



Jyotsna Sahu | Image copyright UN Women India

This Month Special

Jyotsna Sahu: From struggling to make ends meet to thriving businesswoman

Two decades back, **Jyotsna Sahu** was married off to a widower, who ran a corner shop. The 41-year-old, lives in the village of Mandirasahi in the Thakurmunda block of Mayurbhanj district in **Odisha**. Despite the fact that she was married off early and could not complete her education, Jyotsna's entrepreneurial spirit could not be dampened. When she found it hard to make ends meet from the earnings of her husband's small shop, she decided to set up her own small business to provide a better life for her family, including her two sons.

She started a **small home business of making local sweets and savories, which she then sold to local sweet shops**. In the beginning, she was shy and found it difficult to market her products. But she overcame her hesitation soon and began marketing her products better with time and experience. Within a short time, she was **making and selling 11-12 kgs of sweets per day**. She also started selling her sweets in the local market, making a profit of around **Rs 5,000 (USD \$60)** every month.

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However, just as everything seemed to be going well and the dual income had given the family a better lifestyle, suddenly Jyotsna's husband passed away from jaundice. Jyotsna fell apart trying to manage everything on her own. In all the despair and uncertainties, she couldn't enroll her elder son, who had finished his class 10 exams, for further studies. Her son had wanted to train as an electrician in a government technical institute, but Jyotsna could not afford his education just on the income from her sweet making business. Her husband's family treated her badly and disinherited her and her sons from her husband's share of the family property.

This was when Jyotsna approached a local Self Help Group (SHG) group, and also other financial institutions for a loan to expand and grow the corner shop. She was supported by her SHG group, SKS Finance, and PRADAN and secured a loan. She also attended business development trainings and GYB (Grow Your Business) programmes run by PRADAN a to upskill herself.



“The interactions with people from these institutions gave me the courage and inspiration to expand my business and take care of the family on my own,” she says.

She used the loan to expand her husband's betel shop business by diversifying into other products, such as soft drinks and sweets and savouries, in the shop. “The shop is doing well now,” she says. **“We are making enough money to live well. In my free time I am also trying to continue my sweet-making business.”**



SCE girls from Kishanganj in Bihar join Jet Wings in Siliguri to become Cabin Crew

Eight girls between the age group of (18 and 25 years) have joined **Cabin Crew Management and Airport Operations** course at Jet Wings in Siliguri, West Bengal. These girls are 12th pass and belong to low-income farmer families of Kishanganj in Bihar with average annual income of families ranging between INR 50, 000 to 75, 000.

One common advice these girls have for other girls and women striving to achieve something for themselves is to **“Surround oneself with positive people in order to boost one's self-esteem and confidence. This will make one feel empowered and perform and achieve better”**.



Jayanti Kumari Singh, Tanu Kumari, Manisha Kumari Singh, Rupali Singh, Pooja Kumari, Menuka Kumari, Payal Kumari and Deepika Kumari were selected by the Jet Wing institute based on a virtual interview. After course completion and selection, these girls will be placed with Spice Jet and will earn **INR 15, 000** per month initially.



More girls enroll in GDA Course



15 more girls from Patna in Bihar have joined General Duty Assistant (GDA) Course in the month of September.

Under the course work, a trainee will learn about patient care and health care ecosystem. So far, **83 SCE candidates** have enrolled in this course, and many have started earning an average salary of **INR 9,000 to 12, 000 per month** post course completion. It has been largely seen that girls are comfortable working in healthcare sector and are opting for this course.

Women in workforce

SCE Girls Shining Bright

Seven SCE candidates- **Rashmita Miniaka, Banita Nisika, Sasmita Sabar, Walsi Miniaka** and **Babi Nachika** (in pic below) from Rayagada in **Odisha** work an 8-hour shift as **operators** and assemble iPhones and other smart phones at **Foxconn company** in Sriperumbudur, Chennai They joined the workforce in **February 2022** at the salary of INR 1.68 lakhs per annum and with their grit,

determination and hard work have recently received an **increment in salary** to **INR 2.5 lakhs per annum.**

These girls live together in a 1 BHK and are managing everything on their own, they initially had a problem and faced challenges in communicating but with time they have picked up the local language of the region.



Meet 36 SCE candidates working at garment factory in Trichy

In **September**, our **implementing partner Pradan** had an opportunity to visit **Color Jerseys**, a garment factory in Trichy, Tamil Nadu where **36 SCE girls from Gaya in Bihar** are working as **operators** and making garments for brand Jockey. Out of these 36 candidates, **23 girls** have been working at the factory since June 2022 and **13 new girls** have joined the brigade on **September 18** and are undergoing onboarding process.

The Pradan team spoke and interacted with all the candidates in order to understand if they are facing any difficulties, not only the girls spoke confidently and were happy, many girls are also planning to study further and take up trades like General Duty Assistance (GDA). The manager of the factory has vouched for their hard work.



I am eager to onboard more women in the factory to reduce the ratio and gender equalize it for men and women. I want to hire women from all the states - **General Manager, Color Jersey**

Most of these candidates are 10th pass and have enrolled themselves in NIOS for further education.



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