

Education Builds the Future: Never Been in a Beauty-Parlour Before and Now Competently Working in One

"Good worker. Very polite and lovely person." With these words, Seema's co-workers describe her as a workmate. Seema has been working in this little beauty-parlour for seven months – joining the salon just after finishing her iLEAD-training. Now she feels more independent and confident in herself, as she is receiving a salary of her own. But for what does she so vitally need the salary for?

Family in Jaipur

Life has presented Seema with challenges before: She was born in Sawai Madhopur. When her family moved to Jaipur she continued with her schooling, but instead of 9th grade she was put straight into 10th grade. Studies were hard and the subjects, challenging but eventually Seema was able to get through the exams – even with grades she herself was happy with. It is this event that she appreciates the most out of everything she has been through so far.

Nowadays, in her Jaipurian family home her father, mother, brother, sister, uncle and grandparents all live together. Seema's three older sisters have already moved into their husbands' families houses. Previously, she was mainly taking care of the family's animals on a daily basis but then, she heard about iLEAD from her sister – who had been to the training – and Seema was eager to participate!

Training in Hair and Being Heard

Although, it took around three months to convince her parents to let her enroll, she eventually participated in the beautician training. Seema herself had never actually been to a beauty-parlour, but in iLEAD she learned the basic techniques to be a beautician – such as waxing, facial treatments and hair stretching and colouring. As well as the tricks of the trade, she also gradually gained in self-esteem during the training! At first, Seema was afraid to move alone in the streets, but then she just took a step forward and realized that actually, there is no

The Person

Name: Seema
Age: 23
City: Jaipur
Married: For five years
Family: Mother, father, brother, five sisters, uncle, grandparents



Education until: 12th grade
iLEAD-Training: Beautician
Employment: Seven months at a beauty-parlour
Salary: Rs. 2 500

reason to be. Now, she commutes to her workplace by taking a half-an-hour bus ride from her home.

Not only did Seema learn how to take care of customers' looks, she also became more confident in taking care of and altering her own appearance. Before iLEAD, Seema felt a bit like an introverted person, but after the training she feels that she has become more talkative whilst interacting with new people. As her workmates agree, she is good at dealing with the customers.

Being in the training has widened her perspective and now she is thinking more about right and wrong. The dynamics of her family have also changed, as she feels her opinions are now listened to more carefully. If Seema was a maharaja for a month, she'd clear up all the trash lying around the city. Moreover, she wishes there to be free medication for everyone.

" One gains self-confidence from the desire to be something."

- Seema

Receiving a Salary of One's Own

Seema is now receiving INR 2500 salary per a month as a worker-trainee. She is happy with this wage, as she gets trained for new techniques whilst working. All of the salary she receives is saved or spent on medical treatments and examinations. In 2004, Seema found out that she has leukemia, a cancer of the white blood cell. She has been battling the cancer ever since. Previously, she had to ask her father for money to be able to go for tests, but now Seema uses her own salary for treatment.

Thoughts and Doubts in the Community

Members of the community have been slightly concerned about her working, as sometimes she gets home late. They think that a more desirable job for a woman is stitching, as it involves less investment and can be done at home. They also have concerns that a job as beauty-parlour pays off in a working society, but not in villages.

At first, Seema's parents were also a little concerned about her working. However, now they feel happy that she's got a job and has achieved something that she herself is proud of. Seema's mother doesn't know exactly what the work of a beautician involves, but she is happy that her daughter is so independent now.

Seema's husband is also supportive of her working and has even dropped hints that maybe Seema could open a parlour of her own in his house. When asking Seema what she is going to be doing in five years time, she replies with a respectful, confident voice: "I will be the owner of a parlour and earn good money."

As Seema has gone forward in her life and independence, other people around her have noticed the change in her. So she has become a rolemodel to some of her old friends, who would also like to apply to iLEAD. But before being able to enroll themselves, some of them too, have to convince their families first.



Seema giving a beauty-treatment to a client.