

“Financial Crisis and Difficult times: My story”

By Manjulaben Laxmanbhai Parmar
(From Plastics Factory)



My name is Manjulaben Laxmanbhai Parmar. I have studied up to class nine, and reside in Gomtipur area of Ahmedabad city. My family comprises of my husband, a daughter and three sons.

My husband Harshadbhai, my three sons and I were employed in different factories until the prevailing financial crisis resulted in the closure of these factories. Harshadbhai use to work in a spinning factory in Ahmedabad city. My eldest son (age-32) was working in a factory that made steel plates and my other two sons, Manoj (age-28) and Bhavesh (age – 26) use to work in bangle rolls and masks factories, respectively. I was working in a plastics factory. The prevailing financial crisis has adversely impacted our livelihood.

The factory where I worked, manufactured plastic granules from plastic waste/scrap which consisting of discarded plastic bags, broken plastic items and pieces. Plastic waste for making these granules was obtained from scrap shops. The scrap shops procured waste from waste pickers who collect waste from roadside and dump areas.

The factory employed 10 people out of which 5 were women. My job was to sort different types of waste, before it could be used for making plastic granules. I had been working in this factory for the last 15 years. Initially, I was earning Rs.15 as daily wages which gradually increased to Rs50/day (USD 1.04)¹. The factory shut down a year back. The factory owners said, "Due to the current financial crisis we are unable to sell our goods and hence there is no work for anyone". Soon after the closure of the factory, my elder daughter gave birth to a child. I was unable to afford the expenses providing proper and nourishing diet to my grandchild.

For the past 3 months we have been borrowing money in order to meet our household expenses. My husband suffered a heart attack due to mounting worries as a result of our financial situation. The situation due to financial crisis had an adverse effect upon our diet and eating pattern. We stopped eating chapattis. Earlier, we use to cook 500grams of Khichdi (an Indian food preparation made from rice and lentils) everyday, but now it is prepared once in 2-3 days, and that too in not sufficient quantities. Our daily consumption of vegetables came down from 500gms to 25gms.

We had to curtail various other expenses too. Earlier, during the festival of Raksha Bandhan, my daughter would receive clothes and utensils as gifts. And now she gets mere Rs101. Earlier, my sons would purchase 3 to 4 sets of clothes every year. Now they are unable to purchase new clothes and have to manage with old clothes.

During the times the factories were in operation, our income was good. Now, there is no money to meet medical expenses, during sickness. If the nature of ailment is large, we have to go to Government Hospitals as we cannot afford the cost of private clinic. An item that was previously available for Rs10 (USD 0.21) is now costing Rs.40 (USD 0.83), and on top of that - financial crisis has made things worse!!

Prior to working in the Spinning factory, my husband use to work in a textile mill in Ahmedabad city. There were over 100 such mills in the city. The closures of these mills during the 1980s created a situation of massive unemployment within the city. This was followed by the setting up of many small factories in the estate area/ premises of the closed textile. Now once again, these small factories are closing!! My husband says that he became unemployed when the textile mills closed down during the 1980s, and now once again he is jobless. His face becomes tense when he says, "Unemployed once again".

There are more than 600 such plastics factories in Ahmedabad city and each factory has around 6 to 10 workers. Thousands of people are without jobs due to the closure of these factories!! Since my father-in-law had built a house, we have a place to stay, though our living condition is very bad. We are in a very difficult situation _ _ _

¹ <http://www.rbi.org.in/home.aspx#>

Exchange rate, RBI reference rate – INR/1USD: 48.35

