

Summary of Interview

Narmada Bai

Narmada Bai worked for 30 years in the winding department of Kalyan mill. This department specially recruited women workers. There were around 100 women working with Narmada Bai in that department.

Narmada Bai's husband Jeevanlal used to work in Swadeshi Mill. He was a heavy drinker and gave up his job early in life. The household responsibility fell on Narmada Bai's shoulders. One acquaintance helped her getting a *kachcha badli* pass in Kalyan Mill. She was only 22 year old at that time. After 8 years she got a permanent status. Narmada Bai has four children. She tells us that the mill used to provide crèche facility and her service was not interrupted even when children were small.

Narmada Bai had a tough life. Husband did not earn himself and took away her earnings for drinking. There used to be fights and she was often beaten up. Narmada Bai came from Beena. In Indore she did not have a kinship support base. She managed to feed her children, sent them to some municipal school and acquired a house for the family.

In 1992 to when Kalyan Mill offered VRS and closed down production activity in many departments, like many others Narmada Bai became very insecure about her future. She withdrew her children from the school as a cut down on monthly expenditure and quickly married off her daughters taking loan from *Pedhi* (mill co-operative). Later Narmada Bai got afflicted with arthritis and her husband got some heart trouble. Both of them took treatment from ESI dispensary.

Son has followed his father's footsteps. He could study only till 5th standard, refuses to earn on a regular basis and whatever he can lay his hands on, is spent off on liquor. Narmada Bai has finally found a friend and sympathizer in her daughter-in-law, who provides her support against her son and husband.

In the year 2002 Narmada Bai got Rs. 2.28 lakhs from the mill. She gave Rs.10,000 each to her three daughters and Rs.20,000 was squandered away by her husband and her son. She quickly spent off the rest of the money in acquiring a new house. The earlier house

was in a cramped workers' colony near Kalyan Mill. The new one is in a newly developed lower middleclass colony in the outskirts. It's a small, but *pakka* double storied structure. Narmada Bai's family now lives in part of this new house (that is two cramped rooms of 10X10 ft.). The remaining part of the new house and her old house has been rented out. She gets a total of Rs. 2100 per month as rent.

The living standard of Narmada Bai and her family has declined substantially. Not only her monthly income is less than her salary in the mill, she is deprived of ESI facility too. Now she spends Rs. 300 per month or more on medicines. She has three grand children who have to be educated. Son does not allow daughter-in law to take up any earning activity. Narmada Bai is resigned to an unending struggle for existence for as long as she lives.
