RAGS: Improving Social Standards in the Indian Ready-Made Garment Sector

Garment export has fueled economic growth in scores of developing countries, creating over 25 million jobs worldwide. At the same time, working conditions remain a challenge, with gender discrimination, excessive working hours, and safety violations commonplace.

Social Accountability International (SAI) is addressing these issues head-on in an innovative two-year program in India focused on home workers and discrimination on the basis of gender and caste. This project includes the participation from global retailers—Gap Inc. and Timberland— who will engage a select group of their suppliers based in India. In cooperation with the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) UK, along with its grass roots partner the National Home Workers Group (NHG) in New Delhi, and with SAI’s collaboration in a large-scale Public-Private Partnership (PPP), this project will improve the lives of thousands of primarily female garment workers through four measures:

1. Develop Training Tools & Standards
   - Develop and test in over 100 Indian factories training materials about home worker and discrimination issues and management systems designed to assure decent work.
   - Incorporate stakeholder feedback from producer, brands, NGOs and unions.
   - At the end of the project, Elementary training courses will be given to the National CSR Training Center established under the PPP project

2. Build Local Training Capacity
   Through a systematic ‘training-of-trainer’ strategy, SAI will train and qualify 30 local trainers to deliver both advanced and elementary courses. The selected trainers will be immersed in the two specific thematic areas. The training of local trainers will also feed into the rebalancing and adaptation of the curriculum to the workforce, local languages, and production facilities.

3. Increase Worker & Manager Skills and Awareness of Rights
   Through and following on this qualification program, trainers will work with 100 factories to improve avenues of communication, lessen discrimination in the workplace and encourage/enable responsible subcontracting to home workers

4. Strengthen Local Audit Capacity
   To maintain improvements, SAI will deliver auditor guidance on home worker and discrimination issues, using both existing guidelines and new ones addressing issues that are specific to the local context. Through multi-stakeholder engagement and dialogue meetings, it will enhance the core expertise of the project by identifying areas for improvement and means to implement and measure those improvements.

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For more information about SAI’s Public Private Partnership in India, visit www.sa-intl.org/PPPIndia