

# KALAI'S CONFIDENCE



## A TESTAMENT OF COURAGE

*From Tirupur Cluster*

Kalai (name changed) a 38 years old from Tirupur cluster was 9 years old when she first began working and has been working in factories ever since. She relocated to Tirupur from a small village, to look for better livelihood opportunities, she is the sole breadwinner of her family.

Since the untimely demise of her mother due to asthma, she found herself in an early marriage. Post-marriage, she was subjected to maltreatment from her alcoholic husband. Currently, the physical aggression has ceased yet the verbal abuse exists.

Having weathered a storm of past and present harrowing experiences, she found herself entangled in phases of depression and often felt threatened. The resilience which she shows has been repeatedly challenged and at one particular time, she was highly suicidal. It was her son who intervened and stopped her from doing so. Since then, both her sons have been supportive of each other.

The collaboration between the Landmark Group and Swasti's flagship 'Invest for Wellness' (i4We) program aimed to improve the health and well-being of the vulnerable population. Health screenings were conducted within the factories to identify hidden health conditions and provide psychosocial support. The counseling sessions provided her a safe space to share her thoughts and feelings, work through the challenges overcome her struggles, regulate her emotions, and instill in her a new sense of belief and confidence.

On screening for high-burden health conditions, it was found that she was moderately anemic with her Hb levels as low as 8.9 gm/dL. Anemia can bring about a host of physical ailments and psychological distress challenging her existing emotional health issues. She was advised to adhere to preventive health measures and was given Iron Folic Acid tablets to improve her Hb levels. She began to incorporate more iron-rich food such as green leafy vegetables into her diet and modified her overall food and dietary choices. Additionally, she also incorporated Swathi Savi, a nutritional supplement known to reduce fatigue and manage anemia, into her daily diet. Over time, she showed improvement in her Hb level and her overall well-being. She presently feels energetic and is able to walk up the stairs effortlessly, which was not the case earlier. This empowered her to take charge of her own health and that of her family.



With financial literacy being one of the components of the program and a social determinant of health, Kalai received information and awareness on the importance of saving and practical strategies to do so. Since she is a single provider for her family, these sessions have empowered her to manage her finances better and save some part of her income regularly. Previously, she would spend a minimum of Rs 500 at hospitals regularly. However, now she is able to reduce her out-of-pocket health expenses by accessing screening camps conducted on the factory floors, adhering to preventive health measures, and accessing ESI services facilitated through the support of Swasti.

Kalai shares with joy, *“I am happy and healthy; the health of family members is also improving. I am confident that I can overcome all my struggles in life and persevere, I have now gained a profound sense of satisfaction. For this, I am grateful to the factory management and Landmark Group”*

**The i4We initiative strives to build the resilience of millions of workers like Kalai ensuring healthy living, healthy businesses, and a healthier world for tomorrow. Such narratives serve as a testament to collective action to ensure access to quality and affordable primary healthcare for the vulnerable population.**