

Break the Barriers: How Chanchal's Fight for Financial Independence Liberated Her



Ever since childhood, Chanchal had big dreams for herself. She was stubbornly ambitious with a brilliant mind teeming with curiosity and aspirations. Chanchal wanted to pursue her higher education at a renowned university and work a high-paying job with which she could provide for her family. However, a young girl from the small village of Pelpa dreaming big dreams is a vulnerable creature, one that is easily stifled by patriarchy and societal norms. After having to leave her education post-Grade 12, Chanchal was told to take up household chores and play her part as the 'dutiful' daughter. Despite being restricted to her home with her ambitions dismissed, Chanchal refused for her spirit to be suffocated. With every opportunity, she looked for ways to access greater mobility and freedom.

Seeing her friends work at warehouses and go to colleges, inspired her to also look for job opportunities and make a name for herself. Her father was the sole breadwinner in the family and did not contribute much to household expenses. One day, she attended a session organised by the Development Alternatives group where she was introduced to better livelihood and job opportunities. Chanchal, intrigued by the prospect of gaining a job, joined the WE-LEAD project (Women Empowerment through Livelihoods, Entrepreneurship, and Access through Digitalisation), a programme designed to leverage technology and bridge informational and resource gaps for creating sustainable economic opportunities through entrepreneurship. Her mother supported her decision and stood by her as she underwent the logistics training and completed a Computer Science course at the Development Alternatives group, Badli Centre.

Her hard work paid off when she was called to work as a scanner at the ECOM warehouse in Jhajjar, Haryana. After a few months she got promoted to the position of Data Entry Operator (DEO) owing to her optimistic and sincere attitude toward her work. The promotion ensured her a salary of ₹ 13,500 per month- an amount with which she helped her mother to cover the household expenses. Chanchal's father and extended family member remain skeptical of her having a job and going to work every day. However, her enthusiasm and success are slowly bringing them around to accept and support her ambition. Chanchal hopes that one day she will be able to support her family and build a life for herself that she can be proud of. Surpassing nervousness and criticism, she fearlessly continues to fight for her future with an unwavering spirit. Chanchal is proud of her work and hopes to inspire other girls in her locality who have big dreams just like her but do not know how where to begin.