Effects of managerial practices on workplace performance and health of female factory workers in India

Ranjitha Shivaram
Advisors: Dr. Aruna Ranganathan, Prof Susan Silbey
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Abstract/Opportunity
- Growth of manufacturing in India
- More women in traditionally male shop-floors - 25% of working women in urban and peri-urban areas
- More women in managerial positions – 32% in India (Forbes, 2014) but no research on its effects

Garment sector in India
- 59% world market share
- $223 billion industry by 2020
- Currently contributes 4% tp GDP, 13% to export earnings
- Over 45 million people employed

Data/Results
Methodology: Grounded Theory, Methods: Mixed Methods

Iterative phases of data collection and analysis:
- Quantitative data analysis
- Qualitative Fieldwork
- Field experiment

Results:
- Causal identification of statistically significant effect of supervisor gender on four variables listed above
- Identification of mechanism to explain this phenomenon
- Current Work:
  - Identifying supervisor characteristics that enable workers to be more productive and access healthcare at the workplace in better ways
  - Translating findings into policy to enable better supervisory practices

Value Proposition/Next Steps
Value Proposition: Win-win for all stakeholders
- Healthier, more productive workforce for factories. Improved productivity of 4-5%. 1% increase corresponds to:
  - 2 days/ year: reduced sick leave
  - 5 min/ day: reduced breaks/ increased time at work
  - 1% increase: effectiveness of work
  (Fitz & Rosenfeld, 1997)

- Better relationships between supervisors and their workers
- Improved workforce experience for women: better earning, ripple effect of benefits extending to women's families

Next steps:
- Formulating and implementing specific policies
- Exploring avenues for greater outreach and impact

Proposed Solution
- Identifying factors that positively affect workplace performance and health for female factory workers
- Crafting specific policies that can be implemented at the factory level, to be scaled to industrial association and state levels at later stages

Acknowledgments
This work is supported by the Tata Trusts.

References (Non-exhaustive List)
- Abraham, Mabel Lana Botelho. 2013
- Baldassarri, Delia. 2015.