

Benefits for Business and Workers (BBW) project, funded by the Department for International Development (DFID), UK under the Responsible & Accountable Garment Sector (RAGS) Challenge Fund recently celebrated the successful launch of its second year at the British High Commission, New Delhi in the presence of industry informed members. The launch was hosted by Barry Lowen, Director, UK Trade and Investment, India and mementos were given to the six factories which had adopted BBW projects. "BBW is a key contribution towards building the garment sector's competitiveness in terms of productivity, quality and people management," informed Lowen.

## BBW project celebrates success

The project supported by UK retailers like Arcadia, Marks & Spencer, Mothercare, New Look, Sainsbury's and Tesco, aims to boost competitiveness of the Garment Industry in India and Bangladesh with focus on responsible manufacturing resulting in improved factory social standards, worker loyalty, efficiency and quality.



Rosey Hurst, Director, Impactt Limited with Rajesh Bheda, CEO, Rajesh Bheda Consultancy

BBW will equip Industrial Engineers, Production, HR and welfare managers with the latest management techniques to build efficiency, improve quality and improve workers' employment conditions through shorter working hours, better pay, better benefits more training and more promotion opportunities.

The factories which are beneficiaries of the project,

also shared the striking improvements achieved in productivity, quality, labour turnover and absenteeism. "When my buyer Mothercare told me that we would be a part of the RAGS project, at that time, I was literally in rags, it was a terrible phase for me and even my buyer was thinking if I could make it and believe me, when RAGS came in, things changed tremendously; whatever I had thought of became possible," said John Milton, MD of Tirupur-based Cotton Blossom. He added, "I am standing in front of you due to RAGS BBW project. I started with just 12 machines and 20 sewing operators 10 years ago and now I manage an organization of 5000 workers, BBW has completely changed our way of working – we have seen tremendous increases in efficiency, significant quality savings, underpinned by a stable workforce."

A Srinivasan, Administrative Manager, SCM Garments, Tirupur was equally upbeat. "Within just a few months we have seen the change in our factory. The BBW team comes and listens to one and all, understands our problem and gives simple solutions. We have really been able to

deal with the major issue of labour absenteeism," he said.

The RAGS BBW project is managed by Impactt Limited UK and Rajesh Bheda Consulting (RBC) with the aim of improving wages of labourers, productivity and reducing wastage. Rosey Hurst, Director, Impactt Limited while speaking on the occasion said "Benefits for Business and Workers will support stronger businesses and better jobs, as both are vital for the continued competitiveness of the garment export sector." Added Rajesh Bheda, CEO, RBC, "BBW demonstrates how much more potential we have to unlock – this training is a must for any forward-thinking factory owner." He further emphasized that since the industry was going through one of the toughest times it was important to train workers, as it benefits all in the chain-workers, middle management, factory owners as well as brands.

Under the next phase, the BBW project will offer training to 100 factories supplying to the sponsoring brands during 2012. Of these at least 60 factories will be in India. Currently, the project is covering six factories in India and four in Bangladesh.