

# Women For STEM

Over the past few years, it has become glaringly apparent that STEM has much less female representation as compared to other fields. Most women do not pursue STEM education and the few that do prefer to follow core sciences rather than engineering. Looking at engineering, the little female representation that there is mainly in the computer science and biomedical fields. The proportion of women in core engineering streams like mechanical, industrial, production, electrical, civil engineering, mining and metallurgical streams is very low. But this has nothing to do with capability. The problem is the perception in society and the choices that women are influenced to make. Women need to be shown that they can pursue supposed 'male' careers.

As part of my empowerment program Women for STEM, I have tried to encourage and inspire young women and girls through a rather unique format. Over the last ten months, I have been initiating, planning and organising visits for groups of aspiring young women to manufacturing facilities. These visits are planned in such a way that the owners or very senior people at these plants give them a walkthrough and explain the process of manufacturing. The women get to see machines at work and the environment which is generally considered only meant for men.

By spending quality time at manufacturing facilities, the women get an opportunity to see engineering and science at work. They also get to interact with other women at these plants and in the end come back inspired and determined to pursue STEM as a career. With this program, I hope to build confidence in girls and open their eyes to the wide range of opportunities waiting for them.