

A Sewing Machine for Asha

November 8, 2020



You know that feeling when you've injured your leg and you can't walk? You're confined to your couch. You can't get up and walk around. Luckily, for most people these injuries are temporary, and soon enough we're back on our feet, walking in no time. But imagine if it wasn't temporary. Imagine if you were never able to get up to get a glass of water, or to take a stroll outside in fresh air. Sounds difficult, doesn't it? Unfortunately, there are many people with locomotor disability who aren't able to use their legs to move or carry out simple tasks. One such person is 31-year-old Asha who has been living in Rajeev Nagar, located on the banks of Dravyavati River. She, along with 1,248 migrants, lives in an authorized community of temporary housing, commonly referred to as "kutchi basti." The most common occupations of her community members are domestic work, spinning wool and daily wage labor.

Asha was born with locomotor disability. Throughout her life, she has never been able to stand on her feet or walk. In order to move around, she uses a wheelchair, and she sometimes even crawls on floor using her bare hands. At 19, she married Shiv, who also has locomotor disability. The couple have two children. In order to support their family, Shiv sells items like gutka, supari and candies on his tricycle.

On September 2, 2020, when CFAR conducted a meeting with 5 persons with disabilities in Rajeev Nagar, Asha and Shiv shared their financial and other struggles, which they said had increased after the lockdown.



“I used to stitch clothes for a living, and I used whatever money I earned to support my husband and my children,” said Asha. “Before the lockdown, my sewing machine broke, and I wasn’t able to earn a single penny.” Shiv added, “I don’t have enough money to buy her a new machine as I am barely earning Rs. 40 to 50 rupees post-lockdown. Life is becoming increasingly difficult day by day. Without Asha’s income she earned by stitching clothes, we can’t afford to feed our children enough food most of the time.” Asha went on to say that due to their financial crisis, she and Shiv resorted to taking small loans from neighbors and relatives in order to sustain

themselves and their children.

On August 3, 2020, Baby, a Single Window Forum Member (SWFM), helped Asha collect her Adhaar card and disability certificate. On August 5, both Asha and Shiv went to the Shri Mahaveer Viklang Sahayta Samiti, an NGO committed to assisting people with all kinds of disabilities, where Rajneesh Bharadwaj, verified all their documents and gave Asha a new sewing machine. Asha happily collected her new machine along with some new clothes for her children – a gift from the Samiti members.

“I am very thankful to the Mahaveer Viklang Sahayta Samiti and CFAR who have created a support system for people like us, and Baby Ji was kind enough to put us in contact with them,” said Asha, her eyes gleaming with happiness. “Now I will be able to support my family financially. I can’t wait to get some orders soon!” Shiv shared her sentiments as well: “I am so happy. My wife and I used to feel depressed because of our poor financial condition. We weren’t even able to buy schoolbooks for our children. But now I have hope that our situation will get better.”

