

Banki Rani Swain, Barabhuja Basti, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India

Banki Rani is one of the many migrants, who in search of new opportunities, migrated from Kamakhya Nagar in Dhenkanal district to Bhubaneswar in 2003. She and her family settled in Barabhuja Basti. When their life was just about beginning to look up, suddenly misfortune struck, when her husband met with a fatal accident in 2009. Banki Rani realized that as a single parent of two children and as a sole earning member she has to now soldier on with greater determination and grit.



Paving the path

Armed with a graduation certificate and the many skills and aptitude, it took her nine years to find work of her calling. In 2017 she took charge of the Anganwadi in Barabhuja.

“This gave a new meaning to my life. With the loss of my husband, when I was feeling very sad, a job where I had to take care of so many children revived my strength and zest for life” she stated.



Making a difference

From 2018, Banki Rani became a key face/voice of an inclusive WASH project, being implemented by CFAR, in close coordination and consultation with Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC).

Banki Rani along with members of Community Management Committee and Single Window Forum such as Mamata Mohanty, Kanaklata Biswal, Bhabini Pradhan and Chandrama Behera, to name a few, worked concertedly to improve WASH services. This included from assessing needs, listing households wanting to construct toilets, checking feasibility of connecting their toilets to the sewerage line, getting desludging done to finally getting a water ATM installed with the support of BMC.

In the process and in a seamless way, Banki Rani succeeded in linking maternal and child care to WASH and in motivating people to adopt safe hygiene practices

Leading from the front to provide support in times of disaster from Fani to COVID-19



She did this in every possible way and on both occasions from taking people to cyclone shelter, distributing dry ration to securing financial support

The people of Barabhuja, have supported me during my difficult times and it is now my turn to help them, she said Low-cost foot-operated handwash stations is an innovation, I am proud to be part of, she said

On seeing the guidelines the government had issued to protect densely populated settlements from COVID 19, she got interested in the foot operated handwash stations

Soon Banki Rani along with the volunteers made and installed foot operated handwash station at a convenient location to enable the elderly and vulnerable persons to use it.

When asked what excited her most about it, she replied, ***“we can inculcate in children the practice of handwashing and ensure for one and all maximum safety with no contact and no wastage.”***

