

Disability is just a matter of perception



Me and my wife face a lot of challenges in using the toilets which are not disabled friendly. It is important to make a design that is accessible to all in consultation with people.

Shiv Kumar is 31-year-old differently abled man, living in Rajeev Nagar Kachhi Basti, Ward 31 for the last 13 years. Shiv and his wife Asha Devi, both have locomotive disability from childhood. The couple with their two children lives in a single-room tin shed house but have a single pit toilet.

Shiv has a tricycle which he also uses to sell items such as tobacco, water bottles, and supari that fetches him Rs. 2000-2500 per month.

Struggle to manage in COVID-19:

Like many other people, he and his family faced many difficulties in earning their daily bread during the COVID-19 lockdown.

Shiv had applied for financial assistance in the form of loans from the government, he said during a webinar session on the International Day of Person with Disability-2020 on 2nd December, 2020. In June, 2019, when our intervention was initiated in Rajiv Nagar, Shiv was sceptical and was passive in his participation during meetings and activities organised by CFAR as he faced immense pressure to meet his day to day needs.

On September 2, 2020, a meeting with 5 PWDs was conducted in Rajeev Nagar by CFAR members to gain a better understanding of the adversities they faced on a daily basis. Shiv and his wife were present at the meeting and shared their financial struggles, which only increased after the lockdown.

Understanding the impact of COVID-19 and the level of psychological stress it had caused, CFAR had organised a psycho-social tele-counselling session with 10 PWDs (People with disabilities) and elderly, facilitated by Dr Mona, Psychologist from Delhi. The session addressed Shiv's mental and physical trauma.



Post the session when the PWD support group was formed, through a series of meetings, Shiv came out as an active volunteer and male forum member in his settlement and became a motivator for others.

He took the lead in setting up a low-cost foot operated handwashing station with CFAR team along with the trainer Mr. Rambabu Jangid, in his settlement for disabled persons. He played a

prominent role in facilitating sewerage connection for 100 HHs through advocacy, regular follow up and submitting application along with SWF members at the Jaipur Municipal Corporation and addressing those applications. He was an active participant in all the events and campaigns organised by CFAR including World Toilet Day, Global Hand Washing Day, and other activities were organised in his settlements.

On 12th October, 2020- He also attended a workshop on COVID-19 Communication by experts Dr. Chitra Maheshwari and Dr. Kiran Manth, National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM), Jaipur and emerged as a master trainer for his settlement.

“We do not have CTCs. Where would the elderly and PWD go to defecate? Now the open safe is also not safe”-Shiv Kumar

He began to spread awareness about COVID-19 in his settlement and so far, has trained more than 50 people including PWD and elderly in his ward. He emerged as a male champion for his ward, and has supported four disabled people to receive assistive aids for the disabled from his as well as other settlements.

Shiv was felicitated by CFAR on the occasion of World Toilet Day on 19th November, 2020 where he shared his changing life experience. *“I never thought that I can play an important role in any aspect of life for myself or for others, CFAR made me realise that my disability cannot stop me from working for myself or for the society especially for people like me”.*

On 7th December, 2020 Shiv, along with CFAR team members approached Shri Bhagwan Mahaveer Viklang Sahayata Samiti for supporting disabled people. He received a metal box which can be used to keep his products for sale and carry it in his tricycle safely. Recently, Shiv Kumar become a member Self-Help Group named as “SHIV “and now he also sells products made by the SHG including handwashing soap and Phenyl on his tricycle.



Speaking about his need, Shiv said, “We have single pit toilets. We have no sewer line access. If so, we can change from pits to septic tank. The sewer line cannot reach the houses. We are ready to construct the septic tank if JMC provide the sewer line. Even the vehicles do not reach our houses. We hope to address it in our micro-planning with JMC”

Shiv also became a member of the Single Window Forum and since December 23, 2020 he is working closely with the JMC officials and was actively involved in developing a micro-planning (detailed planning and joint action with the JMC officials) for resolving the issues of Sewerage line and Solid Waste Management to implement the initiatives for his entire ward which is currently under process.