

## Case Study

Interview unique number: 04  
Interview date: 22/11/2019  
District: Ganjam  
State: Odisha

Name: **Geeta Sethy**  
Age: **30**  
Gender: **Female**  
Education: **10<sup>th</sup>**  
Marital Status: **Single**  
Highest education: **10<sup>th</sup>**  
Current self-employment/ employment status: **Farming**  
Type of impairment: **Low Vision**  
Any other members with disabilities in family: **Sister with low vision**

Geeta is a 30-year-old woman having low vision by birth. She stated that her parents had stigma but they never showed; rather wanted her to be educated.

***She asserts that, 'I got my eyes checked when I was very young but I came to know about low vision in the 7th standard. There is not much awareness among community on low vision, while blindness is visible and very common. Government should provide nutritional diet and supplements to expectant mothers so that repercussions due to malnutrition can be mitigated. I wish my mother was also given correct diet and me and my sister would not have got visually impaired.'***

Geeta expressed, "My parents had the guilt about me and my sister's disability but they didn't express it. My father supported our education. Women in rural areas are usually uneducated; they do not want to socialise or go out. Hence, our mother wanted us to be educated, so that we could be independent."

She got into the school at the right time without delay because of her parents' enthusiasm and interest. She states that,

***"There was no problem faced during the admission. I could sit in the center of the class and teachers allowed me to refer peers notebook to cover the missed-out work. Classmates were good to me and teachers told them to sit with me on rotation basis so that not one person was stressed due to my intervention in class work. Travelling to the school was not difficult but during summers it was difficult to see things around as visibility in sun rays was zero. I studied till 10<sup>th</sup> standard with continued challenges of commuting in summer."***

She did not take further education and rather chose to go for vocational education on mushroom cultivation. She aspires to start a Self Help Group (SHG) of readymade garments. As per her, mushroom cultivation requires large space and funds, which is not easily available. She pursued training on agriculture as well which helped her to look after her family agricultural business. Local NGO worker provoked her parents to stop her from getting trained. However, she influenced them and finally got trained.

Later, between her 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> standards, she was diagnosed with a hole in the intestine and got treated in Berhampur hospital in Odisha. Her mother was a labour then and it was financially difficult for the family to pay for her treatment as there were no health subsidy for persons with low vision in the state. After this instance, she got information about disability certificate from a local contractor. She immediately applied for one and got it from government hospital. She now has an Indira Awas Yojna (IAY) house and she receives pension of Rs.700/- per month from last 4 years.

Geeta addresses the issue of inaccessible quality healthcare in rural areas and states,

***"There are 'quack' (term used for unlicensed doctor) available in every village where most of us go. There is PHC at 4 kms but usually we go there if we do not get cured from the quack. In PHCs doctors are usually not available, therefore villagers go to 'quacks' and take their medicine. Many a times their medicines are not effective and then we go to District Health Centres. It is not easy to access facilities at district level and I am always accompanied by my parents."***

Geeta mentions her disinterest in attending any family or social functions/gatherings.

**“Yes, I have been invited many times but I did not attend. I feel my parents will get taunted and due to me my family will feel embarrassed. I and my sister with disability do not mingle/communicate with my elder sister’s husband and his family. I feel that community and relatives will not like our ‘presence’ hence, we don’t go.”**

According to Geeta, her family decisions are taken by her father with consent of all the family members and she proudly takes the financial responsibility in her family. All her earning and her fathers are kept with her.

There are certain areas where she has no awareness viz. violence, sexual abuse, rape faced by women; process of police reporting and has no exposure on how to deal with such situations. Geeta was shocked to hear that women with disabilities globally experience violence of various types and neglect/ abandonment and she did not get any information in her village.

As per Geeta,

***“I have many plans for future. Someone from the staff of Jana Jagarana NGO where I work asked me to join Sambhab DPO. We are planning to have a store of readymade clothes and an SHG for women with disabilities. I will be happy to support other poverty stuck women with disabilities so that they can live ”***

She shared following recommendations:

- Girls with low vision should have early intervention so that prevention/correction could be done
- Students with low vision should be allowed to sit in the front row
- Awareness on self protection, SRHR and to stop violence against women with disabilities should be provided in schools, colleges, panchayat and community
- Detailed guidance on police complaints mechanism and process of reporting to be provided to both police personnel and women with disabilities to ensure right to justice