

Case Study

Interview unique number: **05**
Interview date: **11/10/2019**
District: **Hazaribagh**
State: **Jharkhand**

Name: **Kanti Kumari**
Age: **25**
Gender: **Female**
Education: **MA-Economics Honours**
Marital Status: **Unmarried**
Highest education: **MA-Economics Honours**
Current self-employment/ employment status: **Tuition Teacher**
Type of impairment: **Locomotor (Orthopaedic)**
Any other members with disabilities in family: **NO**

Kanti Kumari is a 25-year-old woman who developed locomotor disability in her childhood when she was only 10 years of age. She feels fortunate as her family members are educated that helped her father to take immediate and effective actions concerning her health. He took her to various hospitals in Ranchi and Kolkata, where the treatment was performed for about two years. However, during the treatment, she had to discontinue her education but then, she attended tuition classes conducted at her home for her siblings.

At the age of 12, she gained the strength to resume her studies and took admission in third standard. Pursuing education was not difficult until eighth standard. As she entered the ninth standard, she applied for a hostel, which was initially denied by the school staff. Eventually, she was allotted a room on the ground floor where she came to know that she was the first girl with disability resident in the hostel. Albeit the fact that Kanti was allotted a room in the hostel, yet, her stay there was not amiable.

Kanti stated, “my hostel room was on ground floor but my classes were on floors above marked by stairs. I had difficulty climbing stairs for attending the classes.”

She stated, “my hostel mates were not receptive to me. They wondered and told me why do I need to get education? Hostel was not accessible and teachers were not approachable. Getting the services isn’t enough, as all the residents sharing the same environment needed to be sensitized regarding the diverse and changing needs of individuals. One can’t decide the occurrence and extent of disability, but, if the diverse needs are recognised then accommodating the same becomes easier. I wish one could understand the fact that disability could occur to anyone, at any time and place in life. Realisation of this fact would have been easier for me!”

Kanti emphasised, how she got admission in the school based on merit. She believes in her capabilities and is confident, as during her schooling, she pointed out the wrong teaching concepts by the teachers. Hence the school administration was happy with her and started appointing quality teachers from thereon; thereby, providing better education to all.

Kanti narrates “availability of resources and a platform that provides you the opportunity to share your views and acceptance of the same by the system on the grounds of one’s applied knowledge, is extremely empowering”.

During her higher education, she highlighted the benefits she received from a government-initiated scheme, that is, being able to get admission in the college under disability quota. This helped her in continuing her education. Then, she was able to pursue basic computers training and stitching during her first-year of graduation. She is ambitious and want to appear for Indian Administrative Services (IAS) and is currently preparing for the same. However, she stressed on the lack of awareness regarding the rights of higher and technical education of persons with disabilities in the education system and policies.

In Kanti's case, accessing health services was not that challenging as compared to other women with

Kanti is well aware of sexual and reproductive health rights and confidently reflects on the violence faced by women with disabilities. She said "I will not allow my partner/husband to have sex with me, if I say 'NO'. I am aware about safe sex by use of condoms and right to abortion."

severe disabilities. She claimed to be well aware of the sexual reproductive health rights.

Kanti, based on her own experiences and struggles as a woman with disability, shared the following recommendations that are needed to be considered to make lives of women with disabilities (WwDs) convenient and empowering:

- Qualified WwDs should be given preference for a particular vacancy and merit system is more powerful than reservations in the job
- Provision of scholarships for WwDs for higher education and accessible hostel facilities should be mandatory
- Access to loans for self employment, higher studue and even for travellign which is currently missing
- Social security and volunteers for women with sever dsiabilities and those requiring high support for activities of daily living
- Information on trvel concession uch as bus and railwys to be displayed in accessible formats in all public places to avavoid harrasement and discrimination by service providers
- A health card with information on disability, which will help to get helath check-ups on priority for WwDs as the government hospital system is not friendly for WwDs
- ASHA workers (under health service provision scheme of National Rural Health Mission) to providemedicines at home as the dispensaries/ health centres are far from hamlets
- Harmonise local policies and laws with CRPD, SDG goals and the Rights of Persons with Disability Act and get these implemented at local level