

## Case Study

Interview unique number: 04  
Interview date: 11/10/2019  
District: Hazaribagh  
State: Jharkhand

Name: **Nageshwari Kumari**

Age: **25**

Gender: **Female**

Education: **MA in Political Science**

Marital Status: **Unmarried**

Highest education: **MA in Political Science**

Current self-employment/ employment status: **Employed at JSLPS (NGO)**

Type of impairment: **Locomotor (Orthopaedic)**

Any other members with disabilities in family: **No**

Nageshwari, a 25-year-old narrated her contrasting experiences of living as a girl without disability for 18 years and how things changed when she acquired disability when she met with an accident. Due to an electric wire hitting her hand, she got severely injured and her right hand was amputated. After she was disabled, her family's attitude changed. They were no longer supportive in letting her pursue higher education. Earlier, it was convenient for her to work in the fields in order to earn some income, which she used to pay for her school education. But now, the economic situation changed as her family spent lot of their earning to get her compensation and artificial limb from the government.

Despite all the turmoil in the family and her personal life, she was rigid in pursuing her education. However, she was challenged everyday by various factors, like, commuting to school for 12 kms on her own, unlearning writing with right hand and practicing to write in the same speed with her left hand, searching for job to support her education, fighting discouraging attitude of relatives and eve teasing of male, among others.

She emphasized on her mother being the most supportive in her journey, which she considers as her greatest asset that kept her moving forward. Her mother works as a construction worker and her father is an auto driver. With her enthusiasm and grit, she won her family's support, which encouraged her to continue her studies and train herself to write with left hand efficiently.

**Nageshwari narrates, "it was challenging to commute 12 kms to school every day and then work in the field in afternoons to earn money for education. I was exhausted by end of the day. But the need to get higher education and earn a decent living in future was my only goal. My family was not against my education, but there was no financial support from them, as they couldn't spare money. And I stopped blaming and complaining. Although, my family has been supportive, but my close relatives opposed and raised objection when they saw me going to school and then to college.**

Currently, she is active NGO member and saves money to pay for her college fees. Despite her higher education and a job, she isn't valued like other girls in the society because of her disability and sadly her family also got indulged in negative thinking about her marriage. They feel distressed as money that was kept for her marriage was spent on Nageshwari's medical rehabilitation.

**According to Nageshwari, "while working in the NGO, a friend got a marriage proposal of a man with disability having good job but my parents refused. They wanted me to marry an old man who had two girls and his wife also lived with him. I came to know from close friends that this man wanted a son and I am pretty sure once I deliver the baby boy, he will kick me out of the family. Also, what is the surety that I will give birth to a boy? What happens if this child also turns out to be girl? Hence, I am still fighting to remain single forever but not get harmed and abused in this world of patriarchal dominance."**

Another battle she is fighting is 'patriarchy' in the family, when her uncle had verbally and physically abused her so that she is unable to work in the field and get ownership of the field/property. For the first time she stepped out to complain against the same and report the case to local police. On the intervention of police, a mutual compromise was done through the Panchayat head which went in her favour. Motivated to move forward, she has now made up her mind that she will continue to work on women's rights with local DPO and will help other women with disabilities who face domestic violence.

She is quite contented with current health facilities in her village/block. She appreciated ASHA NGO workers, who would not only pay home visits for her regular health check-ups but also provided the required medicines. She also felt relieved about the government initiatives regarding preparation of disability certificates.

**Nageshwari states, "earlier the Disability Certificate issuing Medical Board use to sit once in a month but now doctors are sitting four times a week and people with disabilities are getting certificates well in time. People who travel long distances are also relieved because there are more windows open for accessing the Board."**

As an active contributor to Disability Inclusive SDG Score Card in her state, Jharkhand, she feels empowered to be part of the process and happy to be selected also for the assessment of public buildings for early intervention and protection of rights of children with disabilities. She facilitated the group discussion children with disabilities group and was proud that her intervention on inclusive education will benefit many children in her village.

**Nageshwari is confident about her future and positively declare "I want to empower other women with disabilities as my economic empowerment linked with education has boosted my confidence and I no longer consider myself disabled. I will ensure as DPO member that no women with disability in my village is discriminated or abused due to patriarchy and lack of social security & support."**

Nageshwari shares the following recommendations for women with disabilities (WwDs) to live a quality and dignified life:

- Zero tolerance for girls with disabilities dropout so that they can continued education and school administration should intervene if families do not send children with disabilities to school
- Capacity building and awareness on SRHR at village/ block and district level also about reproductive health rights
- Raised awareness about rights of WwDs and involvement of Gram Panchayat to upheld these rights
- Spreading awareness on SDGs among persons with disabilities and monitor implementation through score card process