

## Case Study

Interview unique number: 02  
Interview date: 11/10/2019  
District: Hazaribagh  
State: Jharkhand

Name: **Neha Khatun**  
Age: **26**  
Gender: **Female**  
Education: **BA Graduate**  
Marital Status: **Unmarried**  
Highest education: **BA Graduate**  
Current self-employment/ employment status: **Primary School Teacher**  
Type of impairment: **Locomotor (Orthopaedic)**  
Any other members with disabilities in family: **Brother**

Neha Khatun, a 26-year-old young woman with disability, describes the intersection of poverty and disability that puts an individual's capabilities in a questionable situation, especially women, impacting their participation in the society. She is a BA graduate who is currently working as a primary school teacher and as a beautician on occasional basis. Just like majority of women with disabilities, she also struggled to pursue education and vocational training because of various factors like, affordability, accessibility and exclusion among others.

Neha appreciated the consistent support from her family, especially her brother in pursuing education. Her college was located far off; hence, she had to hire a rickshaw every day. Commuting via rickshaw added to their everyday expense, so her brother decided to support her by dropping her to the college. Later, she got a tricycle and started independent commuting to the college. However, she highlighted it was exhausting to manoeuvre hand driven tricycle for six-seven kms, which resulted in poor concentration during the class. Despite the adversities, supportive attitude of teachers and students in the college kept her motivated to continue her studies. Although now, she aspires to get a motorised tricycle/ adapted scooter for ease of travelling to college, her dream is yet to come true.

**Neha states, "After metric (10th) sisters stopped me from going to school but brother supported me to continue my education."**

**Neha stated, "my college teachers and friends help me with the notes and whatever is taught in the class if I miss classes. Because of this, I don't miss out much even being at home. However, if I could go regularly to college, I would have had the first hand learning experience and I wish no one is left to home due to disability and should access regular learning at school"**

She discussed affordability as the prime reason for opting Humanities subject over Commerce in the college because pursuing the latter requires additional tuitions, which she couldn't afford. Nevertheless, being able to earn has made her independent and capable of paying her college fees. She adds that sometimes her family, especially her sister who works as a domestic worker supports her financially.

**According to Neha, "Due to lack of funds, I could not pursue commerce and have to switch to Arts. I wish I could opt for subject of my choice and government supports this by financial aid. I feel that disability is an integral part of development rather than manifestations of poverty. If I would have been 'male', my education might have been given priority. Hence, there is a need to assess how poverty and disability intersect to shape particular outcomes for women as compared to men with disabilities."**

As a young woman with aspirations and dreams of being in love and to be with a life partner is yet to be fulfilled. She narrates that "it is disappointing to observe that our 'changing' societies have 'predetermined and perpetual' standards of acceptance of men and women in order to be chosen and bonded. Everyday a fight a battle to prove my capabilities and not allowed to think about my future in terms of marriage

prospects. Even in my daily field work and networking with other women with disabilities (WwDs), 'being in a relationship where one could be loved and cared while enjoying the life with someone who could appreciate their existence, is something that none WwDs tend to mention. Ignoring their right to pursue happiness (in all terms) is something that is being cultivated in our societies for centuries and sadly, is still continuing...".

Eventually, she acquired skills in stitching and beautician course during her 12<sup>th</sup> and graduation time period and is able to earn certain income by applying both the acquired trainings. Neha was excited to learn new skills; however, she was constantly demotivated by neighbours. Fortunately, she got the opportunity to do her desired course from JSLPS, a local NGO for free, which helped and motivated her greatly. She uses the stitching skills and beautician course for earning daily wages for her family needs. Interestingly, once she completed the course, the same neighbours started to respect her for her quality of services and visit her for regular beautician needs rather than going to another place. As per Neha, 'daily earnings got her respect and this is what she treasures the most!'

**Neha states, "when I told my sister that I need 1500 rupees to undertake beautician course, one of my neighbours taunted- you can't even walk properly, what is the point of doing such a course? However now, people's attitude has changed and they look up to me. I have become quite popular."**

**In future, Neha wants to remain the DPO leader and expressed "I want to be head of Gender Committee formed under the SDG- CRPD framework training in my state. I feel knowledgeable and empowered due to information that has been given to connect from 'local to global' issues of WwDs. I am already engaged in rights based advocacy and want to be an advocate of disability rights and not an 'activist' as I learnt during the disability inclusive SDG score card process that 'united we stand together' and alone we cannot uphold all our rights!"**

Neha mentions that being a woman with disability, accessing health facilities has always been a hassle. As the health services are located far that makes commuting extremely difficult, especially for WwDs. There is lack of availability of emergency care and gynaecologists for WwDs. She had faced several issues while getting herself checked in local health centre and eventually her family gave up but she continued follow up until she could meet the right doctor for her treatment.

As she describes all the above, she remained assertive to discuss the following recommendations for a better life of WwDS:

- Raised awareness, training and sensitization on rights of WwDs in rural areas
- De-centralised health services and facilities with priority services to WwDs
- Centralized services for all medical testing so that WwDs and their carers do not have to run from pillar to post and WwDs are not denied health checkups by families
- Availability of gynaecologists for women health issues in all primary and secondary health centres
- Informing WwDs about sexual reproductive health rights (SRHR) to keep oneself safe and also to ensure that in schools and colleges information and knowledge on SRHR should be provided