

IMPACT STORIES FORMAT

Story Title	A Bold Journey of Growth and Leadership: Sushila Meena's Story
Date	02/10/2024
Prepared by	Gayatri Seva Sansthan
Name of partner Organization	Gayatri Seva Sansthan
Name of Daksha/Daksh	Sushila Meena
Name of SKB centre	Talabfala
Cluster	Devak Mata
Block	Chotisadri
District	Pratapgarh

BACKGROUND/CONTEXT:

Sushila Meena comes from a tribal-dominated region, where opportunities for growth and education, especially for women, are scarce. Her desire to make something of herself and achieve recognition in society seemed like a distant dream, with few avenues for progress in her community. In November 2017, however, a ray of hope appeared when she heard that a Sakhiyon Ki Baadi (SKB) center was going to be established in her nearby village, Talabfala. The program was looking for a *Daksha*, and as SKB prioritized women's empowerment, Sushila saw an opportunity. Despite the lack of highly educated candidates in the region, she met the basic criteria of having completed 12th grade and decided to give it a try.

Sushila interviewed for the position and was selected as the Daksha of the Talabfala SKB center in Devak Mata cluster of Chotisadri block. She received orientation, conducted a baseline survey, and officially opened the center. Her commitment to the children and the community quickly became evident as she poured her energy into ensuring the center's success. Alongside running the center, she also resumed her own education, eventually completing her STC

CHALLENGES FACED:

In 2020, due to her dedication and the progress she made at her center, Sushila was promoted to the position of Cluster Head for the Satola cluster. This role came with new challenges, the most significant being daily visits to different SKB centers across the cluster. Sushila had no vehicle and didn't know how to ride one. For most people, especially in urban areas, this might seem like a minor inconvenience. However, for Sushila, who hailed from a tribal region where women were generally confined to household chores, it was a significant hurdle.

Instead of being daunted, she took a bold step: Sushila took a loan of Rs. 1,03,000 and purchased a scooty. It was a huge amount for her family and community, but Sushila saw it as an investment in her future. She learned to ride the scooty and gained the mobility necessary to visit her centers regularly. This decision not only enhanced her ability to perform her duties effectively but also marked a turning point in her confidence and independence.

INTERVENTION/ACTIVITIES:

Sushila's work at the SKB center and her role as a Cluster Head showcased her strong leadership skills. She employed creative teaching methods using Teaching Learning Materials (TLMs) and engaged the children in activities that made learning fun and meaningful. As a result, many children who had dropped out of formal education or never attended school began to show interest in learning. Sushila helped raise their educational levels and eventually mainstreamed them into formal schools.

Her work was recognized and appreciated by the community, which began to support her endeavors. She became an important figure in promoting girls' education in her region, and her personal achievements inspired other women to step outside the limitations of their traditional roles.

OUTCOMES:

Today, Sushila Meena is an inspiration for her community. She is a symbol of resilience and empowerment, having overcome social and financial barriers to achieve her goals. Sushila's journey from a Daksha to a Cluster Head, and her bold decision to buy a scooty and learn to drive, has set an example for young girls and women in her region. She has proven that with determination and the right support, one can overcome even the toughest challenges.

Through the training and support she received from the IIFL Foundation and Gayatri Seva Sansthan, Sushila's confidence and skills have flourished. She credits the Daksha training for boosting her ability to manage both her centers and the responsibilities that came with her promotion. Sushila continues to uplift and inspire others, and her family and community take immense pride in her accomplishments.

Sushila thanks IIFL Foundation and Gayatri Seva Sansthan for providing her with the opportunity to grow and the unyielding support that helped her transform her life.

GOOD QUALITY IMAGE: - 3-4 IMAGES (Attach below)



