

# IMPACT STORIES FORMAT

<b>Story Title</b>	Empowerment Beyond Disability: The Journey of Jagdish Meena
<b>Date</b>	03/10/2024
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<b>Name of partner Organization</b>	Gayatri Seva Sansthan
<b>Name of Daksha/Daksh</b>	Jagdish Meena
<b>Name of SKB centre</b>	Dhunitalab Fala
<b>Cluster</b>	Piladhar
<b>Block</b>	Sarada
<b>District</b>	Salumber

## BACKGROUND/CONTEXT:

Jagdish Meena, a 27-year-old resident of Red Gudiya village in Veerpura Panchayat, Sarada Block, has demonstrated remarkable resilience and determination in overcoming the odds as a person with a physical disability. Living in an isolated, mountainous region surrounded by water, the local community had little to no awareness about the importance of education. Children in the village primarily engaged in fishing and poultry farming, with no access to formal education.

Despite his disability — Jagdish is physically challenged with a paralyzed leg — he embarked on a mission to bring education to this remote village. His passion for learning and desire to contribute to his community led him to pursue his B.A. degree, even amidst financial hardships and a struggling household.

## CHALLENGES FACED:

Jagdish faced several personal challenges as a disabled individual living in rural area. His physical disability, with one leg paralyzed, made mobility extremely difficult in the mountainous terrain and isolated environment of Red Gudiya. Navigating through uneven, water-surrounded areas to reach households and interact with community members was a daily struggle. The lack of accessible infrastructure for people with disabilities in the village only compounded his mobility issues, making even basic tasks harder. Additionally, living in a community where disability is often stigmatized, Jagdish had to overcome societal perceptions and biases about his capabilities.

Alongside these personal hurdles, educational challenges posed further difficulties for Jagdish. The village had very limited awareness of the importance of education, with most children focused on fishing, poultry farming, or household tasks. Convincing the community to prioritize education was a significant challenge. Jagdish also had to balance his own desire for learning while managing his

responsibilities as an instructor at the education center. With little income and his family's difficult financial situation, continuing his B.A. degree was a constant challenge, as he juggled limited resources for both his own studies and his role as an educator for the children.

### **INTERVENTION/ACTIVITIES:**

Determined to make a difference, Jagdish conducted a survey of the village to assess the needs and perceptions of education among the villagers. Through persistent awareness efforts, he convinced the community of the importance of education for their children. Following the community meetings, he successfully established a Sakhiyon Ki Badi (SKB) center — an initiative aimed at promoting girls' education.

At the SKB center, Jagdish provides daily education to the village children, serving as their instructor and mentor. Despite his physical disability, he diligently runs the center, creating a safe and nurturing environment for the children to learn and grow.

### **OUTCOMES:**

Jagdish's efforts in running the Sakhiyon Ki Badi (SKB) center have not only transformed the educational landscape of Red Gudiya village but also significantly changed his personal and social circumstances. As a disabled person, managing and successfully operating the education center has helped him become financially independent. By earning a steady income from his work as an instructor, Jagdish is now able to support his own educational pursuits and alleviate some of the financial pressures on his family.

In addition to financial empowerment, Jagdish's role as an educator has changed the way the community views him. Initially perceived as limited by his disability, Jagdish is now respected and admired for his leadership, dedication, and contributions to the village. His persistence in bringing education to the children and his visible efforts have helped shift the villagers' outlook towards disability, recognizing that physical limitations do not define a person's ability to make a meaningful impact. Villagers who once dismissed his potential now actively support his work, and the community's involvement in the center's activities has grown substantially.

Moreover, Jagdish has experienced greater social inclusion. His work has allowed him to build stronger relationships within the village, creating a sense of belonging that was previously absent. By leading the SKB center, Jagdish has gained new opportunities for personal growth, including the confidence to continue his B.A. degree while balancing his responsibilities. This newfound inclusion and recognition have been empowering for Jagdish, providing him not only with economic stability but also with a platform to challenge societal stereotypes around disability.

Ultimately, this project has enabled Jagdish to overcome both the physical and societal barriers associated with his disability, empowering him to become a changemaker in his community. His journey highlights how access to opportunities and support can lead to both individual and communal transformation, proving that disability is not a limitation to achieving social and educational progress.

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



