



# ACHIEVING INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT through COMMUNITY-BASED REHABILITATION

Success Stories

**Kapilvastu**



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For those institutions and government agencies that have recently adopted a disability-inclusive approach to service delivery, we hereby acknowledge your genuine support and kind consideration. Together we can continue to inspire other people with disabilities and concerned institutions to provide inclusive services to all.

## **Ramsharan Raidas**

Executive Director

Dalit Social Development Centre, Kapilvastu



## Journey from Bed to School

Eight-year-old Suraj\* has a physical disability. He suffered a stroke that affected his body and limbs, making him unable to walk and speak. He lives in Sultanpur, kapilvastu District. Due to illiteracy and poor financial condition, his family could not afford treatment for Suraj. As a result, he could not read, walk, eat, or even sleep freely. As he got older, his problems were getting worse. Due to his condition, he was compelled to sleep in his bed all day long every single day.

Although his family was worried about his condition never did they expected him to recover. "We did not know that our child had a disability, and we did not expect him to recover as well," shared Bhagwandas Yadav, Suraj's grandfather.

Gradually, his grandfather got involved in the disability programmes and became aware of his grandson's disability. He started to participate in groups formed by the Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) Project in Yashodhara Village in partnership with UMN and partner Dalit Social Development Centre (DSDC). Realising Suraj's disability, he told the project staff about his grandson's situation and hoped his condition would improve with medical treatment. With the advice of the project staff, he also made a disability identity card for his grandson from the rural municipality. The project sent his grandson Suraj to Hospital and Rehabilitation Centre of Disabled Children (HRDC) Butwal for the treatment. Even after his treatment, he had to exercise regularly and visit the doctor from time to time. The project provided the CBR medical training to Suraj's parents and families of others like him. As per the training, he was provided with regular exercises by his family which they are continuing. Eventually, improvement in Suraj's condition was clearly visible.

Now Suraj has been able to walk by himself. He has also been able to clearly communicate with his family and getting their love and support. He studies in Grade 2 in the village school. The neighbours who hated him for his disability in the past thought it was a result of his pre-existing sin, but their outlook has been changing now. Suraj enjoys playing and chatting with his friends.

"For me, the greatest achievement is getting my grandson's life back once again. Disability can happen to anyone that is why no one should be despised and hated," shared Bhagwandas. Suraj and his family are now happy with this positive change.



\* Name changed

## Remarkable Journey for Independence

"When I was eight years old, I got injured when a wall fell on my leg while I was demolishing a mouse house on the wall. I was treated with medicine but did not recover completely. Gradually, my leg became dry, and I could not walk or work like other people. Due to my condition my family did not want me to study. My neighbours disrespected me and made fun of my condition," shared Shiva Prasad Mishra, 53, from Mudila in Kapilvastu District.

He continued, "But I started reading. I used to buy books with the financial help of my friends. Later, I earned money by teaching in the boarding school, and I continued my studies and passed ISC. But I was not able to get a good job nor was I thinking of doing any business at that time."

Mishra has two sons and three daughters. Due to the poor financial condition of the family and his disability, he was not able to improve his and his family's daily life. He was struggling to pay for the education and upbringing of his growing children. Seeing his disability, people in the community did not want to give him work. They constantly used to despise him because of his disability in the neighbourhood.



Mishra participated in the CBR Project when various public awareness programmes started. This project led capacity building and public awareness programmes for his community, which gradually changed his and his community's perspective. The project provided financial assistance of NPR 25,000 (approx. USD 200) to improve his financial situation. He used that money to run a retail store at his home. Gradually he began to get benefits from his shop. He started earning NPR 600 (approx. USD 5) daily from the shop. Due to the improvement in his economic condition and the fact that he has a shop in the village, the number of people who despised him in the neighbourhood decreased. The project has been raising awareness among other people in the community about people of religious leaders and their rights regarding disability. Gradually, he was invited to the religious programmes in the community. Earlier they used to call him Lulo Langado (disabled) but now they call him Mishra Ji or Pandit Ji and Sau Ji. Many people in some societies started recognising him. Income from both sides has greatly improved his financial situation. It has become easier for him to raise his children. Now he has even bought a motorcycle. They are open to respecting him in the society. In the village, he is constantly busy with the work of worship and marriage, and it has become hard for him to have any free time at all. His financial condition has been greatly improved lately, and he is very happy to see the change in his life.



# A Life Changed by a Sewing Machine

Sabhu, 28, is a tailor and lives in Kapilvastu District. When he was five, he was diagnosed with polio and due to this, his leg was badly affected which further impacted his daily life activities like walking. This situation caused stress among his family members. His family tried to send him to school and provide him with quality education. But the physical infrastructure of the school he attended was not disability friendly. At school, teachers and peers used to tease him with different inappropriate nicknames, and he was forced to tolerate discrimination in academic and extracurricular activities as he was physically weak and different from other students. So Sabhu decided to drop out of school while he was in Grade 6. Due to illiteracy and poor physical condition, he could not find any work in the community and was compelled to move to India to improve his financial condition.

When Sabhu returned home from India, he had the opportunity to participate in public awareness programmes run by UMN's CBR Project, in partnership with DSDC. By participating in various training, interaction, meetings, and seminars, he learned a lot about disability. He understood that he was no different from other people because of his disability and decided to stay in Nepal as people with disability can also do something.

To make his dream come true, the CBR Project helped him to start a business worth NPR 25,000 (approx. USD 200). For a few months, he ran a retail store with that money. But with the COVID lockdown, his shop was closed. But with the money saved from the retail shop, he bought a sewing machine and started a tailor business. He had learned the skill of sewing while he was in India, so he did not have to take any more new skills in this job. His sewing business flourished, and his financial condition improved a lot. Now he is able to save NPR 25,000 (approx. USD 200) per month.

Sabhu is now married and has two children. The family needs are easily handled. He is taking very good care of his wife and his children. Nowadays he has recruited a new employee as a helper. He is proud that his financial situation has improved, and he has been able to lead a dignified life in the community.





## A Network to Ensure Disability Rights

Yashodhara Rural Municipality in the southern part of Kapilvastu is a less developed municipality. From 2016 to 2022, CBR Project was implemented in Wards- 4, 5, 6, and 7 of this municipality in partnership with UMN and DSDC. The social and economic condition of people with disabilities and their families is poor in this region which borders India. Stakeholders such as the local government and its regional branches, sectors such as health, education, employment, and social security have less interest in people with disabilities, and those with disabilities also had less capacity and unity among themselves.

The CBR Project facilitated the formation of groups of people with disabilities in the area. Various programmes at the community level on the rights of people with disabilities, including pieces of training, advocacy, coordination, and cooperation to develop the capacity of the group members was conducted. In 2016, the project formed a rural municipality level network to work for people with disabilities, facilitating capacity building for its members. The project provided them with various training, public awareness activities, search, and operation of capacity-building resources for social inclusion, and materials like tables and chairs were also provided for the organisation's office. Gradually, the members of the network developed their capacity and were becoming integrated as well.

At present, this municipality-level network has been developed as an organisation. They have started working institutionally by registering the name of the inclusive disability organisation at Yashodhara Rural Municipality, District Administration Office, Kapilvastu, and Social Welfare Council. Eleven working committees including Dalit women have been formed to advocate on the issues of disability in this organisation and to spread public awareness about the rights of people with disabilities. Institutionally, they have consistently advocated for the rights of people with disabilities with the local government and other stakeholders. As a result, in the year 2078/79 they have been able to bring the budget of NPR 300,000 (approx. USD 2,401). Hamidullah Musalman, Chairman of the organisation, said that the organisation has moved ahead with the aim of building an inclusive society for all by being institutionally strong by coordinating with other local organisations. He further shared that he hopes to get continuous advice, suggestions, and support from the other community people and other stakeholders to continue working in the field of disability.



## Off to School Now

Sharad\* is now nine-year-old now. He lives in Kapilvastu District with his six family members. He studies in Grade 3. When he was 2, he had a fever after which he faced a problem of paralysis that affected his right hand and left foot. He was treated for fever and later it caused cerebral palsy. Back then, the family was convinced that traditional healer might be the right person to treat him and were thinking of taking him there.

In the meantime, Social Mobiliser (SM) of UMN's CBR Project met his aunt when he was going to conduct meetings of the ward level disability committee. During the meeting, his aunt shared Sharad's problem. Later, SM Jit Narayan examined him. After verifying the case, Sharad was sent to HRDC in Kathmandu for further treatment. He got an operation on his foot and was provided a special footwear.

After coming home, he began to just roam in the village with his friends until one year. Sharad didn't want to go to school, and his parents didn't send him because of his disability. But, after frequent visits to his parents and counselling, he is now going to school and improving. He also received educational materials from UMN's partner DSDC. His parents are happy with his day-to-day improvement in his activities of daily living.

Sharad's mother had raised concerns that her daughters had gone to school, but her son did not go to school. She shares, "I was worried because my son had a disability, but now I am happy to see my son go to school. I am thankful to DSDC."



\* Name changed

## Setting an Example

Krishnawati Tiwari, 56, has a physical disability. But she was not born with a disability. At the age of 38, she was diagnosed with thyroid disease which affected her hands and feet. The virus has swollen her limbs and made it difficult for her to walk. For 18 years, she was bedridden without any treatment, and her condition continued to deteriorate. In such a situation, she was despised at home and in the society. She had to rely on her family for everything from going to the toilet to every small activity, but her husband always supported and took care of her which made her painful life much easier.

Her husband heard about the disability programme in his ward. He wanted his wife to get involved in that programme so that she could get confidence from coming out of her comfort zone. But he felt ashamed and anxious because he was afraid of the people in his community. It was challenging for a woman with disability to participate in such programmes. However, he took his wife with him and joined the orientation programme. Krishnawati liked the programme and talked about disability with self-confidence. This was her first time sharing her thoughts happily with the group. On the day of the orientation programme, her husband Trijogi Narayan Tiwari shared that it has become a life-changing event for his wife. After the event, project staff identified Krishna's illness and provided regular physiotherapy at home. During the treatment, her husband was very supportive. After three years of regular therapy, she is able to walk alone with the help of a walker. She is able to do the daily chores, such as cooking, cleaning, and washing clothes. Her physical condition was improving. She wanted to be independent by doing whatever business she could because of her physical condition. The project provided financial support to make her idea come to a reality.

She started a grocery store. She was scared because the shop was very challenging to run as a woman with a disability. But, with confidence, she opened a shop at home. "I am happy to show that people with disabilities can do anything if given the opportunity," shared Krishnawati. She saves around NPR 8000 to Rs 9000 monthly (approx. USD 64 to 72). As a woman with a disability in a patriarchal society, she set an example for women like her and also for women with able bodies. Krishnawati is also a member of the Swavalamban group and has been regularly participating in various training, meetings, and programmes. She is actively speaking out for people with disabilities and women in her community.



## Change for the Better

Radheshyam Bishwakarma, 42, from Bhasahiya of Kapilvastu District, has a physical disability. Living in a joint family of 25, Radheshyam's financial situation was very poor. He went to Mumbai, India for work to meet the financial needs of his family. But unfortunately, while working, he fell from a building and had broken his spine. He was treated at various hospitals but did not recover. Due to his physical disability, the society's attitude towards him was negative. He was unable to do any work. When he had to spend endless days laying in the bed doing nothing at home, they use to take him as a burden. He felt inferior.

The CBR Project was launched in 2016. Through this project, Radheshyam found the opportunity to participate in various activities related to disability. By participating in various training and capacity development programmes on disability, he was able to understand himself and his abilities. The project taught him physical exercises such as walking with the help of a walker, and he also started to stand and slowly walk with a stick after exercising regularly.

The Pet Cart Project run by UMN helped him to facilitate his daily activities. With the help of the Pet Cart, he was able to carry out his daily activities and move around easily.

His daily activities improved, and he wanted to become independent. To fulfil his dream, he started a shop with the help of NPR 20,000 (approx. USD 160) to run a retail store for income from the project. In a short time, he started earning money from the shop and even saved the shop's profit. As his financial situation improved, the attitude of his family and community towards him changed. He started participating more socially. Radheshyam is now working hard to run his shop. He is trying to lift the financial burden off his family and is sending his children to school. He is happy with the change and improvement in his life.

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## A New Life

Eight-year-old Hassan\* was born with cerebral palsy in Kapilvastu District. Born with a disability in a Muslim community meant that many people believed this was a curse. For six years he stayed at home doing nothing but lying on his bed. Eventually his grandmother found out about the possibility for treatment through a UMN-supported project and they got him help. This changed Hassan's future.

Hassan had difficulties speaking or moving. His grandmother didn't believe her grandson would ever be able to move, walk or do any daily living activities. The family also feared that if he went outside of the home his condition would get worse. So Hassan spent his days lying on his bed in his home with his grandmother.

One day Hassan's grandmother found out about possible treatment for her grandson from someone in a mother's group. His grandmother then contacted the social mobiliser of DSDC and requested support.

After going through the process to verify the case, Hassan was referred to HRDC Butwal for further treatment. Hassan started doing physiotherapy exercises and was given a walker with shoes to help him walk. After he received physiotherapy, Hassan was more mobile – he was able to move around in his room and the wider community. Before he used to stay in bed all day and night, what a change! He's also able to have a social life now and plays with friends.

With the regular facilitation of the social mobiliser, Hassan receives the disability cards and gets NPR 600 (approx. USD 5) each month.

Hassan's family and community are amazed to see these changes in his life. His grandmother expresses her happiness, "We used to take our grandson as a curse and burden, but now we see him as a blessing," she says. "We get respect from the community and are invited to different programmes to represent him. My voice is heard because of him, and I am proud to say that I'm Hassan's grandmother." Hassan's parents and grandmother are grateful to the supporting organisations that have helped him.

Hassan however no longer goes to school as it's situated far away. His activities of daily living is improving.

\* Name changed



## Leading with Confidence

Radhika Badhai, 35, is from Kapilvastu District. Her husband has a physical disability which happened after he got in a car accident where he injured his legs which eventually caused a disability. She has a family of seven members including her three daughters and two sons. They belong to the squatter family with poor financial background. As there was physical disability in the family, she was not invited to do the household chores in the community and her children were deprived of education, so their situation was very sensitive. They faced discrimination due to her husband's critical condition, all the family responsibilities including finances came on her shoulders. Radhika was worried about her family. She had no self-confidence regarding how to participate in social programmes, how to put her thoughts into it etc. She was deprived of the opportunity to join the group committee.

She started working as a member of the Siddhartha Disability Committee in Yashodhara under the CBR Project run by UMN in partnership with DSDC. After that, she participated in civic training, capacity building for people with disability, group mobilisation training, disability awareness training, discrimination, and reduction of greed. She is now working as a social leader too, advocates for disability and coordinates with the stakeholders. For three years she had worked as a treasurer at a school. Now she is chairing the Siddhartha Disability Committee under the leadership of a person with disabilities. She also sends her children to school.

Radhika shares, "I now believe that I can do something. By empowering women in the society to be aware of violence against women and disability rights, I am confident that I can do something."



# Disability-Friendly Community School

Jagannath School is in Kopwa of Kapilvastu District. There was no school for children with disability here. Due to the absolute damage to the road to school, students had to reach school through the field, and due to this miserable condition of the school environment, children with disabilities were forced to stay out of school. During the month of the rainy season, the school road became worse for small children to walk on as it looked like a river. Therefore, the landlords around the school were not in favour of giving away their land for the road to school.

Under the CBR Project, a training on inclusive education and disability-friendly school building was provided. Tilak Ram Lohar, the school's headmaster talked about the condition of the road of their school. With the initiative of the CBR Project, a meeting of the ward chairperson was held for building a disability-friendly structure in the school. With the permission of the school, the construction of a disability-friendly structure was then started. With the joint initiative of the school, parents, CBR Project, and ward office, the physical infrastructure of Kopwa School has become disability friendly.

Although no such wheelchair users have been enrolled in the school so far, the headmaster and the management committee shared that in the future, children with physical disabilities will be welcomed by the physical infrastructure.



## Becoming Self-reliant

Ramdhani lives in Suthauli of Kapilvastu District which is situated at the border of India and Nepal. The social and economic condition of the people living here is deplorable. He worked hard in other's houses to manage expenses for everyday food. When there was no wage work, he took loans for food. Ramdhani faced humiliation due to his disability in the society. His family was living at a landlord's house. He has a hearing disability, and his father also has a physical disability. So, he was deprived of education. Due to his disability, he was unable to put forwards his words and did not have access to the decision-making process. From his early days, Ramdhani had a knack for repairing bicycles and was very interested to work as a mechanic. But when the country was on lockdown due to the COVID pandemic, his family was in a state of starvation after he lost his job and could not get any loans.

The social operation of the CBR Project got information about Ramdhani through the office of the disability committee. During the face-to-face meeting, he got selected for running a business as a part of the project to improve the living condition of the economically weaker during the second wave of COVID. He then started his business of bicycle maintenance after receiving the grant of NPR 18,000 (approx. USD 144) from that project.

Initially few people used to come to his repair shop but now the number of customers has increased. He is earning NPR 800 (approx. USD 6) a day from the shop. He no longer has to take loans from anyone for medical treatment and food for his family. His family also no longer stays in the landlord's house and have rented a room for themselves and are working for wage independently in other places as well. Socially, his self-esteem has also improved. Using the skills he has, he has also started repairing electric fans. He is now free to decide where to spend his income and has also increased his contact with other people. "The support from the organisation has totally changed me and my family's life," shared Ramdhani.





## Accessing Her Civil Rights

Janmawati, 30, is a woman with visual impairment. She lives in Loharaili of Kapilvastu District with her nine family members. Her husband remarried when she had no children for many years. After his second marriage, her husband neglected her. Coincidentally, she also gave birth to a daughter. Her family however did not pay much attention for the upbringing of her child because of her disability. Not only that, Janmawati could not even get the identity card, birth certificate, citizenship, disability identity card, and marriage certificate as she had the right to as a Nepali citizen. Due to this, she was not able to exercise her due citizens' rights. Because of her disability, neighbourhood people used to tease and despised her.

After participating in various programmes and seminars under the CBR Project, Janmawati learned about the rights of women, disability identity cards, and services provided to people with disabilities. She requested her husband to register their marriage and get her citizenship. But she was denied from getting her certificates. After the denial, she consulted with the CBR Project staff. After counselling, she mentioned the issue of marriage registration and citizenship to the judicial committee of Yasodhara. A discussion was held with her husband in the presence of women's rights activists and disability rights activists. After she was denied from getting citizenship, she filed a complaint with the district court office seeking the right to citizenship. After that, finally her husband has made her citizenship card and the disability identity card. After receiving social security allowance from the rural municipality, Janmawati is now living a much happier life as compared to earlier.

Janmawati shares, "I made a disability identity card because of which I am getting services and facilities which has made my daily life easier."

