



Pleasant feeling & Comfort

Born in a small village at Nashik, young Shwetika whose family was into agricultural farming, came in search of higher opportunities in the city of Mumbai. With her parents and 4 siblings, Shwetika started staying at Ramabai Sahakar Nagar. Her father being the only earning member of the family, Shwetika's mother also started working as a housemaid to share in the growing expenses of staying in the city.

During the same time, her father got habitual to alcohol and seeing the growing problems of the family, Shwetika left her studies halfway and started earning for her family's survival. Within a few years, her relatives got her married at an early age and she shifted to Rupadevi pada, Thane with her husband, Santosh Gaikwad.

Things didn't change for good, for Shwetika had to struggle even after her marriage. The first few years went well but life did take a dangerous turn. Shwetika got infected with malaria while she was pregnant. She got recovered through medication but the after-effects were faced by her new born baby, Yash. In his 6th month, Yash started getting sick. High fever affected his brain and due to the infection, the left side of his body got paralytic.

Shwetika and Santosh tried their best in recovering Yash. While the doctors suggested a regular physiotherapist, the family couldn't afford it and normal massages and exercises didn't help much. Due to the trauma and stressful situation at home, Santosh started getting seizures (fits) and the medical expenses multiplied. Being a casual labour and due to his medical condition, Santosh couldn't get regular work. Finances were a major concern for the family.

Not having a toilet at home added to the worries. Unable to take Yash to the community toilet, he had to defecate at home on either a paper or plastic sheet. This eventually spread a lot of odour and infections at home. Yash and his sister were often victim to infectious diseases.

This impacted Shwetika's health too since she couldn't go to the community toilet leaving the children alone. She had to hold her stools until her husband got back home. Her frustration often spoke, **“My house smells bad all the time. I feel so stressed at times that I don't feel like staying at home but being a mother, I have responsibilities towards my children which I cannot deny”**.

While this went on for years until Shelter Associates came to the settlement with the 'One Home One Toilet' initiative. During one of the days when the city municipal workers were working on the drainage line, Shwetika got to know about this initiative that facilitates individual toilet to the needy families by providing the toilet construction materials free of cost. Shwetika was keen on having a toilet but couldn't afford even the construction cost. Understanding her situation, Shelter Associates came forward and provided complete financial support to the family.

This came as a god given gift for Shwetika and her family who have got the support at the right time. Shwetika could now take care of the house and herself along with her children. The house now feels pleasant and the stress & frustration has vanished totally, for which Shwetika & Santosh thanks Shelter Associates immensely.



Shwetika Gaikwad with her children

