



# ONE for MANY!

Sunita Vakode, resident of Bhimnagar in Panvel at the age of 40 lives all by herself. Her destiny was such that her husband, an alcoholic passed away 20 years ago. Being subjected to abuse by her in-laws', she gave up and moved out of that house. She came here as she had a strong backing from her parents who also stayed in this settlement, however she chose to stay independently and her mother would come to stay with her every night to accompany her.

Sunita earns a living by undertaking domestic chores in nearby apartments but that fails to keep her financially sound. To add to this, she has been living with a major apprehension. As Bhimnagar is located on CIDCO land, this community has always been threatened to be evicted and hence they live with a fear. Considering this scenario, families have their constructed of temporary materials like tin sheets and tarpauline, as they are sooner or later going to be evicted.

For years this community has lacked an access to a toilet facility. Very recently, they got one toilet constructed on a temporary basis. There is one 'Sulabh Shouchalaya' but that is located far away from the settlement and hence very inconvenient. Staying alone, and having noone to accompany her to defecate in the open for years made her compromise on her dietary intake. She would be scared to go alone in the night or early mornings in the open before sunrise. The worst situations would arise during monsoons when there would be rodents and insects making the place very unhygienic and unsafe.

Shelter Associates came to her rescue and eased her stress around these challenges. She got rid of one of her tin sheet walls and got it constructed along with the toilet. She is elated now as this toilet is a blessing for her. With this, her sister's family too has moved in with her and her nieces and nephews do not need to struggle with access to such a basic need!



Sunita and her household toilet

