



Battle against societal pressures!

Kashibai Bhupal Mane was only 30 years old when her husband died and left her with a 5-year-old girl child in her lap. Kashibai undertook domestic chores in the homes nearby to allow her to earn her daily bread. Although she had to face multiple challenges, she continued to work hard to ensure a bright and secured future for her daughter.

She has been living in Awachit Nagar, Kolhapur for 70 years now. Owing to the financially poor condition of her in-laws and her own family, she lacked any kind of support and she was forced to leave her in-laws' house too. She found an unclaimed house and now she has been living in that house for almost 65 years. She was backed by a very strong passion to get her daughter educated which would then make them financially sound and happy.

Hot Summers, heavy monsoons, eating once in a day or sometimes sleeping without even eating anything, were the conditions Kashibai and Shobha (her daughter) were facing. Even at such difficult times, Shobha studied till her 10th grade and successfully passed.

In due course of time, Kashibai's health started to deteriorate due to her increasing mental and physical pressure. It was very hard to live in that house, during heavy rains the roof of their house would fly away with the wind. Hence, they had to be awake in those rainy and stormy nights.

“There is no one to take care of my young daughter after my death”, these kind of thoughts often troubled Kashibai. Therefore, she decided to get Shobha married as soon as possible. Whenever Kashibai shared this with Shobha, Shobha would always put forth a condition, “If I ever get married, my husband will live with me here in this house, I am not going to leave you alone”.

Nonetheless Kashibai started her lookout for a groom for Shobha, who would fit in her terms. She found a guy and got Shobha married to him. They both started living together with Kashibai. Shobha's husband was a painter, he had a house with two rooms and his family included his parents and siblings. Manikrao (Shobha's husband) bravely took the decision of living with Shobha and her mother. A groom living in his in-laws' house is typically looked down upon and not accepted in the Indian culture, tradition and society. But Manik didn't care about societal pressures and such norms and accepted living at his in law's house.

Initially, all the people in the slum used to resort to open defecation, after a few years with a community toilet block having come up, some of them started to use the community toilet block (CTB).

Many households had started to construct household toilets. However, Kashibai and her family would always go out in the open or at times use the CTB. Even Shobha's in-laws don't have a household toilet. Shobha's childhood and adulthood was spent in using to the CTB. Shobha along with her husband Manikrao and their fifteen year old daughter were living with Kashibai in that one room house. In this poor condition, poor Kashibai was affected by partial paralysis.



Kashibai's house

For over a year now, Kashibai has been bed ridden with no movements. Shobha tai takes care of her mother in bed by catering to needs in bed including cleaning all the waste from the bed as that is where she urinates and defecates.

Due to all these conditions, the house has become very filthy and unhygienic, yet Manik and Shobha are facing the situation and taking care of Kashibai. Unable to see Kashibai in this condition, they considered constructing a household toilet but due to all their monthly expenses towards medication, domestic needs and their daughter's education, this seemed impossible.

When they heard about SA's OHOT intervention which was being implemented in a slum nearby, they were very happy. They heard that this organization was giving the construction material at the door-step. This would enable them to construct a toilet at a much less expense and yet have the much needed facility in their home.

Keeping in mind, Kashibai's condition and the security of their growing daughter, they decided to avail a loan and got their toilet constructed.



Cooking area in their small house (above) and toilet facilitated (below)

They said, "we are grateful to SA, for realising our problems and providing us a solution for the same. This has not only been a problem for us but also for most of the community residents, who have to undergo such challenging times due to the absence of a household toilet. We, now can proudly say that we use our own toilet only because of Shelter Associates, Thank You!".



Kashibai in her paralysed state