



Behind the Wheel of Resilience: Yasmeen's Story of Overcoming Adversity

"When a person walks out into society, they face many obstacles; it is better to go out and earn by driving an e-rickshaw with hard work than die of hunger sitting at home."

Yasmeen, a resident of Sundar village, Mirzapur, faced adversity early in life when she lost her father, leaving behind six siblings and a family-run grocery store. Unfortunately, the grocery store failed to generate enough revenue and had to close, plunging the family into financial trouble. This had an impact on the family's daily lives as well as Yasmeen and her siblings' schooling, as none of them were able to complete their studies. Tragically, Yasmeen's mother also passed away, leaving her grappling with the challenges of providing for her three sisters and two brothers.



With her education cut short, Yasmeen turned to tailoring to sustain herself and her siblings.

However, she soon realized that this job involved significant effort and did not pay well. Consequently, she decided to discontinue her tailoring business. At this point, only one of her brothers covered the family's expenses.

Yasmeen learned about the Safe Mobility project, supported by the Work4Progress project, a joint initiative of Development Alternatives, la Caixa Foundation, and Fundación ISS that focuses on creating dignified and meaningful livelihood opportunities for marginalized women and youth in rural India through enterprise development. Embracing the prospect of driving an e-rickshaw, she participated in a three-day e-rickshaw training session and learned how to operate an e-rickshaw. Despite initial resistance from her older siblings, she saved money, took a loan of Rs. 1 lakh and purchased an e-rickshaw last February. She currently earns Rs 15,000 monthly and invests in batteries for her e-rickshaw after paying the monthly installment.

Now, she spends 3-4 hours every morning driving the e-rickshaw and provides transportation services to students through her connections with local schools. Her newfound income not only sustains her family but also allows her the freedom to pursue additional ventures. She also manages a beauty salon, further diversifying her sources of income. The financial stability gained from her efforts has helped her overcome obstacles, including an expense due to her brother's accident, which incurred a cost of 15-16 lakhs.

Looking ahead, Yasmeen envisions purchasing another e-rickshaw. She plans to provide her brother with the means to drive his own e-rickshaw, further contributing to the family's prosperity. Her journey shows the strength that emerges from adversity and the power of seizing opportunities for a brighter future.