



JAVED ABIDI FELLOWSHIP

**“DON’T JUDGE ME BY MY
SUCCESS, JUDGE ME BY HOW
MANY TIMES I FELL DOWN
AND GOT BACK UP AGAIN”**



**NCPEDP -
JAVED ABIDI
FELLOWSHIP**

Prepared by
KRISHNA YADAV

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BACKGROUND

Born in a quaint district in Chhattisgarh with a modest population of around 5000, she embarked on her educational journey at a government school. Her father, driven by dreams of a brighter future for her, initially sought to enroll her in a private institution. However, the conservative whispers of the village swayed his decision, and she continued her studies at the local government school. Despite her disability, she was embraced by her peers, never once feeling the sting of discrimination. She flourished academically, completing her education there until 10th grade. With a burgeoning passion for the arts, she set her sights on Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya. Her academic prowess shone through as she aced the entrance exams and secured a place in this esteemed institution. The transition brought her into a world with better facilities and a more studious environment. From a young age, she exuded independence. Her father, with unwavering determination, taught her to walk with the aid of a stick, ensuring she could attend school unaided. The school's facilities, however, were a stark contrast to her spirit. The muddy roads and lack of proper toilets posed significant challenges. When she was in 3rd grade, she finally received a tricycle after overcoming numerous obstacles. Prior to this, walking to school was an arduous journey filled with frequent falls and skinned knees. Her sister's companionship provided solace, though she often pondered why her father insisted on such independence despite her disability. Now, she understands it was a lesson in resilience.

Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya, with its superior amenities, offered a separate toilet for PwDs. Initially, this felt like exclusion, but she soon appreciated the convenience it provided. After 12th grade, she aspired to join BHU, but delayed results led her to Guru Ghasidas University in Bilaspur instead. Nestled among dense forests, the university's inefficient facilities presented daily struggles. Her tricycle often got stuck, necessitating frequent assistance from her peers. The infrastructure was outdated, and the hostel's scattered facilities made her perpetually dependent on others.

A 30-minute trek to the library was a daily testament to her perseverance. At that time, her understanding of disability rights was rudimentary. She was unaware of her entitlement to demand basic accessibility and proper infrastructure. The transfer of a supportive female peon to another department, replaced by a male counterpart, created discomfort. Her request to the HOD for the female peon's return was met with disdain. He belittled her concerns, recounting his past assistance and painting her as ungrateful. Her classmates sided with him, leaving her heartbroken and isolated. This emotional desertion extended to her family, plunging her into despair and depression. Despite the darkness, she endured, completing her end semester exams by sheer willpower. Returning home for the holidays offered no relief, as she felt like a pariah. Yet, in May, she faced her NEET exams with little hope. Miraculously, she triumphed, passing with flying colors. Her teacher's elation was marked by the gift of a pen, a symbol of her hard-earned victory. Time became her healer as she slowly let go of past wounds and embraced forgiveness.

Graduating with a gold medal, she applied to Allahabad University and JNU for her Masters and PhD. During the COVID-19 pandemic, a serendipitous advertisement for a Fellowship program on NDTV caught her eye. Though she discussed it with her family, she kept her application a secret, fearing rejection. Procrastination gripped her until her sister, her steadfast motivator, urged her to take the plunge. Even in the fellowship, she faced formidable challenges, grappling with language and technological barriers. Her chosen research topic aimed at designing interventions to support children with disabilities at the primary level, fostering inclusive education. Currently, her advocacy is focused on developing accessible toilets for children with disabilities, a testament to her enduring commitment to creating a more inclusive world.

PROGRESS OVERVIEW

NOVEMBER 2021 TO APRIL 2022

- Krishna conducted field visits to various district villages around where she lived and met several Children with Disabilities to gain comprehensive knowledge of the issues they are facing and what could be done to tackle them.
- She did a case study on a child with disability, Lakshmi. She already had a Disability Certificate but did not have access to assistive devices.
- Krishna organized awareness training regarding RPWD Act 2016 in Gram Panchayat Kukda on 16th April 2022 in collaboration with local residents in which 32 people participated. People of Jamdi village of Jaijaipur block also participated in this program. By organizing this program, she personally learned that through such training, people can be made aware about disability. Such training programs are very important to build an inclusive society. There was a positive response from the people.
- Inspected the Government Primary School of the Gram Panchayat Godhna. There was a conversation with the teacher Mrs. Nankuniya Sahu Madam ji and Krishna got basic information regarding the children with disabilities and their education through questionnaires. The primary study of primary school Godhna says that there is a need to make the infrastructure and curriculum inclusive here.
- There was a community meeting of Divyang people in Kirtan Mandali Bhawan Bhathapara Godhna in which 16 Divyang people registered their presence. Three members of the handicapped development organization Pamgarh had also come. The objective of this program was to organize all the Divyangs of village Godhna and reorganize the group. Discussions took place regarding planning for organizing awareness programs regarding disability in Nawagarh area, as well as an appeal was made to contribute a minimum of Rs 10 per member for financial support to run the group.

- Meeting with Janpad Panchayat CEO Nawagarh Block on 4 April 2022. The purpose of the meeting was to make the CEO aware of the fellowship and its objective.
- Interviews were conducted as part of the primary survey. Following conclusions were drawn:
 - 1.The accessibility situation in schools is not satisfactory.
 - 2.There is a shortage of specially trained teachers.
 - 3.There is a lack of supplementary teaching materials for special children in schools.
 - 4.Parents are engaged in labor and farming, which prevents them from dedicating time to educate their children themselves.
 - 5.There is a lack of awareness about the rights of disabled children among both teachers and parents.

MAY 2022 TO OCTOBER 2022

- Cross Disability Training was organized in Gram Panchayat Godhna on 19th May 2022.After the successful completion of cross disability training, it was ranked in the local newspaper named "Tarun Path"
- Under the joint auspices of the Nishtak Jan Vikas Sangathan, Pamgarh and Kansa Project, Raipur, a meeting was organized on 28th September 2022 to promote employment for persons with disabilities and to provide them with a means of regular income. The event was attended by officials of the Nishtak Jan Vikas Sangathan, including Treasurer Mr. Bajrang Patel, President Mr. Manglu Dhivar, and Secretary Mr. Tularam Khare. State Coordinator of the Kansa Project, Mr. Rajesh Sharma, was also present. Members of women's groups from various villages attended the program as well.

- On October 13, 2022, with permission from the headmaster, Krishna organized World Sight Day at the Government New Primary School in Ganesh Mohalla, Gram Panchayat Godhna. The purpose of celebrating this day was to address the issue that, at the primary level, children often unknowingly damage their eyes due to a lack of awareness, which can lead to blindness. In India, around 20,000 people suffer from corneal blindness, and over 60% of these individuals are under the age of twelve.
- A district-level teacher training session was organized in Janjgir. This was a ten-day residential training program. Teachers from five development blocks, namely Nawagarh, Pamgarh, Akaltara, Baloda, and Bamhanidih, participated. The training was organized by Samagra Shiksha Janjgir-Champa. During the program, Krishna also delivered a lecture on the importance, objectives, and necessity of inclusive education.
- Krishna met with Panchayat Inspector Mr. Ratiram Shriwas at the Janpad Panchayat Nawagarh on 28th Oct 2022. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss assistive devices for Nisha Dhiwar and Mr. Lakshmi Prasad Kashyap. Nisha is a hearing-impaired student in the fourth grade. Lakshmi Prasad Kashyap is a young man with a disability whose old tricycle is in a dilapidated condition.
- Cross disability training was organized on 6th June 2022 to inform parents of children with disabilities about the RPwD aCT 2016 and the 21 types of disabilities.

NOVEMBER 2022 TO APRIL 2023

- Cross Disability Training was organized on November 20, 2022, on the occasion of World Children's Day in Gram Panchayat Godhna. The theme for this event was "Inclusive Childhood." Krishna informed the parents about the meaning of inclusive childhood and why World Children's Day is celebrated. It was emphasized that children with disabilities should be given the opportunity to participate in every sport and social activity.

- Meeting with Dev Seva Sanstha on 11th November 2022. Dev Seva Sansthan has been operating since 2001 in the village of Khokhra, Janjgir-Champa district, providing education for mentally challenged children. Currently, 18 mentally challenged children are studying here. The institution aims to improve their quality of life through training. Students from other states, such as Jharkhand, also come here to study.
- Inspection of Government Primary School in Lingwapara, Nawagarh to understand the status of inclusive education and the situation of special children. Krishna gathered general information about the school during the visit.
- Every year on December 12, Universal Health Coverage Day is observed worldwide to raise awareness about global health systems. At S.D. College, Nawagarh, Krishna organized an awareness program with the support of the teachers and staff. In the program, she highlighted that managing health is as crucial as managing finances for our future. By managing health financially, we can avoid economic crises in the future.
- On December 18, 2022, a Disability Day program was organized under Cross-Disability Training at the Panchayat Ghodna. Former District Panchayat Chairman Mr. Narendra Kaushik also participated. This was the first time the village celebrated Disability Day in this manner, with the participation of persons with disabilities and their guardians. The objective of the event was to address and reduce the inferiority complex associated with disability among persons with disabilities and their parents.
- Meeting with the Principal of Dev Seva Sansthan, Khokra (a special school for mentally challenged children). Dev Seva Sansthan is an institution where mentally challenged children receive education. This was her second visit to the institution. She informed the Principal about her research work. He explained that children with mental disabilities who cannot attend regular schools are admitted to their institution.

- On World Hearing Day i.e. 3rd March 2023, information on necessary precautions related to hearing was provided to the students of Janpad Primary School, Navagarh. Headmaster Mr. Santosh Kashyap also gave essential instructions to the children.
- The last academic training session of this term at the block level was organized to train teachers on inclusive education. On February 28 and March 1, 2023, training was provided on 21 types of disabilities and sign language. On February 28, 2023, World Rare Disease Day, Krishna provided information to teachers about rare diseases during the training session.
- Met with Panchayat Inspector Mr. Rati Ram Shriwas on 15th Feb 2023. The purpose of the meeting was to obtain data on registered persons with disabilities from the camp held for disability certificates and to gather information regarding assistive devices. Additionally, she sought information about ration cards for those persons with disabilities who want to get a ration card.
- During this period Krishna also wrote a case study on Pratish Kaushal, a 7 year old child with disability.

MAY 2023 TO OCTOBER 2023

- Meeting with DMC Mr. Rajkumar Tiwari at the District Education Officer's Office on 28th July 2023. During this meeting, she primarily raised the issue of the difficulties faced by children with disabilities in rural areas when trying to gain admission to regular schools.
- Cross Disability Training was organized on 21st July 2023. This meeting was held offline at the Drishti and Shravan Badhitharth School in Pamgarh. The purpose of this meeting was to raise awareness among people with disabilities about their rights in light of this session's election and to encourage them to stay organized. The goal is to conduct awareness programs at the rural level.

- She participated in a workshop organized by Ek Kadam Aur Foundation. It was conducted for the capacity building of visually impaired children. In this workshop, she shared the educational challenges faced by visually impaired children in regular schools, based on my fieldwork, to help them get enrolled in mainstream schools
- Krishna assisted parents in obtaining disability certificates for their children at the District Hospital, Janjgir-Champa. Shri Lakshminarayan Yadav and Mrs. Janki Devi Yadav have two daughters, Vaijayanti Yadav and Gungun Yadav. Both daughters are affected by cerebral palsy and intellectual disability. She had been consistently urging them to obtain disability certificates for the past year, and they finally agreed this year. Vaijayanti Yadav is now 17 years old, but her parents were not getting her certificate made. However, after repeated requests, they agreed. Vaijayanti Yadav's certificate has been issued.
- Visit to the Government Multi-Disability School on 5th July 2023. Her objective for this visit was to discuss the issues faced by children who are not thriving in general schools, particularly those with intellectual disabilities or multiple disabilities.
- Krishna met with ABEO Nawagarh, Mr. Sanjay Devangan, and informed him that in the data provided by the department, a child with a physical disability has been incorrectly categorized as a visually impaired child, whereas he should be included under physical disability. She had visited the child's home and found that he is not visually impaired but physically disabled, yet he has been listed under the category of visually impaired in the government records. Due to this incorrect information, the child has not been receiving the scholarship meant for disabled children. Mr. Devangan responded that the incorrect information regarding the child would be corrected, and the scholarship would be provided to him from this session onward.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Krishna assisted in helping two Children with Disabilities who were visually impaired get admission to a school by writing a letter to the BO.
- She assisted a girl in her village, Lakshmi, receive homeschooling through a program for CwD.
- She also assisted the girl in getting an assistive device.

Please click on [Impact and Policy Change](#) for details



EXPERIENCE IN THE FELLOWSHIP

This journey has been a turning point in my life and has given me many thrilling experiences. The most special thing about this journey is that it has made me more capable than before. For instance, I had no technical knowledge at the start; I didn't even know basic computer skills, which made it difficult for me initially. However, I gradually learned, though it took me quite some time, and I still feel the need to focus more on technical education. This journey has filled me with incredible courage that I never imagined. Daughters from rural areas should have such opportunities so that they can prove their talent and capability. I sincerely thank this journey and the NCPEDP team for empowering me to fight and advocate for the challenges I faced in my childhood. I feel that I have only just begun, and a new journey is starting in my life. After the conclusion of this fellowship, I want to thank all of you for giving me a new vision for my life, and I hope to stay connected with you always.

RESOURCES

Follow Krishna's work on their social media

