



# Gunjan

*A Quiet  
Strength*

*A Skill  
Development  
Centre trainee*

## New Beginnings

Gunjan joined the Samarth Saarthi Samuh a few months ago. She arrives at the skill development centre every day to learn new techniques of stitching and embroidery. Gunjan listens to the instructions intently but is unable to focus for a long time. Earlier she felt distracted and sad for most hours of the day. It is here at the skill development centre, she feels she is among friends. Despite the distraction she learned a lot and created some beautiful scrunchies.

## Growing up Early

Gunjan shares that she lived with her parents and two sisters in Munger, Bihar. She was married aged fourteen in 2008. She says that her in-laws and husband are kind and care for her. Four years after her marriage she arrived in Delhi with her husband. She mentioned that her husband works in an office.

## Losing A Part of Herself

Gunjan settled in Govind Puri area of Delhi in a rented home with her husband. She became the mother of a son, Samar. Gunjan visited her husband's village during the COVID19 Pandemic. Samar was a playful eight-year-old. One day he decided to visit the nearby lake to take a swim with his friends. An unsuspecting Gunjan let her son go with the village boys to have some fun. Tragedy struck. Her son went missing. After a long search, his body was found. He died by drowning and left his mother in an unending sorrow.

*"Lockdown was horrible for me. It took my son away."*

## A Passive but Hopeful Beginning

Gunjan lost interest in living. She was inconsolable. After some time of lamenting over the loss of her son, she tried to uplift herself again with the help of her husband and family. After a few years, she and her husband decided to have another child. This idea gave her hope, and she started receiving medical assistance for it. Even after trying for a long time, she didn't receive good news. She started feeling depressed and distracted again. She longed for her child. Her landlady empathized with her and informed her about the Newgen skill development centre. Her daughter was a student of Newgen DigitalDiscovery Paathshala (NDDP). Through her she introduced Gunjan to new opportunities.

## A New Outlook

At the skill development centre, Gunjan sits everyday listening to different stories and anecdotes from the other women. She learned to stitch and embroider scrunchies and cushion covers. This helped her take her mind off her despair. She shares that I come here every day because I feel alive and somewhat happy. The digital literacy sessions at the centre taught her the use of UPI and introduced her to online banking. Her husband encouraged her to learn more and use it daily. She also attends the mental health sessions at the Newgen Skill Development Centre. The sessions reminded her that she needs to take care of her body. She particularly recalls a session on how to draw energy from the meaning of your name. The session invoked motivation in her.

*"I learned how to control anxiety and fear."*

*"The environment at the skill development centre and making new friends helped me sustain myself."*

## A New Horizon is in View

Gunjan shares that not having a child always distracts and disturbs her but when she attends the centre, she feels she can add another layer to her life. It distracts her from the thoughts of her past tragedy. She says she will find new meaning and new opportunities for herself. She wants to learn to make lunch bags, potlis and bottle bags. She taught her neighbors what she learned in the mental health sessions and helped them overcome their anxiety and fear.

Gunjan says that she wishes to be financially secure so she can support her husband and grow her family. She is still healing but now she has a vision for her future.

## Making an impact