

## **The story of the migrant labourer**

Cycling with one hand on the bars the labourer returned to Gaya from Gurugram staring at a dark future. Partially disabled migrant labourer cycled 1,300 km in 8 days to reach home during the lockdown. 13 years old Jyoti Kumari cycled back home with an injured father riding pillion to Dwarbhanga from the same place. Her determination was lauded by Cabinet Ministers and Ivanka Trump, the daughter of American President Donald Trump. But Kamaleshwar Jadav, did not receive the media attention, nor did he get any Government assistance. His is a story of resilience and faith on God.

In a certificate issued by the Government of Bihar to him, it is clearly stated that he is 45% disabled. Kamaleshwar lost his job as a worker in a grocery shop when lockdown was implemented due to Covid 19. After that he got the news that their new born baby was sick; being very disturbed he decided to return home.

His salary was 8,000/- rupees, out of which 3,000/- he had to pay for the house rent. Rest of the money was spent just to stay alive. He bought a used bicycle and on a budget of rupees 500/-, 2 kgs of "chatu" and 1 kg of "chana", he set forth home.

His friends failed to dissuade him. This migrant labourer set forth on the 8<sup>th</sup> of May on a ramshackle bicycle. Using only his right hand he travelled daily nearly 170 km.

Due to physical stress his right hand swelled up. Despite being caned by the Uttar Pradesh police he remained steadfast. This migrant was shunned by locals fearing Covid and the open field and sky were his only shelters. The last lap of 250 km he could not even procure food as money had run out.

After a 14 day ordeal and quarantine he finally reached home. His family was overjoyed to see him. But when he saw that his baby's health had still not improved, he felt heartbroken. Having got caught up in bureaucratic trap he is still empty handed. The local District Magistrate said that if he had known he would have come to his help. Kamaleshwar pleaded with the District Magistrate seeking some help from him. With the money that he got and some money that his wife

had saved, he could get the medical advice from another doctor. He prayed to God to help him and his family out of this crisis. Finally, his baby recovered.

The District Magistrate took pity on Kamaleshwar and wanted to help him. He was sent to the neighbouring village where he got a job of working in a roadside tea and snack stall during the day and carrying back grocery for the District Magistrate's house in the evening. Finally, our hero could make some money. His family was happy and now they could eat two proper meals a day. Kamaleshwar has decided to stay back in his village, even after the lockdown ends. He has realized that there is no greater happiness and peace than staying with his family and protecting them.

Name – Tanbir Hossain

Age – 20

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