

## Success Stories of Sarthak Alumni

### Healing Hand!

**Neetu**

**Disability- VI**

**Location- Delhi**

**Organisation- PayU**



She remembers them distinctly, the colour of sky on a clear day, the fiery red hibiscus flowers in a tin container at home or the green frock her mother had bought on her eight birthday.

At 35, Neetu still asks her mother to choose her clothes. Not only because she loves her but also because her mother can see the colours and she can't.

"Of course I tell her what styles I want. For example on a relaxed day, I could wear a salwar kameez but when I have things to carry in my backpack or I have a hospital's appointment to attend to, I prefer jeans," she says with a smile. A pink lipstick has been put carefully and lovely orange nail paint, sits pretty on her dainty fingernails.

"I love my job. The fact that so many people ask for me, that they wait for their turn to see me feels great. But what I love most is to think that they get rid of their pains and relax", she confesses.

Neetu works as a female therapist at PayU office in Gurgaon, five days a week. The women employees line up to get a quick neck and shoulder massage. On Saturdays she works from 9 to 5 at C K Birla hospital as a medical tactile examiner. I got trained in 'Tactile Breast Examination' (TBE) technique, she says with confidence. Pioneered by Dr Frank Hoffmann, the internationally accepted Discovering Hands concept uses the exceptional sensory skills of visually impaired women for manual breast health screening. This helps with early detection of cancer, she smiles.

But she didn't smile as often till about a decade back, shares Neetu. As a school girl in Hapur in Uttar Pradesh, she was always happy to go to school. But that was only till class five, she shares. Because post that, she began losing her eyesight gradually, because of Optic Atrophy. The doctor advised her not to strain her eyes but Neetu couldn't think of not studying. She always looked for brighter areas in class where she could see better, avoided telling her parents how she was slowly not being able to see their faces clearly. "It was a sinking feeling to think I was slowly losing everything that was comforting and familiar", she says. Post her class 10th exams, Neetu knew she couldn't study any

longer as she had lost her eyesight completely by then. For a young girl full of dreams and hopes, it was a cruel blow. “My world was suddenly plunged in darkness. It was a very difficult phase. What made it worse was the fact that I was at home, always” she recalls.

After years of sitting at home trying to keep negativity out, when she finally heard of training centre for blind women like her in Delhi’s Hauz Khas, she was determined to join it. From her small protected world, it was a big change but Neetu was beginning to dream again. She also completed her class 12th.

Soon after, she heard of Sarthak Educational Trust which helped her with a job placement at PayU, where she has now been working for three years.

“When I spent endless days at my village, hoping this misery would end, I couldn’t even imagine life could be this meaningful. It feels great to be independent. I live in a paying guest accommodation in Guragon and travel to work on my own. I am no different from any other working woman now”, she says with confidence.

