

Lila Devi's Story – Delhi



Lila Devi sitting on the ground of her newly constructed home proudly showed us the different kinds of tiles they've added in the hall. This new home, four stories tall, and decorated with fairy lights and flowers for a pooja stands atop what used to be a dilapidated two-storey structure made of bricks and mud. Lila Devi and her family were beneficiaries of this 25 sq yard plot of land in Adarsh Nagar after they had been relocated from the slums of old Delhi in 1990. Today Adarsh Nagar is a thriving part of Delhi with lots of businesses and small industrial enterprises. Lila Devi's son and husband work as fruit suppliers to local fruit sellers at Shalimar Bagh. She herself works multiple jobs over the year to support her family. In the summers she installs switches and plugs for DVD players and other electronic appliances for a nearby factory while in winters she makes blankets that are sold in her neighbourhood.

Having lived in the old house for more than 20 years she and her family were forced to vacate after their home became impossible to live in. "Bahut bure din dekhe hai humne. Jab bhi barish hoti ne tab barish aur naale ka paani sab andar aa jata. Zameen pe baith hi nahi sakte the. Charpai pe sote aur usi pe khana khate". After years of struggling to live in a home that was

increasingly becoming uninhabitable due to constant flooding and the vagaries of climate change Lila Devi with the support of her sons and family decided to apply for a loan at SEWA Grih Rin. She heard about SGRL from other women in the colony who had successfully financed their home constructions through our loans.

However the journey from getting her loan financed to building her dream home hasn't been easy. During the two years of COVID residents of Adarsh Nagar were often barred from going out of their colony which severely impacted her family's livelihood. Despite these obstacles Lila Devi and her family ensured timely payments of their EMI. Her Journey like that of many others in her community has been of persistence amidst uncertainty. Two years post COVID she tells us that she's more busy with work than she's ever been before and the extra space that the new home has afforded her enables her to take up more work orders from home itself. Thus despite the difficulties she's had to endure she's proud that she and her family, including her grand kids have the space and privilege to enjoy the home of their dreams.