

# NAYANTARA MEMORIAL CHARITABLE TRUST

## SUMITRA BASKI

Sumitra Baski is the 3<sup>rd</sup> of the 4 siblings. She has 2 elder sisters. All the 3 sisters were school drop-outs and well passed the normal marriageable age in the tribal community that they belong to. They had opted to stay unmarried as they wanted to help their parents as earning members of the family.



In 2009 Sumitra, then a school drop out after class VII, heard about Nayantara's Supportive Education Program. Though a school drop out, she wanted to study. Hence she started attending the classes conducted by Nayantara. Her determination and sincerity amazed the teachers. She would stay awake at night doing her homework in the light of lantern so that she could finish her lessons for the next morning.

Jealousy and village politics always work negatively. Whispers started doing the rounds and questions were raised as to why a grown up unmarried school drop out girl need to go to Nayantara's Study centre to study? Gradually the opposition became stronger and when Sumitra could not be stopped, she along with her family was socially boycotted in the village. Rightly it is said that every action has an equal and opposite reaction. As it proved to be correct, Sumitra's determination kept on increasing with increasing opposition. Her determination rubbed in to her sisters and soon Nayantara found all the 3 sisters attending Nayantara Study centre. We kept our counseling on both for Sumitra's family as also for the opposing families. Finally after a month and a half of social boycott the opposing fizzled out. And the icing on the cake was fact that the school drop out daughter of the very family which had initiated the boycott, started attending our Study centre. Eventually both of them, along with Sumitra's elder sister Kalidasi, joined school as regular students.

Sumitra's story carries on. She went on to pass her Madhyamik (class X Board exam) in 2012, completed her class XI and appeared for an open exam for a one year assistant nursing course – Sahayika Sevika, in Matri Bhavan Hospital run by Ramakrishna Sarada Mission in Kolkata and qualified to undertake the course which she is currently pursuing.

It doesn't end even here. Sumitra's elder sister Kalidasi had failed in class IX as she could not appear for the final exam due to an injury that she sustained. Disheartened Kalidasi left studies in 2011. The eldest of her siblings, Purnima, did not join her sisters but took training at Nayantara to teach the pre-primary students. She too wanted to study but was ashamed to go to school with children over 10 years her junior. After completing her Madhyamik, Sumitra quietly motivated her sisters to take the class X exam from open school. Silently, without any body's knowledge, Sumitra started teaching her elder siblings at home. In 2014 both the sisters appeared for class X exam from open school. While Kalidasi passed, Purnima cleared all but one subject, which she is determined to clear next time round.

Sumitra is a **role model** that Nayantara always wanted to groom. **We salute her** for her strength of character and strong determination. Sumitra is doing her Sahayika

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Sevika course which is totally free for the participants. But this residential one year course costs around Rs.40,000/-.

Nayantara is looking forward to arrange for this sponsorship along with that for Sonali, Uma, Purnima and Sonamuni all of whom are Nayantara's students who are currently undertaking the course in Matri BHavan. So far we have been able to get sponsors for 2 of the 5 girls. We need another Rs.1,20,000/- to cover the education cost of the remaining 3 girls.