



A WINDOW TO YOUR RIGHTS

“One child desperately needs clothes, another needs slippers; yet another needs medicines urgently...” these are the daily woes of Mehtab Jahan, a 40 year old widow with five children. Her husband died a year ago and since then it is her sole responsibility to run this household.

Mehtab now works as a full time thread cutter in a factory at Tughlakabad in New Delhi. She barely earns around Rs.2500 per month. To augment her income she often tries to work overtime and then also she is unable to earn more than Rs.3000 per month. Just to earn five hundred rupees more she has to work from 9:30 in the morning to 9:00 in the night for several days. She is not entitled to any leave either. So she laments, *“I am suffering from leg pain and eye sight problem but I can't even take a day's leave to seek some medical attention. If I take leave they will cut one days salary...and even though I am supposed to have a Sunday off, I am generally called to work on Sundays also....”*

In these circumstances she discovered the **Samajik Suvidha Kendra** (SSK) run by the *Gender Resource Centre* of **CEQUIN**. SSK is a unique initiative where underprivileged people are provided all the information related to benefits and compensations from multiple departments of the Delhi Government. The Centre facilitates this access by providing relevant forms and educating people about their entitlements, through the help of desk counselor and community mobilizers.

Mehtab accessed help from the Counselor at the Centre who told her about the **Widow scheme** which entitles a person to a sum of Rs.10,000 to help cope with the difficulties that arise due to the death of a husband. She recalls vividly her relief, *“I was not only extended deep compassion by the counselor, but was also helped swiftly by filling up forms and arranging all the necessary documentation... I was so surprised that I did not have to run from door to door for arranging everything....and now that I have just received Rs.10,000/- you cannot imagine how timely this relief has been for me...my eldest daughter has just given birth to a child and I am overwhelmed with joy that I don't have to borrow money to buy my grandchild a pair of new clothes.....I am also looking forward to repairing my house which is in a very bad condition!”*