

Success Story: Ramavatar's transformation in his new "Avtar"

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In the quiet village of Tain, nestled within the heart of Nuh district in Haryana, lives Ramavatar, a man whose life has long been marked by hardship and struggle. Born in the Valmiki community, which is classified among the Scheduled Castes (SC) in Haryana. Growing up, he did not have access to any formal education. He worked as a daily wage construction worker to support his family of four, his wife and two daughters. Despite making tireless efforts, he could barely make ends meet. To make things worse, he developed a drinking problem, which led to a fiery temper, leading to growing dissatisfaction among those closest to him.

The turning point in Ramavatar's life came when Saahas, an NGO in the field of solid waste management, initiated a solid waste management intervention called 'Unnati' funded by TLG India Pvt. Ltd. in Tain village. As sanitation jobs in the village are reserved for his community, he was onboarded by the village sarpanch as a waste collection staff.



Pic Source: Saahas

With the support of Saahas, Ramavatar received comprehensive training on the end-to-end implementation of the waste collection process. The training covered every aspect, from data collection and door-to-door awareness to waste sorting and community engagement. Owing to the scale of operation, and limited manpower, he also convinced his wife to receive training for secondary sorting of waste, which added to their family income. He was fueled by a newfound sense of purpose and determination,

It was not easy for him to establish their foothold into the sustainable SWM processes, which place the onus of source segregation of waste on the waste generator. Behavior change is a slow process, hence initially there was resistance from the community to segregate their waste. Ramavatar and his wife faced many challenges, including but not limited to complaints from the

community members. His personal struggle of overcoming alcoholism was further making it hard to work. However, Ramavatar embraced the role with sincerity. The transformation was not instantaneous, but through persistent effort and a commitment to change, he gradually overcame his old habits. His dedication to the job began to reflect positively in his personal life as well.

Ramavatar's journey was marked by several significant milestones. Not only did he become proficient in collecting data, conducting door-to-door awareness campaigns, explaining the waste management process to community members, and efficiently sorting waste, but he also began to take on additional responsibilities with firm belief. Ramavatar played a crucial role in managing waste during village weddings, ensuring that all waste generated was properly handled and transported to the Resource Recovery Center (RRC). His proactive approach helped maintain cleanliness and order during these festive occasions, earning him respect and appreciation from the community.

When RRC representatives visited the village, Ramavatar volunteered to explain the waste management process, often taking on the role of speaker during awareness sessions. His ability to articulate the process clearly and address community concerns made him a key figure in the village community. Additionally, he diligently tackled all questions posed by the community during his collection rounds and managed the collection of user fees every month, ensuring the financial sustainability of the waste management system.

Ramavatar's commitment extended beyond his official duties. He took great pride in his role as the guardian of the RRC, treating it with the same care and attention he would give to his own home. He cleaned the RRC regularly and ensured that it was secure and well-maintained. His sense of ownership and responsibility for the center became a model for others in the community.

Ramavatar also went the extra mile by collecting valuable items discarded on the roads during his rounds, demonstrating an unexpected level of conscientiousness and care for his environment.

The impact of this transformation extended beyond Ramavatar himself. His improved habits and sincere efforts began to mend strained relationships within his family. The once fiery and difficult individual was now seen as a dedicated worker and a positive force in the community. His wife, too, played a crucial role in this change, supporting him and working alongside him in the waste management process.

Ramavatar's story is one of remarkable personal and professional transformation. What began as an opportunity for change has evolved into a success story that highlights the power of second chances and the impact of dedicated support and training. Today, Ramavatar stands as a testament to the idea that with the right guidance and a commitment to growth, anyone can



overcome their past and build a better future. His journey from a struggling laborer to a respected and effective member of the waste collection team is an inspiration to many in Tain and beyond.