

**“Be the change that you wish to see  
in the world” - Mahatma Gandhi**

*Chitrakoot, Uttar Pradesh, January 2017*



Growing up with two brothers and no sister can often lead to male chauvinism within the family. This was the case with **Mohit Singh**, a 23-year-old boy from Kol Majra village in Chitrakoot, Uttar Pradesh. Moreover, like other boys of his village, Mohit used to pass lewd comments to girls and thought of eve teasing to be non-offensive. Mohit had no knowledge that he was harassing the girls of his village.

To support his family financially, Mohit decided to work with ABSSS (Akhil Bhartiya Samaj Sewa Sansthan) in enhancing the rural livelihood and adult education in Bargarh village of Chitrakoot. While working with ABSSS, Mohit became a part of the Kadam Badhate Chalo (KBC) program when he took part in the phase 1 Sports Camp organized in Chitrakoot in January 2016.

The initial phase of the KBC program had a transformational impact on Mohit. Mohit came to know about the various forms in which Violence Against Women (VAW) exists in our society and how he also naively got involved with his friends in practicing VAW. Mohit was filled with remorse and decided to mend his iniquity by spreading awareness about VAW and gender equality among his family, friends and community folk. He started by educating his family on the importance of equality in everyday life and as an elder brother decided that all of the work will be shared among the family members, unlike previously, where his mother used to do most of the work at home.

With a strong-will, Mohit set out on a challenging journey to drive change in his patriarchal community. Even though Mohit made up his mind to tackle gender based issues in his society, he still lacked the confidence to start. He was nervous of making the young boys and girls of his village unlearn the behavior they had been practicing. To improve his understanding further about the KBC program, Mohit traveled to New Delhi to attend



the 3-day Gender & Sports workshop. It was the first time that Mohit was traveling to a different city and his excitement had no limits. This workshop was attended by 37 individuals working across 12 KBC sites in India. This was a clarifying experience for him as he took part in the discussions and activities not only for the planning and organization of the KBC program, but also about the topics of gender, equality and violence. These discussions with like-minded people widened his intellect and he returned from the workshop with a lot of confidence.

At present, Mohit has activated youth in 40 villages from 13 gram panchayats of Chitrakoot district. He conducts regular meetings and sports gatherings with the young boys and girls of these villages after their school hours to explain them the importance of working together as one



team, sharing and respecting each other's thoughts and opinions as well as encouraging them to openly discuss the various issues in their society.

Mohit's hard work and efforts were gaining momentum because of which he was invited to attend a review meeting of his work in New Delhi. He was nervous, as it was the first time that he was presenting his work to an audience which he likes to term as 'Having Superior Knowledge'. His face was flushed with excitement and his hands trembled as he presented the impact of his work on his community. Mohit was suave and deferential in his demonstration and was applauded by all the members of KBC program.



Mohit has grown a name for himself in Bargarh due to the efforts he puts in to educate the people of his community. The young boys and girls of Bargarh look up to Mohit as a mentor. Mohit's role as a local partner trainer during the KBC Phase 2 Sports Leadership Workshop was instrumental. He helped the PSD trainers in building the youth participant's interest during the workshop. Mohit believes that sports can prove to be a very effective tool to make the youth work together for a good reason because they have fun while learning. He mentioned,

"I am really lucky to be a part of KBC program as it has helped me develop a personality that everyone respects. I was a totally different person before, but now I have changed for good and I want to help all the people of my village, irrespective of their age and gender, to get rid of their narrow-mindedness and prosper in everyday life".

*\*The above quote has been translated in English, from Hindi, in which it was originally narrated.*

Mohit envisages a safe environment for girls and women across villages and communities in Chitrakoot, which he thinks can only be achieved if the young boys and girls work together to take responsibility to drive that change. He also considers the KBC sports leadership workshop as a great platform for youth to gather necessary information and develop effective skills that can help them to reach out to a large number of communities and make the KBC movement wide spread.

