

It is estimated that there are more than 10 million people in India alone with epilepsy which means that its prevalence is about 1% of our population, that's a huge number don't you think? Yet epilepsy is a stigma and it is misunderstood.

Hi my name is Naziya Ansari a 31-year-old working professional a banker and a social worker (Epilepsy Foundation India) a person with Epilepsy trying to break the stigma around epilepsy.

Being a child of a single parent comes with its own hardships. My mother Fouziya Ansari, tried to give my brother and me the best upbringing in her capacity. However, life is never fair and one faithful day we lost our mother to cancer when I was 11 years old. Along with the loss of my mother came grief, trauma and financial hardship. But the trauma did not come alone, it came with epilepsy and seizures.

That was it! Epilepsy was considered a life sentence. Everything came to a halt, a big fat stop sign! Questions like will I be able to have a normal life? Could I be left alone? What about medical expenses? Will I be able to study and get to make a career? And the ever haunting question of all how will I get married? I completed my education regardless of all the hurdles. I attended seminars to learn more about epilepsy and how to control it. Never skipped medications and followed proper sleep schedule to live an improved life. It was only possible with proper guidance from my Dr. Nirmal Surya, medication and a healthy lifestyle. The Epilepsy Foundation has played a huge role when it comes to living my life to the fullest. Ever since I have become a part of the foundation, I have been to camps in remote and rural parts of Maharashtra to spread the much-needed awareness about epilepsy. I have been running marathons for the same cause and helped raise funds for the cause.

My association with the Epilepsy Foundation helped me connect to children with epilepsy and their families. I could guide them to avail proper free medication and treatment. I tutored children who were part of the foundation. Hosting events for the foundation, maintaining records, social media awareness. Most importantly clearing the stigma and misconceptions around epilepsy

My contribution towards epilepsy in past 10 years

I am regularly attend Epilepsy Foundation OPD (Tuesday) as and when I can manage from my office work to help other People with epilepsy particularly those who are coming from far and new patients and guide them as and when they have some issue and can't speak to doctor due to shyness or fear also Educating People with Epilepsy and their Families about Epilepsy Do's and Don'ts

Managing Epilepsy Foundation activities: As EFI does regular programme on various occasion and I took responsibility of hosting and Coordinating for Purple Day , Epilepsy Day Awareness Programmes ,Annual Picnics, Translating for Guests from Out of India

like I did for Torie Robinson (UK), Cassidy Megan (Founder of Purple Day), here me being educated gave the advantage as Dr Surya would immediately hand over the responsibility to me.

I would also promote work done by people with epilepsy in foundation and selling their art and craft work like Bags, Rakhi, Diya, Wall hangings etc. i have attended Epilepsy Foundation Camps AND Till now approx. 25 camp in Rural Maharashtra done by EFI, my role is to Cover entire camp on social media platforms like Fb, Twitter, You Tube etc., beside this this during camps I meet families and taking their interviews to understand their Views and Knowledge towards epilepsy as well motivating people and children with epilepsy for studies and making their carrier. Checking if proper medicines are given to all entries etc.

I actively Participated every year in Marathon for Dream run and raising funds for Epilepsy Foundation. I met 15-year-old girl Divyasini Sharma at Epilepsy Foundation Inspiring everyone and changing life of all patients with epilepsy by teaching Yoga and she also won Golden light Award. Which has inspired me a lot. I want to continue helping the cause by spreading awareness and extending the ray of hope to others. One thing I want people to learn from my journey is to always keeping going even if it is one step a day always keep going.

If I get a chance to win the Golden Light Award I believe I would get more power to my contribution and motivation towards epilepsy cause.

Thank you