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# Destiny's design: Rag-picker makes it to NID

Dhaval Bharwad



Sanjay Parmar with his parents

**Radha Sharma** | TNN

**Ahmedabad:** Sanjay Parmar spent much of his childhood picking rags, sifting through mounds of waste at Rama Pir No Tekro in Vadaj area of Ahmedabad to supplement the family's meagre income. Sanjay's father Dineshbhai was a driver and barely managed to put food on the table for his three children. On lucky days, he would find a pair of footwear for his little sister Manisha in the garbage. When bored, Sanjay would fashion boats out of waste paper and cars from discarded thermocol packaging.

Then destiny intervened. At 19, Sanjay is perhaps the only one with a rag-picking past to make it to the country's premiere design school — National Institute of Design — and aims to become an automobile designer.

But first, he wants to design an aid which cuts the burden of LPG cylinder deliverymen. "I have seen my father break his back delivering cylinders in multi-storey houses which don't have lifts. It is my dream to design a simple aid," he says.

The young boy's life turned when he was selected as one of eight kids who were enrolled in a special project by NGO Visamo Kids which gave bright children from poor families a chance at a good education. "If I was not plucked out of the slums and given an education, I would not have gone beyond class X. All my best friends are school drop-outs", says Sanjay.

Initially, it was tough for Sanjay to adjust to the new world. "He was an angry, stubborn child. He was not good at learning and writing but he was good with his hands," says Ameer Shah, boarding in-charge of Visamo Kids. Sanjay calls Ameer his second mother. While the residential programme covers education till class XII, an anonymous donor came forward to fund his education when he made it to NID. He was also trained by city-based designer Bhanvar Rathore for the entrance test.

"I did not have the means to educate Sanjay; I could just provide him a roof. When he becomes a man, he will buy us a house," says Dineshbhai.