

## EDITORIAL

### Below Dignity Line

Life is full of Paradoxes. I have arrived at the conclusion and resigned to the fact that, India is a land of dichotomies, inequalities and lopsided development; especially for people with disabilities.

The debate triggered by popular Economist Adam Smith "Guns vs Butter" in today's context can be rephrased as "Human Life vs Alien Life."

Consider the following Paradox. The estimated cost of Chandrayaan I, India's Moon Vehicle project was US \$62M (Rs. 386 crores). A whopping amount to search for life on the Moon. Compare it to this down- to- earth real story. RM is a 25 years young paraplegic who lives alone with her younger brother on the third floor, without an elevator, of her dilapidated flat in Mumbai. The cost of her independence, to go outdoors, is by installing a stair lift estimated at US \$2000. Absolutely outrageous amount for her!

The Paradox is:

RM is entitled to vote, despite her spine injury and permanent disability.

She is capable of being employed and earn, even though her Disability Certificate declares her 80% disabled.

She is mentally strong to live alone as her parents are no more; managing herself, tending for her brother and his needs and taking care of her house and other chores. Living and surviving against all odds.

A normal activity that most of us take for granted like stepping out in the sun, chatting on the street, gazing at the trees and more is denied to her. There are hundreds and thousands and lakhs like her existing in this city and elsewhere in the country. We as a nation will commit and spend huge amounts of money to find a possible trace of 'Alien Life' on the moon - a faraway planet. But we will not care or provide for a 'Human Life' amidst us, lift her spirits, grant her a basic mobility and make her life a little bit simpler, brighter and easier to live.

Maybe she would have had better chances if she was not on this Planet Earth but faraway moon, and pushed up to a better life from Below Dignity Line!



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