

Life is the most beautiful thing'

NEW DELHI, HINDU , DECEMBER 03, 2015 00:00 IST, BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN

With 90 per cent hearing loss, Abhijit Chakraborty's journey towards becoming an Indian Foreign Service officer hasn't been without its share of ups and down by his own admission. But that was not a deterrent for this young man, who received a standing ovation from a room packed to capacity here on Tuesday.

Part of the function organised to commemorate 20 years of the passage of the Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995, Mr. Chakraborty said: "With due deference to Mahatma Gandhi, I would like my work to be the message that duly enabled, we are as good or as bad as the mainstream workforce, in managing job profiles, both in public and private sectors, and in making productive contributions to the society."

"Increasingly, greater and seamless integration of the differently abled in gainful and productive activities look less and less as a chimera," he added.

Yet another person with disability making a positive change is Sminu Jindal, managing-director Jindal SAW Ltd. and founder of Svayam. Ms. Jindal has been using a wheelchair since the age of 11 after an accident. "I understand that despite all the trials and tribulations that life puts you through, it is the most precious and beautiful thing that a human being can have," she says.

Her organisation was conferred the 'National Tourism Award of Excellence', jointly with the Archaeological Survey of India , for making world heritage sites like the Qutub Minar, Red Fort and the Fatehpur Sikri group of monuments in Agra as the 'Most Accessible and Disabled Friendly Historical Monument' in 2009, 2011 and 2012. She is currently engaged in conducting access audits of important government buildings such as the Planning Commission, North Block, South Block, Dak Bhawan and Paryavaran Bhawan, among others, as part of the Accessible India campaign.

On the occasion of World Disability Day on December 3, persons with disabilities, their families and supporters are planning to gather at the India Gate for the NCPEDP-Veer 'Walk to Freedom' on Wednesday.

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