

Ira Singhal – Indian Administrative Service Officer – Scoliosis



Ira Singhal, India's first 'divyang' IAS officer, not just knows how to dream big, but also knows how to make her dreams come true, in spite of suffering from 62 percent locomotor disability due to scoliosis (an abnormal lateral curvature of the spine). The disability which stunted her height and she cannot even fully twist her arms.

A multi-talented person table tennis player, dancer, actor, choreographer and a great cook- Ira not only defied all odds to top the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) exams, but also fought tooth and nail against the system that denied her a posting that she had rightfully earned.

Born in Meerut to Rajendra Singhal an engineer, and Anita Singhal, an insurance advisor, Ira was always a meritorious student. She completed her schooling from the Army Public School, Dhaula Kuan and studied Computer Engineering from Netaji Subhas Institute of Technology and received dual MBA in Marketing & Finance from Faculty of Management Studies, University of Delhi.

Ira's travails and triumphs during her tryst with UPSC exams have today set a benchmark for all the persons with disabilities - aspirants of Civil Services exams in the country. She became eligible to get into the Customs and Central Excise Service cadre in her first attempt in 2010, but was rejected as her disability did not fit into any of the disability categories on their list.

Ira refused to take the injustice lying down and she filed a lawsuit in the Central Administrative Tribunal. It turned out to be a long battle, but Ira was not to give up. She continued to appear for the Civil Service Exams in 2011, 2013 and 2014, in the hope of improving her rank and getting picked for a cadre where her disability would not be a hurdle.