

A Light's Struggle in a Storm

Ashok Deora



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This book is not my story alone; it is the voice of thousands of individuals who stood by me, encouraged me, and reminded me that there is strength in unity. To the wonderful community of brothers and sisters behind the Viklang Andolan, I owe my deepest gratitude to you all for inspiring me with your resilience and unwavering dedication for justice. Thanks for showing me what it means to fight with courage and dignity.

I am also deeply grateful to my family, friends, and supporters who have been there with me at every low and every small win. Your belief in me has been my anchor.

Lastly, to every one of you who read this book, thank you for your time to hear this journey. By reading, you are part of the change I hope for in this world—a world where everybody's voice has a chance to be heard, regardless of their conditions. This book is just as much

yours as it is mine. Let us continue this fight for dignity and justice, together.

With love & gratitude,

Ashok Deora

PREFACE

"In matters of truth and justice, there is no difference between large and small problems, for issues concerning the treatment of people are all the same". - Albert Einstein

This book canvasses more than just the story of a common man's conflict with an industrial giant. It is the tale of my struggle for justice, not just for myself but for the future of thousands of others like me. My name is Ashok Deora, a disabled social worker and in-charge of the social media front of the Viklang Andolan, Rajasthan. This book is my reality, my struggle, and my refusal to be silent before injustice.

It started with something as simple as an internet connection and spiraled into a much larger battle. Reliance Jio promised 4G speed, and I, like millions of other people, believed them. But what I received instead was frustration, broken promises, and internet speed slower than a snail on a rainy day. This was not just a hindrance for me, who had to manage the social media front of the Viklang Andolan 2016, but rather disruption

of a movement in-motion, aimed at asserting the rights of disabled people like myself in Rajasthan. My entire work depends on the internet and, with Jio's poor service holding back my ability to work, it became difficult not to take action.

I filed my grievances, but no steps were taken. That's when I turned to the courts, believing that justice will be served. What I did not perceive was that when taking on such gigantic names like the Reliance group, the very rules of the game itself are rigged. The courts were out of bounds and the forces arrayed against me seemed unassailable. Yet, I kept going, armed with nothing but the truth and the resolve to be heard.

Sitting in my wheelchair, I witnessed how the system twisted and turned to cover the powerful and wealthy. With every dismissal, my flames grew stronger. They did not realize this fight was no longer about the slow internet. It was for respect - to be seen and heard, and justice which we all are entitled to.

The more you delve deeper into the story, you will find it is more than a legal struggle against corporate giants. It is the exhilarating tale of a disabled man and every other person who refused to let life's hardships break them and instead became a beacon of how, in the face of overwhelming adversity and nonfeasance, they still chose to move forward.

It is the story of each one of us who has ever been denied justice. It is about a movement - the Viklang Andolan -

and the fight for the rights and dignity of disabled people in Rajasthan. And as you turn these pages, I hope my struggle spurs you to carry your light high, shining through all of life's storms.

Welcome to my story. Welcome to the truth.

—Ashok Deora

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Life is unpredictable and nobody can tell what awaits them in the future. It is one of the most profound characteristics of life. Just when you think you have everything figured out, it throws a curveball at you completely dismantling your plans.

Never would I have imagined that this was how my life was going to turn out. Ever since I was young, I was a happy-go-lucky child, enjoying my days to the fullest until that apocalyptic day changed the course of my life. My world came crashing down when I was barely fifteen. I was diagnosed with Rheumatoid Arthritis, a chronic (long-lasting) auto-immune disease that mostly affects joints. It occurs when the immune system, which normally helps protect the body from infection and disease, attacks its own tissues. The pain lit up in my entire body like a christmas tree shackling me to my bed confining me among the four walls of my room. I could not move an inch. Days turned into months and months turned to years. And before I realized, eight years had

gone by while I was stuck in my bed. My body was sore, my movements still restricted, and the little hope I had in the earlier days slowly dwindled away into nothingness.

But life works in mysterious ways. During that time, I suffered from severe tuberculosis. And it was almost like a miracle that the treatment I was undergoing for it awakened the lost hope I had. My legs and spine were still stiff but I could slowly sit. It was a big progress for me considering my condition. With the relentless support of my parents, I gradually learnt to move around in my tricycle. However, I could still feel the worried gazes of my parents as they saw me struggling. People around looked at me with sympathy and pity. Being an only child, I was all my parents had. Determined to not worry them more and utilize the second chance I got at life, I set out on my tricycle. I promised myself that I would not let anything stop me from living life to the fullest.

I did not want my disability to become my entire personality. Deciding to not sit idle, I opened a small STD phone booth near the Rajasthan High Court premises. It was my way to feel a sense of normalcy, to feel like I belonged. I was tired of people looking at me with pity. Interestingly, the opportunity to start the STD PCO booth came through the support of IAS officer Mr. Naveen Jain, who was then serving as the SDM during his first appointment. He was known to be a very honest and upright officer, and it was on his suggestion that I was able to begin this work. Every day, I used to sit in my shop and observe people. Whenever I saw someone

in need of some assistance, I offered my help without any hesitation. All I wanted was to feel needed, to be useful to someone—even if it was something minor. Helping people in need gave me a purpose in life.

It was like any other day when I was helping a man that caught the attention of the Viklang Andolan, the ongoing disability rights movement in Rajasthan. They saw the unwavering dedication in me and were impressed by my denial to not let my limitations control my life - they found a voice in me that could reach others. So, they offered me the position of Social Media Head for the movement. This was a new kind of freedom for me to share my experiences along with others' and the difficulties we faced in a world that did not notice and care for people like us. With social media, I could help out all those who were sidelined throughout their life.

This is where Reliance came into the picture. The work I was doing required a reliable and high speed network for smooth functioning. So, like millions of others, I turned to Reliance Jio for a stable internet connection that they assured us. But as days passed, the service became unreliable, quite the contradiction in comparison to their Brand name, *Reliance*. The internet speed was slower than a snail. Frustrated, I filed my grievances which went unheard. My frustrations grew day by day as each of my complaints was ignored. I realized very soon that the battle was no longer between me and Reliance Jio's poor services - it was a fight for

rights, a battle that held the hopes and misery of all those whose pleas were ignored.

So, I stepped foot into this corrupt battlefield with nothing but my truth and belief in myself as my armor. All these just to be heard and get justice. And as you turn the pages, I hope you realize that sometimes it is these small acts that create great changes.

CHAPTER 2

THE STRUGGLE FOR CONNECTION

The first time I joined the Viklang Andolan, a Disability Rights movement in Jaipur, Rajasthan, I felt belonged, I didn't feel so alone anymore. That day, I met so many amazing people who had it worse than me and yet their determination and resilience could move mountains. I thank my stars everyday for letting me meet this astounding group of people. This movement, which was started back in 2016 with just a handful of people following the leadership of Mr. Ratan Lal Bedwa, who left his own job to make Rajasthan a 'just and fair' state especially for the physically challenged people, has now become a popular movement with thousands of people coming forward to fight for the cause. Each one of them carrying their own stories of struggles, resolve, and hope.

I remember this certain incident where we protested for 27 days in Jyoti Nagar in Jaipur. We held rallies, delivered speeches and flooded the place to prove the point that we would not be swept away, making sure that

our mission was very clear. We wanted fair treatment, accessible healthcare and other benefits, and most importantly recognition of our basic human rights. But after those long hours of protests, I realized one thing; this wasn't an easy battle, it cannot and would not just end there. For our voices to be heard, we would need something that could help us spread our stories to the common mass across the country. We needed more people to hear our voices for this protest to be effective. That is where the great social media became a part of our movement.

To us, social media was not just a platform but a megaphone through which we could spread our voices to the rest of the world. It enabled us to chronicle the activities and agendas of the Viklang Andolan while sharing our struggles, uniting people to be able to view and identify similar experiences and come forward to join the movement. It was a critical part of the movement especially because we were aiming for a transformation not only in Rajasthan but on a nationwide scale. Every post was educative, mobilizing, and a call for justice. Free on my keyboard but confined in a wheelchair, for me social media was my voice by which I broke down the walls that confined me.

When I subscribed to Reliance Jio, it was largely done with the hope that at last, I may be able to support my work with stable high-speed connectivity. More than a million Indians made the same decision as me, enticed by the promises of 4G speed coupled with reliable

connectivity at an affordable rate. It was only natural for a common man like me to subscribe to their services. The company had marketed its services as the game-changer that would bring high-speed internet to the masses. For me, a dependent online campaigner lobbying for people's rights, it was a lifeline.

I think that is where I made the very first mistake. At first it was going all well but as days passed, they started showing their true colors. Day by day my frustrations grew as loading a single page would take what seemed like forever. The buffering time and constant interruptions while watching a video, uploading content, or even sending text messages started to get irritating. It was the internet speed promised by Jio that actually made me subscribe to them. But as days passed, it felt like an illusion. I did not realize that signing up for 4G speed meant what I'd get was only marginally better than those early 3G days. Every delayed action, every connection dropped felt like a kind of obstruction not just to myself but to the work I was trying to do for Viklang Andolan.

Time is a precious thing for everybody. And for a social worker like myself who is actively involved with an ongoing movement and working for the disabled community, it was priceless. The information has to be timely, events have to be promoted and people must be updated at all times. My role as the social media head was to broadcast updates, share information of protests occurring, posting calls to action, and disseminating

education on rights for people with disabilities among our followers. Every day that is lost without some kind of information may contribute to losing a potential supporter. I felt like I was shouting across a noisy room and only for my mouth to be taped shut at the worst possible moments.

So, I approached the customer support in Jio like anyone in my place would do and told them that their slow internet speed was affecting my work and requested a stable internet for my advocacy work. However, on each occasion, they gave hollow promises or feedback of technical tests that did not improve the situation at all. I was not just an ordinary customer. I was a social worker, representing a cause, trying to bring attention to a movement that held the fate of thousands of people. I repeated this multiple times to the Customer Service Executive, hoping at least that one person might grasp that these connectivity issues did not involve trivial matters, but instead were barriers to bigger movements.

I tried again and again each day, logging into the Jio network, hoping that it would work today but all my hopes slowly dwindled away with each failed attempt. More than frustrating, it was disheartening. It was a feeling of helplessness, as if the efforts put forth toward communicating with our supporters and keeping people updated on critical issues in an easy and quick manner were stunted by some invisible hand. It was almost as though this movement was being throttled-this time, not

in internet speed, but through neglect by a corporate giant that seemed not to care about its users' needs.

Viklang Andolan was a movement more than an organized event; it was survival for thousands of disabled people in Rajasthan, crying for their rights to be heard. And I still hadn't been able to live up to the responsibility I had been entrusted with simply because of a company's inability more like refusal to provide the grade of service it advertised. It is a shame considering the nationwide scale of Reliance Jio. Each time the update failed to post or a response wasn't posted to a query someone left, I felt helpless because I knew there were people waiting to hear from us, waiting to be a part of a movement to make something out of their mundane lives they normally live. Every delay, every second we were late in posting any update felt like a small violation of our community, as if we were betraying them with every passing minute in addition to the trust they had laid upon me to inform them.

That's when it hit me that this was not simply a personal setback but a systemic issue, which Jio had inflicted on dozens of others besides me, and they are so wrong if they think I was going to let it be. Thus, my tussle with Jio became another chapter of the struggle for justice. It was no more about connectivity; it was about rising, speaking out, and making our voices reverberate across

every corner of Rajasthan—and beyond—despite disabilities in our bodies.

CHAPTER 3

THE BEGINNING OF THE BATTLE

After days and days of fighting against unreliable internet and Jio's cascading flood of empty promises, things finally came to a head. I had gone about everything that I could to make the connection work, not only for myself but for Viklang Andolan and all those voices we were trying to unify and amplify. I could not just sit back anymore. The promises of Jio looked as hollow as those buffering icons sitting right there on my screen each time I tried to reach out to the supporters. That is when it struck me—if they wouldn't listen to my voice as a customer, I would ensure they listen to it as a complainant.

It wasn't that easy to finally decide on filing a formal complaint. I am not the kind of person who jumps into court litigation without valid reason; I believe matters need to be addressed amicably. So, my first response was to lodge a formal complaint through the customer service of Jio. First things first, I wrote down a clear, concise account of my complaints and sent it to Jio's

customer service. I made sure to follow each protocol they set down and even reminded them the importance of stable connectivity in the work I did.

I thought this would finally settle things for good. Companies must love their customers, mustn't they? Every time I mailed their support, I held onto hope. Representatives kept assuring me that this would be improved and promised the complaint had been escalated. In fact, they often urged me, "just wait a few more days.". So, I patiently waited only to find that that wait was fruitless. I realized that I'd fallen into a cycle of repetitive almost indistinct responses. The customer support people sounded sympathetic oftentimes, but nothing changed. I could visibly feel that my requests were being dismissed, and soon the hope of receiving the service for which I paid started to dissipate like sand between fingers.

I started doing my homework on consumer grievance forums and local forums; in hopes that perhaps there is a higher authority that will force Jio to honor their commitments. This was my formal, first-time act of confronting their negligence. By now, I was pretty acquainted in making complaints, as well as reporting. Each report was comprehensive; it contained all dates, screenshots, and even speed test results-things that prove my connection is nowhere near the 4G promised speeds. Every shred of evidence I held onto, knowing

that if I have to push this case further to different authorities, every single shred will count.

And when I finally took that step, I knew it was not going to be an easy ride ahead. Reaching out to the Consumer Forum was hard, not because I did not know that my grievance was valid, but because I knew who I was battling against, it was Reliance Jio. A corporate giant with resources and machinery, legal teams, and influence while I was just a mere social worker with a pile of evidence and stubborn resolve to do the right thing. But even the Consumer Forum failed to bring a solution to this issue. After months of getting hit by several dead ends, I had finally reached the moment of reckoning. If that corporate giant thought I would just give up, then they were mistaken. Too much had happened in my life to let lack of internet speed defeat me. So a quick decision was made, then and there, to go to court with that complaint. It was definitely not something decided without a lot of thought. Litigation is long, costly, and resource-consuming in terms of time when dealing with as energetic and widespread a movement as Viklang Andolan. Still, this particular case was special to me—it wasn't just my personal fight; it was a fight against a corporation which cheats its customers. Jio's apathy extended beyond the individual; it symbolized the kind of corporate neglect that too many people had to face daily, especially people like us who

rely on technology for advocacy work. I wanted to tell them that companies could not sweep away our rights.

In 2019, I submitted my first complaint with the presiding judge being Mr. Shyam Sunder Latha. With that, I made sure to meticulously prepare all evidence that could be given in support of my assertions and speed test results with detailed reports and clear explanations for how Jio was misleading consumers.

But what ensued later was not only pathetic but also laughable. Reliance Jio's legal team would not even grace their presence during a hearing; despite their absence, no action was taken against them, but the court kept on giving adjournments, and the case continued indefinitely. It was frustrating to sit through a whole lot of hearings and see absolutely no progress.

And then, on 4th October 2021 the unthinkable happened. My appeal got rejected. The court said that I had skipped the hearings. This was absolutely a lie, a blatant unfounded accusation. I had attended all the sessions. Armed with my proof and a stiff upper lip, I marched down to the Collector's office; I produced all paperwork that indicated that I had attended each hearing. The Collector upheld my complaint and ordered that the case be restored.

The case was refiled under Judge Chandrakala Jain in the year 2021. I approached the court once again with even more determination and even with the same set of evidence that had been so clearly exposing Jio's

negligence. Again, their lawyers could not produce one shred of evidence against this. They based it on false claims and hollow arguments as if confident that their stature alone would shift the balance in their favor. The court ruled against me. Yet again.

All this was ridiculous. How could a court disregard evidence that had taken me months of searching? How could it side with a company that never even bothered to show up let alone put up much of a fight? As days passed, my faith in the justice system began to fade, but I didn't give up. I decided to appeal this decision at the State Commission, thinking that someone higher up would pay attention to my case.

Another barrier lay waiting for me when I produced my file before the State Commission. Judge Devendra Kachhwaha did not accept my file and dismissed my case without reading the piece of evidence put forward by me. He refused even to listen to me when I went to his office personally. For the final time, I filed two appeals online. Both were rejected without any explanation whatsoever. It seemed as if the entire system was turned against me in order to deny me justice.

There were times when I had to doubt, but I still kept reminding myself of the purpose of this struggle. The Jio representatives in their efforts to lay under the assertion made by me would often question my intent and, in fact, believe that I was there for personal gain and not for accountability. But my story and evidence were there for

everyone to see. And I was standing there not for compensation and attention but for justice. I wanted my struggle to clearly be stated as not being for myself, but for every one of them for whose voice Jio had chosen to turn a deaf ear towards.

Months turned into a year and still, I waited for that day when our voices would be heard in full. It was not going to come easy; there were days I questioned myself whether it was all worth the pain. But each time I rolled into that courtroom, something within me started anew. This was not a stand against lousy service, but the stand for every disabled individual who had ever been made to feel invisible; every customer made to feel unimportant; and every person that trusted a company to deliver what it promised.

Those silent courtrooms still echo with the weight of trust cast upon my shoulders by my community. If there were people fighting against me, then such a fight was worth fighting, given that Jio also had its lawyers and resources, but mine was more potent, the will to change, endurance to stay, and restless determination of the Viklang Andolan. It was more than a battle in law courts; it showed that it was our common strength, which told everyone that however big the opponent was, justice could be sought.

CHAPTER 4

STRUGGLE BEYOND CONNECTIVITY

As I waited in that courtroom for another adjourned hearing in my case against Reliance Jio, it dawned on me that my fight was never about internet speed, it was something much larger than it. It had grown into something much more vital, something that echoed the very essence of Viklang Andolan. The demand and struggles for faster internet became a metaphor for the greater struggle for dignity, access, and justice that the disabled community face across Rajasthan. The delay was nothing but the manifestation of what we had battled within the movement for long - systemic neglect and apathy.

The Viklang Andolan was not a child born out of one protest but a collective fire in the minds of thousands of disabled people of Rajasthan, who had borne years of systemic apathy. The movement was formally launched on May 22, 2016, under Mr. Ratan Lal Berwa who has given up his livelihood to wholly invest himself in this cause. It was a bold, unprecedented move in a state

where the community of disabled people was frequently marginalized and ignored. It was from that first day of protest in Jaipur's Jyoti Nagar T-Point that the Andolan became a movement to reckon with.

The initial demands were simple but drawn from the very depth of the disabled community's need - a better pension deal, equal access to government schemes, and removal of all barriers that had excluded us from living life in society. And above these concrete demands, the Andolan was also a sign of reclaiming our dignity. It was our answer to saying, *"We exist, we matter, and we will no longer be ignored."*

My association with them started at a time when the movement was building steam and adding to it my skills as a social worker and commitment to justice. My role as the head of our social media team allowed me the opportunity to make our voices reach further places than Rajasthan. We used the power of social media to share our stories, document our struggles, and get support. Social media bridged the gap between our physical protests and the larger audience we needed to reach.

But even as the movement picked pace, we still had to deal with issues that spoke at many levels of the systemic neglect we were fighting against. Personal struggles with Reliance Jio only made my fight more nuanced. For some, it may appear as a minor problem with slow internet. A lot of people might even think I am making a big deal out of such a minor issue but for me, slow

internet became a barrier in delivering my duties to the Andolan. Whenever there was a delay in sharing updates or organizing campaigns, it was yet another reminder of the broader delays in society as a whole when it came to recognizing and acting on the rights of disabled individuals.

The slow internet speed became a symbol of something much more profound, something much more uncontrollable; that access was a struggle forever. Be it the physical inaccessibility of public places, or an inclusive policy that did not exist, or the dismissive attitude that we often found, the disabled community of Rajasthan had to wage a daily battle just to be seen and heard. My fight against Jio wasn't just about connectivity—it was a movement against that kind of mentality, which let such neglectable situations continue.

The Andolan was also a struggle, in every conceivable way for access. It was our way to establish that education, employment, healthcare, and public infrastructure are rights and not privileges they have been denying us for so long. It demanded recognition and guarantee of these rights. And in that stride, it spoke to the frustrations and aspirations of thousands of disabled people who had been shunned by society.

Being part of the Andolan as the social media head, I drew strength from the very people for whom we were fighting for. With every protest, with every rally, and with

every new encounter with fellow activists, it reminded me why this work was so important, why I cannot stop. So many tales of hope and resolve motivated me to go forward, no matter what was ahead of me.

One particular incident, which strengthened my resolve, was that of Mr. Sharad Tripathi, a dedicated and sightless activist, who faced severe consequences for supporting the movement. Sharad did not resign from his job—he continued to support the movement while holding his official position. Because of this, the government asked him to step aside and remain at home. During this period, Sharad served as a crucial link between the government and the disability rights movement, facilitating communication and dialogue. This role was encouraged by the then Disability Commissioner, Mr. Dhannaram Rajpurohit. Despite his cooperation with the authorities, action was still taken against him. Eventually, the government acknowledged its mistake and reinstated him to his position. Sharad, supported by the Andolan, fought for two years to reclaim his livelihood. His reinstatement was a victory not only for him but for the entire community—a testament to what might be accomplished when we stand together.

It was not merely a victory for individuals, the Andolan was a movement towards systemic change. Through vigorous advocacy, we could secure major policy wins—increased pensions, digitization of disability certificates, and eliminating discriminatory restrictions within

programs like Palanhaar, among others. These were hard-won and often came at great personal cost to those who fought for change, but they marked important steps toward the more inclusive society we wanted.

For me, the connection between my personal struggle and the larger movement started to become crystal clear as my fight with Jio progressed. This was because with every court hearing coming up, each hearing resembled more of the street protests we had carried out back in Jaipur. Just as we demanded from the government recognition and respect, I demanded from a corporation which had failed its customers accountability and action. In this sense, both battles were founded on the same principles that was justice, dignity, and the refusal to be treated as an acceptable option when it comes to negligence.

Looking back, I realize that my battle with Jio has never been about a faster Internet at any point of time. It has been more of a fight against neglect and indifference-of demanding better for myself as well as the community I was representing, to refuse letting systemic barriers define what we could achieve.

It taught me that while every struggle, no matter how personal, is part of a fight for justice, my own fight against Reliance Jio is one small thread in the tapestry of our movement. It reminded me that the impact of even the smallest battle matters. And continuing my struggle, not only inside and outside the court, but also

within the Andolan, I was assured that this was soon going to change, when dignity and access would no longer be a privilege but a right for all.

CHAPTER 5

THE COST OF JUSTICE

The battle I fought, quite literally, was not only in courtrooms and tedious case files preparation; it was also within myself. Every passing day made the fight against Reliance Jio more personal than purely legal or technical in nature. It evolved into a highly personal battle for dignity, respect, and recognition—all of which had fueled my work as a social worker and as a part of the Viklang Andolan. From the complaint over slow internet speeds, it had evolved by then into a wider fight against apathy and systemic abandonment, not only at the corporate level but also by those who are entrusted to protect the weak.

Having worked for years with the Viklang Andolan on rights issues pertaining to accessibility, pensions, and respect for disabled people, I thought I knew what it was to face systemic challenges. I had seen how red tape could delay the most straightforward policies and watched officials shrug off proper concerns with empty words. However, this legal battle over Reliance Jio

brought all this to crystal clarity. That is why the indifference I had faced inside the courtroom was demoralizing and downright disheartening.

It was not just about the technicalities of the case, the arguments, or the evidence, I spent days preparing. It was standing up to a giant, one whose resources seemed endless, whose influence seemed to reach far beyond anything I could ever counter with my meager means. It was about finding out that this much-availed system, which was to serve as a grand equalizer, often helped the powerful get away instead of penalizing them.

Each of those hearings in court, it started to take a toll on my body. I'd wheel myself into a courtroom with bundles of evidence slung across my body with the complications from kidney failure weighing my body down along with the arthritic ache but still determined never to flinch. And there stood against me Reliance Jio's lawyers, filled to the brim with apathy, their arrogance as if this whole case was just an insignificant little nuisance to them. Baseless arguments were dished out, evidence non-existent to counter the valid claims, yet again, the system bent backwards to support them.

I vividly remember one such hearing session. Weeks had passed since my last surgery, and my entire body hurt. The courtroom was filled, but as I waited in my wheelchair to be called, I felt utterly invisible. All my efforts, evidence, voice felt pretty dwarfed in the face of

this corporate giant I was up against that is Reliance Group. Their lawyer accused me in court of having done it out of greed and seeking personal financial gain; however, nothing could have been further from the truth.

In one of my earlier cases against HomeShop18, I spent more than ₹16,000 to see how far a company can go to exploit its customers and see the end of it, and I had only asked for ₹5,000 in damages. There never was a money motive in my pursuit but rather keeping power-holders accountable. And this Reliance Jio case was no exception. It was not about money or personal gain but about principle and ensuring that these giant corporations would not exploit ordinary people relying on their services without consequences.

But the emotional price of this battle extended far beyond the courtroom. Every setback knocked off my confidence. There were days when I felt the burden of continuing almost unbearable. My rapidly deteriorating health adding to the baggage. My kidneys failed totally, and those surgeries left me even weaker than I had ever felt. The arthritic pain had made even ordinary mobility problematic, yet I pushed ahead. And as if all this suffering wasn't enough I lost my parents too. With no one by my side, my bed became my safe haven where I could gather my thoughts and prepare for the next step of my battle.

That, combined with the growing sense of despair that the system wasn't built for someone like me only added

to my already difficult life. Many courts and courthouses had neither ramps nor elevators because of which I had to wait downstairs and rely on others to communicate. I had to wait downstairs in my wheelchair. I requested passing lawyers in court to go and pass a message to the judge that a disabled person with an appeal file was downstairs waiting. The response I got was dismissive; they knew I was downstairs and with the file, but they intentionally refused to accept it. Judges appeared to be more interested in dismissing my case than in going over the evidence. Sometimes, it seemed that my being present was some sort of annoyance to the process. It was as if everyone was afraid of Mukesh Ambani's influence there; they were so afraid that upon seeing my case, no one was ready to take up my case and nobody was sent to talk to me.

Yet, I kept reminding myself why I was doing this. It was never about me. What I was fighting in the court was the same issue we were fighting against outside through the Viklang Andolan. But I was not fighting a personal battle here; I was furthering the fight that the Andolan had waged to create access, respect, and justice.

The apathy on both sides of Jio, as well as within the legal system, revealed and reflected the same kind of systemic neglect that people with disabilities faced daily. Slow internet speeds had brought my work for the Andolan to a grinding halt. It became a metaphor for many things: barriers that society often shrugged aside

as insignificant but that have profound impact on our lives nonetheless.

The case, though unresolved, became a point of turning for me. I started to see my battle with Jio not as a mere battle but as part of the larger movement against injustice and inequality that Viklang Andolan represented. Lessons learned in court soon came to reflect the values of what we stood for at the Andolan, which is that we must persevere, not let go of unity, and not back down even before injustice.

And I rolled into court once more, ready for another hearing in a fight not only for myself but for all of those disabled, made to feel invisible, every customer pushed aside, every individual that had been told that one's voice meant nothing. The verdict is still uncertain but I am sure of this one fact that I was never to be silenced again.

CHAPTER 6

THE COURT OF THE PEOPLE

There are times in life when you feel like the whole system is against you. When every forward step is taken back with more force and might, so that the fight for justice feels like going up a never-ending mountain. My journey in courts has had such moments but each step back just strengthened my determination to go forward.

The first time my complaint was dismissed, I just could not believe it. I had attended all hearings, with all evidence meticulously prepared and submitted. And yet, the court said that I was absent. That day, I went to face the judge Shyam Sundar Latha. I had a fever, but determination overwhelmed the weakness in my body. I sat by his car as night fell. When he emerged, I gathered myself enough to say that dismissing my complaint was not fair. I even showed him proof that I attended, but this did not seem to convince him to address my

concerns because he got angry instead. *"I'll dismiss your case again if you persist,"* he said curtly and sharply.

That experience should have weakened me, but it had a contrary effect on me. It just fueled my inner fire not to let such injustice go unpunished. I waited for hours in that wheelchair hoping that the people in power had some sense of decency left in them. The court was on the second floor, without any elevator and railings, the building was a stark architectural reflection of how disabled people face barriers every day. I was not in a position to reach the judge. I would hand over my file to lawyers who passed by my way, asking them to let the judge know that I was waiting downstairs. Their response just proved to me that there is no basic humanity left in those in power. They said and I quote *"They know you're downstairs, but they are not going to accept the file."*

I then resorted to online submission thinking that maybe technology would be the way around those systemic blockages. I did my appeal twice on the portal, where each time upon inquiry I was informed that it had not been received. The barriers were no less institutional than physical, being devised to protect the interest of the powerful and suppress any voices that dared to challenge such power.

However, in the thick of this struggle, on Twitter, I found a tiny ray of hope. I got in touch with Naveen Sharma, a consumer forum officer. He listened to my plea and promised to take care of the issue. He referred my case

to one of his colleagues, Deepak Verma, who contacted me to understand the details of the entire case. For a short while, it felt as though the tide might finally turn for me. But even they seemingly succumbed to the power of Mr. Mukesh Ambani's influence. Deepak Verma stopped taking my calls one day, and once again I was left standing in court holding my file, waiting for justice.

Every rebuff, every rejected appeal, every dismissed glance could have destroyed any soul in my place. However, they hardened my conviction that this was a fight necessary, not only for me, but for all those hundreds and thousands of people silenced by a system of justice built to protect the wealthy and powerful.

This is the reason why I brought my case before the "court of the people." If it would not be heard by the judiciary, then let it be told to the world. This book is my testimony, my way to ensure that this truth doesn't get drowned by bureaucratic indifference and corporate influence.

The flaws I encountered in the system were revealing a truth: that many already know, but few dare to face head-on; the system is designed to favor the mighty and the resource-rich. It is to make me and others who are like me feel little, exhaust us into being silent. But I have refused to be silenced.

I am unshakeable in my resolve. The fight is not just for high-speed internet; it's a fight for fairness and respect, for the right to be heard. This fight has taught me that

justice doesn't necessarily reside in a court of law; it lies in perseverance, in being able to stay strong, and in having the strength to speak up when everyone else is quiet.

This is not the end of the story. My file remains with me; the proof of two submissions online. I still await the response of the system to my plea. Still, however, I wait not in silence. I continue to fight because who else will fight my battle if not I?

CHAPTER 7

INSPIRING A MOVEMENT

As I continued to fight against the corporate giant, my battle was no longer just my own. It became a source of inspiration for thousands of others like me. It began as a quest for justice in my own case, but it has also become an inspiration for the disabled community and even other people to stand up and fight. The story touched so many who have been neglected, silenced, and met with systemic challenges that it became a reason to believe that even the smallest voice could stand against the loudest powers.

Through the movement, I was surrounded by many tales of courage and strength as well. Our movement became the collective voice of the disabled people across Rajasthan, unifying thousands of them. Many of them had carried on lives of quiet struggle, tolerating the barrier of inaccessibility and societal negation on a daily basis. But through the Andolan, they found not only unity

but also a platform through which they got to express their aspirations and frustrations.

I often think of Sharad Tripathi, who is visually impaired but is an activist just like I am. His fight for reclaiming his job back after he was wrongly dismissed from it became an inspiration to the entire Andolan. It was with collective support of the movement that he emerged victorious and reminded us of what we could do together. Such countless acts of solidarity is what built the foundation of the Viklang Andolan. Hundreds of disabled people from across Rajasthan made sacrifices just to join our 27 days protest at Jyoti Nagar T-Point in Jaipur. They come together amid physical and financial hardships just to demand better pensions, equal access to government programs, and above all to live with dignity. Each day, new faces would join us, proving the power of collective action.

What really touched my heart during those protests were the shared purposes among each of the people joining us. Many had personal stories of being discriminated against, excluded, and made to feel invisible. But not only did they turn these pains into action, by doing so, they also infused a sense of belongingness in the Andolan, the hope not only for the present generation but also that of generations to come..

Even beyond the confines of our disabled community, our fight inspired others to join hands. Social workers and activists felt that our plight was similar to their cause

against institutionalized injustice. The amount of overflowing support we received from these allies further reminded us that the pursuit of dignity is universal-this cuts across disabilities, profession, or background.

It was a very personal legal battle I had with Reliance Jio, yet for many, it had become a symbol of resistance unknowingly. It showed that no matter what the odds are, it is possible to stand up against it. It also reinforced the fact that when we fight with unity, our voices get louder and change becomes possible.

Through the Viklang Andolan and my very own struggle, I have learned that hope doesn't wait for us— we need to generate it within ourselves. Together, we can then create a world where dignity and justice no longer remains a distant dream but a reality for everyone.

CHAPTER 8

A CALL FOR JUSTICE

As we reach the end of this book, I remember all that it encompasses—a journey that tested my belief, my patience, and my trust in justice. What was once a struggle just to get decent internet, transpired into something much more than just that - A fight for dignity, respect, and accountability. Never was that fight just about me-it was about fighting a system that lets the powerful brush off the voices of the ordinary.

Through these pages, I share my struggles-personal, legal, and emotional, while laying bare the hurdles against me, from the indifferent corporate giant to the flaws in our system of judiciary which protects the influential and marginalizes the vulnerable. But most important, I have shared with you my unrelenting commitment to continue the fight, even when the deck was stacked against me.

What I learned from all of this is what I hope you, the reader, will learn as well. This battle has opened my eyes

to the fact that justice does not fall into our lap, it needs to be fought for. However miniscule the problem might be, whether it's slow internet speed, or something monumental, like the lack of systemic accountability, any and every fight for justice matters. Every battle, no matter its size, is one step closer to making the world a fair, just society where accountability is not a privilege but a right.

I have learned that the way to justice is never direct. There are many barriers, delays, and sometimes even doubt. However, these must not be our weaknesses; they must instead make us more resolute. The powerful survive on our silence, the willingness with which we let things just go away. Standing up, making our voices heard is what breaks this cycle of complacency and demand to have what we deserve.

This was not just the story of how I fought Reliance Jio, one of the biggest industrial giants. This is my testimony to the human spirit that can stand against anything. It is an indication that no matter what the situation, our voices are going to matter. We stand small against the giants, but with the strength to stand up and hang in there is what makes a person strong.

To all the readers, I leave you a call to stand up for what is right. The world often is unfair and the systems we place our trust in sometimes fail. But that is not a reason to keep silent. Do not let the scale of a problem discourage you from taking a stand. Small actions can

lead to ripples of change, whether it's a personal grievance that has an impact on your daily life or a greater societal injustice affecting many.

Change starts when one is unwilling to accept the status quo, deciding that enough is enough, and demanding better - not just for one's own sake but also for those who cannot fight for themselves. The reason for fighting against injustice is to win, certainly, but mostly to stand up and make oneself noticed. And each time you denounce injustice, you are planting the seeds for a better tomorrow.

Justice is not a destination; it's a journey that needs perseverance, courage, and hope. It is a journey filled with challenges and obstacles; still, if I had my way, I'd say it's worth the walk. In my case, my fight may be personal and private, but it has made me realize that the journey to justice is not easy. Strength is needed for setbacks, determination for resistance, and faith in believing that all efforts will be fruitful one day.

My fight is not even close to over, but I know that this has been a fight worthwhile. As I learned and grew along the way, these experiences have molded me, strengthened me, and gave me purpose. I hope that by reading this story, it will encourage you to pick up the fight against your battles-whatever they may be-be they small or daunting.

Don't underestimate the power of your voice. Don't underestimate the power of standing up for what's right.

Remember that change doesn't come overnight, but it does when ordinary people don't take that injustice just lying down. So step forward. Let your voice be heard. Challenge those injustices. Not just for you, but for all the people who cannot and would not have had the strength to fight.

Together, we can build a world where dignity, fairness, and justice prevail, not as a dream, but as our present realities. A world where everybody's voice matters, where no one is silenced merely because of their situation or social standing, and raising your voice for what is right will be met with respect, not with resistance. After all, at times the finest victory is the one that resounds within hearts and minds of the people, not necessarily those that are won in a court of law. It is the kind of victory that can inspire change and ignite the flame of courage in each of us and reminds us that humanity is not lost.

This fight is not just mine; it belongs to us all. This is a battle against apathy, neglect, and inequality, and far from over. It is just the beginning.