

Activists fume, demand action

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Representative image

NEW DELHI: Even though DDA officials denied that Rishi Raj Bhati's disability had anything to do with the rescinding of his appointment, activists fumed at the alleged discrimination. The issue assumes significance as only recently did Parliament pass the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, to bring more infirmities under its ambit.

As Javed Abidi, convener of Disability Rights Group, told TOI: "If this had happened in the '90s, it won't have come as a shock. But it's happening when we have a strong disability Act in place. This is outrageous." Abidi sought strict action against DDA officials.

Activists demanded that DDA take back Bhati. "This is shocking. Those who did this should remember that it can happen to anyone. Disabled people are people first. We need to change the mindset," said Anjlee Agarwal, founder and executive director, Samarthyam.

Abidi said that at a time when the Prime Minister was leading the campaign to empower disabled people, such incidents should be taken seriously. "There is a need to take stringent action against officials. Only then will people take the issue seriously. This is as serious as outraging the modesty of a woman or child labour. The person should file a court case against DDA," said Abidi.

Activists said there was a need to sensitise people. "Efforts are being made to empower disabled people and sensitise people. Processes have been put in place, but we need to challenge the mental barrier at all levels. There is need to bring about an attitudinal change," said Charulekha Khandelwal, senior manager at Action for Ability Development and Inclusion.

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