

This braveheart scaled peaks despite polio

Himanshu Bhatt | TNN

Surat: At 51, this woman has will power as high as the Mount Everest. With one leg, Rekha Pansania climbed Pindari Glaciers some 20,800 feet above the sea level in Himalayas when she was 35 and this she did after covering 30 km for 13 days to reach there. She also walked 64 km during the Amarnath yatra in 2003. Besides, she has also taken physically-challenged children on a trekking expedition to Kullu-Manali in 2008.

"You don't need two legs to climb the Himalayas. If you have the will power, you will succeed," Rekha told TOI. She was afflicted with polio at the age of three which rendered her one leg incapable of any function. Later, she got a job in the fisheries department of the Gujarat government and lived in Ahmedabad and Gandhinagar.

Her passion for rock climbing and trekking took her to the Himalayas in 1989. This became a regular affair thereafter. However, she never lost focus of her aim of helping other physically challenged and became one of the founders of Surat Disable Welfare Trust.

She took VRS in November 2009 to take care of 20 physically-challenged girls in Surat. Today, she is the mother and father to 20 of them, who are put up at the trust hostel at the city's Piplod area. She says, "I get emotional support from my family, but these girls aged between 8 and 28 have no one to take care of." Majority of the girls are tribals. "Nature has a funny way of balancing things. When it takes away a limb, it does fill you up with extra energy," Rekha said.



Polio-afflicted Rekha Pansania, 51, climbed Pindari Glaciers 20,800 feet above the sea level in Himalayas when she was 35. Now 51, she's doing her bit for others not as lucky as her. She runs a home for 20 disabled girls in Surat