

AGAINST ALL ODDS

Just like any other 15 years old, **Rizwan**, was a dynamic teenager belonging to a lower middle class family of seven, including 4 brothers and one sister.

He was a **10th grade student** in local high school, an excellent cricket player, taking interest in physical activities as he wanted to become an army **commander**, after reading a heroic story of a commander, defending his home land and helping destitute people.

He was physically fit, full of energy, and there was no reason for him to think of any thing less than becoming an army commander, until the devastating **earth quake of 8.6 magnitude hit his home town on October, 8th 2005.**

At 8: 40 A.M he was sitting along beside his elder brother, Naseer Ahmad who happened to be his classmate, totally unaware of what was waiting for him in the very near future.

He was just a few seconds, behind his elder brother along with everyone else, rushing out to the safety of the open skies, when the earth was shaken, below their feet, a solid cemented wall fell on his back.



Rizwan, was one of the 10 seriously injured , unaware of what had happened to him, while Naseer Ahmad his elder brother was stunned, and did not know what to do.

Rizwan, was taken out of the debris 2 hours-after the devastating earthquake, transferred to a local hospital by some volunteers. He was unconscious, and the entire village of Khawas, Distt Mansehra, was praying for his full recovery.

But **Rizwan's** back was broken and so were his **dreams, though** he was still not yet aware of it all.

I was shocked to know that, I was not able to move my legs and I had no control on my bowel and bladder, yet for quite sometime, I thought, it was all temporary.



I was not ready to believe that I had sustained permanent damage to my spinal cord and I would never be able to regain voluntary control on my legs and above all I, will not be able to become the man of my dreams, an army commander.

The worst part of it all was to know that I, will always be dependent on my family and will never be able to take care of

myself, I can't imagine being bed bound , doing nothing what so ever “**Rizwan says**”.

Rizwan, further reported that he had lost every hope of an active independent life, till he was transferred by **Gillanai hospital Abbottabad**, to **Paraplegic Centre, Hayatabad Peshawar**, for **treatment & rehabilitation**.

“**That’s where, I was able to see some light at the end of tunnel**”.

“**At Paraplegic Centre**, I met a lot of more people with spinal cord injuries of different kinds, passing through different stages of rehabilitation, including vocational training. It was the 1st time after the disaster of the October, 8th 2005, when I realized that, I may have lost my legs and I may not be able to become an army commander, but I will be able to live an independent life with dignity and honor. With tears in his eyes, **Rizwan says**, that though he still dreams about being an army commander, yet, he has slowly started thinking about becoming a **computer operator**.

Rizwan, is now independent, in wheel chair activates, he has already started to walk with callipers



and crutches on even surfaces. He knows, a lot more about his disability and has learnt how to take care of himself and how to prevent future complications, like pressures sores, bladders infection, stiff joints or contractures etc.



He is now anxiously looking forward to start learning computer skills, so that he may be able to continue his studies in order to live an independent life with dignity and honor.

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For more information regarding Paraplegic Center, please visit our website www.paraplegiccenter.org