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- [Columns](#)
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## Physically challenged students set to turn entrepreneurs

Vazhithala (Ker), Sep 16, PTI:

**Thirty physically challenged students have developed a portal which will enable them to turn entrepreneurs and be independent.**

The students were given a year-long training by the Sharjah headquartered International Management consultancy service provider, Support Links Worldwide under an entrepreneurial training initiative-- 'Mission Employment' for the physically challenged persons.

It was launched in August last year in association with Santhigiri College of Computer Sciences at Vazhithala in Idukki district. Activity based training to develop leadership skills and improving communication skills was imparted, says, Saji Itoop Thomas, Director of Support Links.

The training has seen a world of difference among the students, who were shy, uncommunicative and self conscious about their disability, he said.

They have developed portal-- bslips.com, an Internet based data reservoir that provided listing of businesses and professionals to enable easy access for customers to avail services. The portal will be launched soon.

Sherin Joseph (32), was a nursing student at Mumbai's Jaslok Hospital in 2002, when fate willed it otherwise.

"I had lot of dreams and ambition. I was a good at academics, had lots of friends and loved shopping. But one day on her way to hospital I tried to cross a railway track, slipped and fell on the track, which totally turned my life upside down," she says.

Sherin was unconscious for three months and was in hospital for eight months. "I was a bubbly chirpy person and could not believe the transformation. After the accident, I was like a small kid. I could not brush my teeth, comb hair or eat food on my own without any help," she said.

When Sherin heard about the course, she told her relatives that she would like to join it and got admission. "All that we thought was impossible, we are making it possible now," she says in a voice brimming with confidence.

Thirty-two-year old Binsi Thomas was struck by polio at a young age and is wheel chair bound.

Binsi, a postgraduate in Political Science, says the course helped to boost her morale and self confidence. "We were provided activity based training".

"The training has taught us that all the limitations are in our minds. If we succeed in overcoming that, there are no boundaries we cannot cross," Binsi, who was brought up in Rajasthan said.

Other students include Aneish, who is paralysed waist down and 20-year-old Emyline, who has the growth of a 5-year-old. Despite their challenges, they have worked hard and succeeded in completing their course, Thomas said.

The students also undertook a 15-day roadshow covering about 1800 km and visiting various educational institutions in the state to talk about their portal, which will be launched this month.

The entire documentation, uploading and updating of the portal and pages were managed and operated by the students. An office had already been set up with advanced computer facilities for running bslips.com, Thomas said.

The portal's global marketing is being undertaken by Support Links and the data collected by the marketing wing would be onpassed online to Santhigiri office of bslips.com.

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There would be a tariff for listing, which varies for individuals, companies and institutions. The revenue generated would be utilised for paying salary to the 30 students and running future batches, he said.

The portal offers mainly directory listing which helps the customer to have a better knowledge of the service provided by the suppliers.

The project developers are hoping that the portal would succeed so that their plans to train 30 physically challenged students every year becomes a reality.

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By: KV Suryanarayanan  
on: 16 Sep 2009 11:06 am

I am glad to note that thirty physically challenged students have developed a portal which will enable them to turn entrepreneurs. The physically challenged people have got lot of inborn talents and talents that come to them by the grace of God. They need to be encouraged and supported by all means. It will be nice if the IT majors, viz. Infosys, Wipro, TCS, Cognizant, Robert Bosch, Perot Systems, Philips, Siemens, L&T Infotech, etc., provide greater opportunities in their companies to these unfortunate sections of the community. I understand that some of them are already doing their bit in this direction, but this needs to be reinforced and sizeable opportunities should be given to these people, so that they could stand tall, assert themselves and take up challenging jobs and get trained in appropriate areas for their development.

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By: Saji Thomas  
on: 18 Sep 2009 10:32 am

Your Suggestions are highly valuable. But there are many hurdles an organisation has to go through. 1) It is very difficult to find a physically challenged person with required education 2) Because there is no educational institution who have the infrastructure or resource to train them and to motivate them 3) Our society is not yet equipped to accept them 4) We do not have any building with barrier free environment We are not aware that one day all of us will get into this situation: by birth, accident, illness or age related issues. This community is maintained in a prison till death by able bodied people like us. It is high time we all join together to build a system for all of us to have a normal life in this state. We invite professionals and organisations to join hands with us to create a system that will help all of us at some point of our life. Remember: Most difficult situation in a person's life is when his mind is active and the body do not react to the signals send by the brain

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