



QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



Exciting News from Bahaal!

We are delighted to share that our founder, Sijo Varghese, has been selected as one of the fellows for the 2025 Serai Residency Fellowship at Nomad Eco-Retreat in Himachal Pradesh.

The Serai Residency is a three-week retreat that brings together artists, educators, writers, and changemakers from the Global South to pause, reflect, and immerse themselves in work that matters deeply to them. Nestled amidst the serene Deodar forests of Himachal, Serai offers private cottages, shared meals, nature walks, and a vibrant space for collaboration and inspiration.

This fellowship will give Sijo the invaluable time and space to focus on a project close to his heart, continuing Bahaal's mission of restoring dignity and hope for people with spinal cord injuries, while drawing on the serenity of the mountains and the fellowship of like-minded changemakers.



From the Founder Sijo Varghese

This year, on World Spinal Cord Injury Day, the theme was Fall Prevention and Spinal Cord Protection, a theme that speaks deeply to me. As someone who has lived through the life-changing impact of a spinal cord injury, I know how a single moment can alter everything.

Many of these injuries can be prevented. Too often, they happen because of things we think of as harmless, such as rash driving, climbing without safety measures, or taking risks during leisure activities. I especially worry for our young people, whose lives can change in an instant because of one reckless choice.

Equally important is what happens right after an injury. A calm and careful first response, not moving the injured person and getting immediate medical help, can make all the difference.

Let us come together to spread awareness, educate our youth, and create safer spaces for everyone. Together, we can reduce the number of spinal cord injuries and protect the futures of countless families.



This month, our founder, along with colleagues from NCHAT-IITM, visited the [Good Samaritan Rehabilitation & Training Centre](#) (GSRTC) in Kannur. The visit was an inspiring experience, offering a glimpse into the remarkable work GSRTC does to support accident survivors and people with disabilities.

GSRTC (Good Samaritan Rehabilitation & Training Centre) is a centre run by the Samaritan Trust since 2017, focused on providing support to accident survivors, persons with disabilities, especially paraplegic patients. Their mission is “back to life”

GSRTC provides free holistic rehabilitation, including physiotherapy, counselling, skill development, and entrepreneurship support, all aimed at restoring independence and dignity. Their inclusive facilities and commitment to empowering individuals align closely with Bahaal’s mission.

During our visit, we explored the potential for future collaborations, from wheelchair skill training to skill-training initiatives and peer-support programs. We believe such partnerships can create stronger pathways for recovery and empowerment for people with spinal cord injuries.

This visit marked the beginning of a promising relationship, and we look forward to working together to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those we serve.

Inspiration on Wheels - Mr. Sivan



Born in the quiet village of Nedumkaruna in Wayanad, Kerala. Sivan grew up as the fourth of five children in a family that faced many hardships. Poverty shaped his early years, forcing him to leave school to work as a helper in households from the age of 11. His father worked as a daily wage labourer, and his mother suffered from medical conditions, but Sivan never let those challenges shake his dreams. As a young boy, he often dreamed of building a small house where his family could feel safe and secure.

Life took a difficult turn when, at just 15, Sivan lost his father to an infection caused by a work injury. Overnight, the responsibility of supporting the family fell on his young shoulders. Determined and hardworking, he took on all kinds of jobs, including climbing tall areca nut trees to earn a better wage. Slowly, he began saving for his dream of a home, until tragedy struck again.

In November 2001, at the age of 20, Sivan fell from a tree while harvesting areca nuts, sustaining a severe spinal cord injury that left him paralysed below the chest. The years that followed were some of the toughest of his life. He spent a long time in Kozhikode Medical College, undergoing surgeries, physiotherapy, and battling complications like pressure sores. Despite the pain and setbacks, Sivan held on to hope, determined to rebuild his life and find new ways to move forward. There were moments of despair when the dream he once held dear felt out of reach.

Yet, Sivan's spirit refused to be broken. A significant turning point came when he moved to Karunya Bhavan, a centre in Kannur dedicated to the rehabilitation of people with spinal cord injuries. There, he not only learned skills for independent living but also discovered a new purpose, supporting others like himself.

Today, Sivan lives with hope and dignity. His journey, marked by resilience and determination, has transformed him into a beacon of encouragement for many. As a peer trainer, he now guides others with similar injuries, helping them rebuild their confidence and find meaning in their lives. Through his work, he has turned his own challenges into a source of strength for others, proving that life on wheels can still move forward with courage and purpose.

Sivan's story reminds us that even in the face of life's hardest challenges, strength can grow from struggle, and new dreams can rise on the wheels of inspiration.



Onam celebration at Karunya Charitable Trust for the Disabled, organised by the C Madhavan Memorial Library, for a day filled with joy and togetherness. The event was graced by Kuthuparamba ACP K V Pramodan as the chief guest.

Participants enjoyed a traditional sadya, received new clothes, and took part in fun, festive activities with the team. The celebration was a vibrant reminder of community, sharing, and togetherness, spreading smiles and happiness all around.

Moments like these create cherished memories and strengthen the bonds within our community. The spirit of Onam truly brought everyone closer, leaving everyone with warmth and joy to carry forward.



Bahaal Foundation recently organised the “Spine in Motion” program, a five-day initiative held from September 15th to 19th, 2025, dedicated to empowering people with spinal cord injuries through movement, knowledge, and connection. The program was facilitated by [The National Centre for Assistive Health Technologies, IIT Madras \(NCAHT-IITM\)](#), funded by [The Pollination Project](#), and graciously hosted by Karunya Charitable Trust for the Disabled.

Over five days, the program offered a rich mix of activities designed to build confidence, skills, and resilience:

- Group Exercises: Gentle workouts to improve strength and flexibility.
- Transfer Training: Safe transfer between wheelchair, bed, and other surfaces.
- Wheelchair Mobility: Practice on ramps, uneven paths, and outdoor terrain.
- Skill Training: Tips for daily living and self-care independence.
- Knowledge Sharing: Insights on spinal health, mental well-being, and rights.
- Motivational Talks: Stories of resilience from SCI survivors.
- Fun Activities: Games and icebreakers for joy and bonding.

The impact was remarkable; participants expressed feeling more confident in managing their mobility and daily tasks, while caregivers gained valuable knowledge on better supporting their loved ones. The event fostered hope, encouraged peer support, and created a strong sense of community.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to [The Pollination Project](#) for believing in our vision, to [NCAHT-IITM](#) for their expert facilitation, and to Karunya Charitable Trust for the Disabled for hosting us so warmly. Our deepest thanks also go to all the supporters, volunteers, and well-wishers who made this program possible. A special thanks to [Kabes Media](#) for beautifully documenting the entire program, capturing the stories, smiles, and spirit of empowerment that defined the five days.

The success of “Spine in Motion” inspires us to continue creating more opportunities that restore freedom, dignity, and hope for people with spinal cord injuries. We look forward to organising many more such programs in the future.

Upcoming Plans for Bahaal Foundation (Next Quarter)

- Mind over Matter: This project will provide psychosocial support sessions through counselling, peer mentorship, and group therapy for SCI survivors.
- Spine in Motion – Next Edition: Bringing our much-loved rehabilitation and wheelchair skill training program to more survivors.
- Mind the Spine Awareness Program: Hosting community campaigns on spinal health, fall prevention, and early care.
- Purple Fest 2025 Participation: Joining the Purple Fest 2025 to connect, learn, and collaborate with others in the disability inclusion space.
- Team Expansion: Welcoming new team members, collaborators, and volunteers to strengthen our outreach and support programs.
- Fundraising Drives: Launching community events and online campaigns to sustain ongoing projects.
- Community Outreach & Home Visits: Reaching out to new SCI survivors for assessments and guidance
- Caregiver Training Workshops: Equipping families with skills in safe transfers, pressure sore prevention, and mental well-being.
- Volunteer Engagement: Recruiting and training volunteers to support our initiatives.
- Monitoring & Evaluation: Tracking progress, collecting feedback, and preparing quarterly reports to guide future action.

Stay Connected & Support Our Mission

Your support plays a vital role in restoring freedom, dignity, and hope for individuals with spinal cord injuries. Join us in making a difference by visiting our website and following us on our social media pages. Stay updated on our initiatives, success stories, and upcoming events. Together, we can create a more inclusive and empowering future!



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Bahaal Foundation is now officially registered as a Section 8 not-for-profit organisation