



# QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

## Bahaal Foundation: Our Journey in 2025

The year 2025 marked a meaningful beginning for Bahaal Foundation—a year of vision taking form and purpose turning into action.

On March 10th, 2025, Bahaal Foundation was officially registered, laying the foundation for our commitment to restoring freedom, dignity, and hope for people living with spinal cord injuries. What began as a deeply personal vision soon became a shared journey, shaped by collective belief and support.

One of our first milestones was the pilot project, Spine in Motion, implemented in association with Seva Dhamma. This pilot allowed us to take our ideas into real-world practice learning directly from the community, understanding lived realities, and refining our approach to rehabilitation, empowerment, and psychosocial support.

A defining moment in our journey was securing our first-ever funding from The Pollination Project. This support was more than financial, it was a powerful vote of confidence in our mission and the work we aspire to build. It strengthened our resolve and reassured us that compassionate, community-driven initiatives truly matter.

As we look back on 2025, we do so with deep gratitude. To our partners, mentors, supporters, participants, and well-wishers—thank you for believing in Bahaal Foundation, for standing with us in our early steps, and for walking this journey with trust and encouragement.

This is only the beginning. With the love, support, and shared commitment of our community, we move forward with hope, resilience, and a renewed determination to create lasting impact.



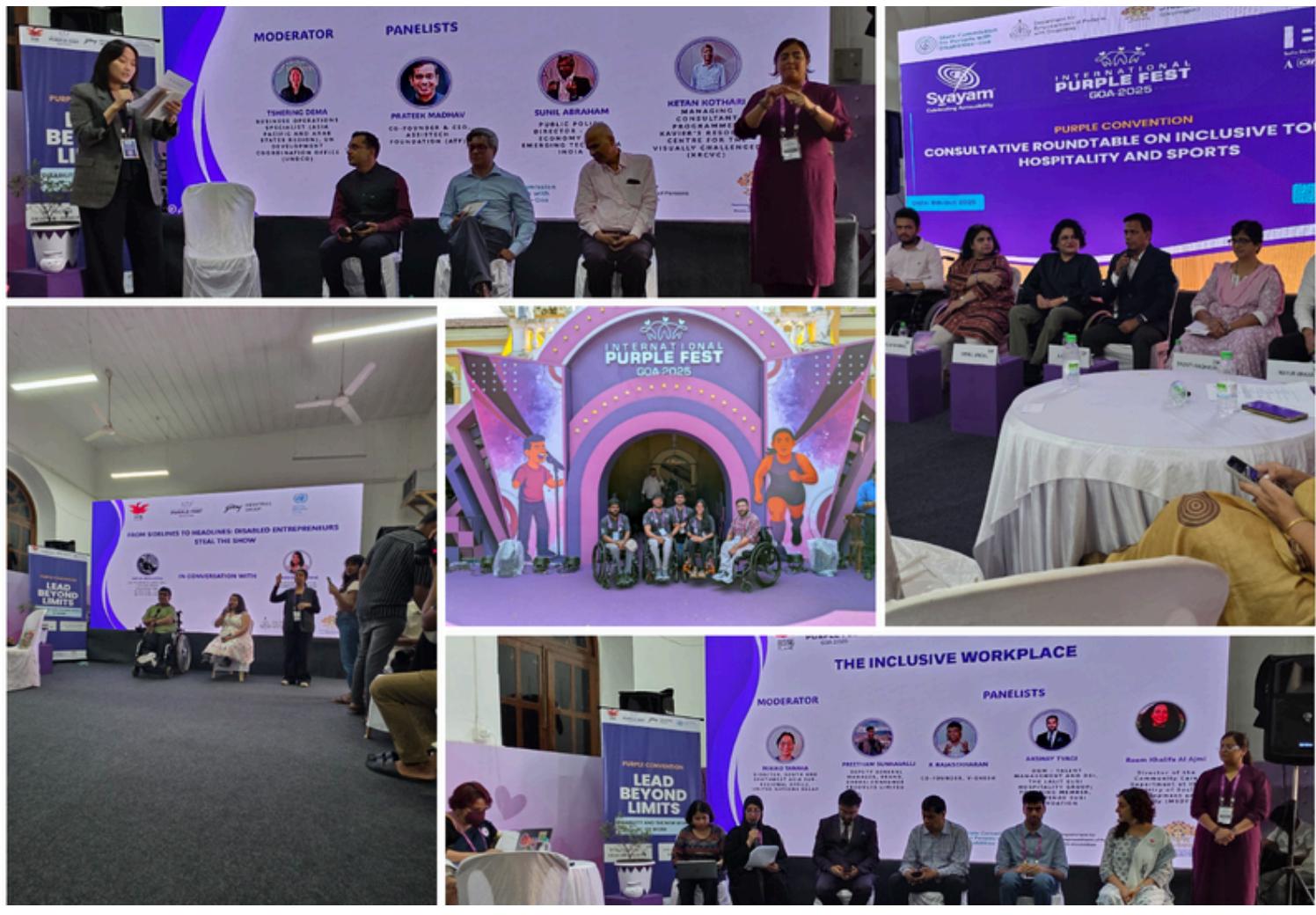
### From the Founder Sijo Varghese

As we step into a new year, I find myself filled with deep gratitude. Bahaal Foundation exists because of the courage of individuals living with spinal cord injuries, the trust of families, the dedication of our team, and the belief of supporters who stand with us. Each story we encounter reminds us why this work matters, not just to restore mobility or skills, but to restore dignity, hope, and a sense of purpose.

The year gone by has taught us the value of resilience and patience. Change does not happen overnight, but with consistency, compassion, and collective effort, meaningful progress is always possible.

As we enter this new year, we do so with optimism. Optimism that we can strengthen emotional well-being, expand support systems, and create more inclusive pathways for people rebuilding life after injury.

Thank you for walking this journey with Bahaal Foundation. Your belief fuels our work, and your presence makes our mission stronger.



The Goa Purple Fest was more than a celebration of inclusion—it was a powerful platform for dialogue, learning, and collaboration within the disability and accessibility ecosystem. Bringing together persons with disabilities, organisations, policymakers, innovators, and allies from across the country, the fest created a space where lived experiences met action-oriented solutions.

For Sijo Varghese, Founder of Bahaal Foundation, the Purple Fest offered a valuable opportunity to connect with individuals and organisations working across rehabilitation, mental health, assistive technology, accessibility, and disability rights. These interactions helped open meaningful conversations around shared challenges faced by people living with spinal cord injuries, particularly beyond medical rehabilitation, such as psychosocial support, community integration, and economic participation.

Through these engagements, new networks were established with grassroots organisations, researchers, disability advocates, and innovators. These connections have laid the foundation for potential collaborations—ranging from knowledge exchange and program partnerships to co-creating inclusive initiatives that strengthen long-term support systems for persons with disabilities.

Most importantly, the Purple Fest reinforced the importance of collective effort. It reaffirmed that sustainable change is possible when lived experience, empathy, and collaboration come together. The learnings and relationships formed during the fest will play a key role in shaping Bahaal Foundation's future programs and partnerships.

Bahaal Foundation looks forward to nurturing these networks and translating conversations into action—working together to build a more inclusive, accessible, and empowered future.

## Inspiration on Wheels - Mr. Poornachandran



My name is Poornachandran, and I am from Vellore, Tamil Nadu. I was 21 years old when my life took an unexpected turn. I had completed my diploma in Civil Engineering and was working as a junior site engineer with a private firm. I am the youngest in my family, with an elder brother and sister, and my parents are farmers.

On 19 June 2011, while plucking tender coconuts with my brother, I fell from a coconut tree. Though my brother tried to help me stand, I couldn't. I was rushed to the hospital, where doctors performed surgery and later informed us that I had sustained a spinal cord injury at the T11–L1 level.

The early days after the injury were extremely difficult. I spent a month in the hospital following surgery, unable to move my legs or feel any sensation below my waist. Shock, confusion, and fear overwhelmed me. I felt alone, believing I was the only person living with such a condition. Recovery was slow, and for nearly a year and a half, I stayed at home, struggling to come to terms with my new reality.

My journey began to change when I underwent rehabilitation at CMC Vellore. There, I met people with higher levels of injury who were living active, independent lives. Seeing their confidence and determination inspired me to push myself further. As I learned more about my condition, I realised that life did not end with my injury—there was still so much ahead to explore.

Today, I work as a Project Associate for the Wheelchair Skill Training Program at IIT Madras, where I also contribute user feedback for research and development. I currently work as a wheelchair skills trainer, supporting others to gain confidence, mobility, and independence. I draw deep inspiration from Vaidyanathan Sir, Co-Founder of the Ganga Foundation, whose life and work motivated me to overcome my limitations and believe in my own potential.

Beyond work, I live an independent life and am married to the love of my life—something I once thought might not be possible.

I am deeply grateful to everyone who supported me through this journey. I hope my life can serve as an inspiration to others facing similar challenges, reminding them that with support, perseverance, and belief, it is possible to rebuild life with dignity and purpose.



FLY Gosham 2025 was a joyful three-day gathering where people with disabilities came together to connect, interact, and celebrate life.

Filled with meaningful conversations, shared experiences, laughter, and moments of pure fun, the space fostered a strong sense of belonging and community.

Beyond celebration, the time together reminded everyone of the power of togetherness—of being seen, heard, and supported. FLY Gosham 2025 was not just an event, but a celebration of inclusion, friendship, and collective strength.

## **Serai Residency: Holding Space for Stillness, Stories, and Becoming**

At Bahaal, our work is rooted in lived experience, care, and long-term commitment. The Serai Residency came at a time when slowing down was not just welcome, but necessary.

Serai offered something rare, a gentle pause. Away from deadlines and constant decision-making, it created space to reflect, to sit with our stories, and to reconnect with why we do what we do. The calm surroundings and unhurried rhythm allowed thoughts to settle and clarity to emerge naturally.

For our founder, this residency became a deeply grounding experience. It was a space to revisit the journey that led to Bahaal and to shape Mind Over Matter, our psychosocial support initiative for people living with spinal cord injuries, with greater intention and emotional depth. Being held in a thoughtful, compassionate environment helped reaffirm that healing, change, and impact take time, and that slowing down is often where the most meaningful work begins.

Mind Over Matter did not take form in a meeting room or on a whiteboard—it took shape in stillness, reflection, and honest listening. The Serai Residency offered the kind of space that allowed this project to grow from lived experience rather than urgency.

What truly defined Serai was the sense of community. Conversations flowed with honesty, silences were respected, and shared moments of laughter and reflection built connections that will last far beyond the residency. It reminded us that social change is sustained not only by strategy, but by empathy, trust, and collective care.

Serai did not just help shape a project, it strengthened our conviction. We return with Mind Over Matter clearer in purpose, deeper in empathy, and firmly aligned with Bahaal's commitment to long-term, human-centred support for the spinal cord injury community.

We are deeply grateful for the care, trust, and community you offered. We carry this experience forward with renewed conviction, fuller hearts, and a stronger commitment to building compassionate, long-term support for people living with spinal cord injuries.



## Upcoming Plans for Bahaal Foundation (Next Quarter)

# WE ARE HIRING

## PROJECT COORDINATOR

- Coordinate project activities
- Support planning, timelines, and documentation
- Track progress and assist in reporting
- Assist in organising meetings, trainings, and events

**APPLY NOW**

+91 94812 77112

Email: [info@bahaal.org](mailto:info@bahaal.org)

# WE ARE HIRING

## COUNSELLOR – PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

- Provide individual and group counselling support
- Use empathetic, trauma-informed approaches
- Maintain confidential records and documentation
- Support emotional coping and resilience building

**APPLY NOW**

+91 94812 77112

Email: [info@bahaal.org](mailto:info@bahaal.org)

## 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!



[www.bahaal.org](http://www.bahaal.org)



[Bahaal@LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/bahaal/)



[Bahaal@facebook](https://www.facebook.com/bahaalorg/)



[Bahaal@Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/bahaalorg/)



[info@bahaal.org](mailto:info@bahaal.org)



[+91 9481277112](tel:+919481277112)

**Scan to visit our website**



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