

SOULFREE'S SEVENTH ANNUAL REPORT (2019-20)

HIGHLIGHT: Soulfree completes seven years of service on September 7, 2020.

VISION: To improve the quality-of-life of persons living with permanent paralysis due to spinal cord injury (SCI), with special focus on women and those living below the line of poverty.

MISSION: To enable Positively-Abled living through the provision of improved opportunities in:

- ➔ MOBILITY AND ACCESS
- ➔ MEDICAL SUPPORT
- ➔ REHABILITATION
- ➔ INDEPENDENT LIVING
- ➔ EMOTIONAL SUPPORT
- ➔ SEED FUNDING FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP
- ➔ COMMUNITY BUILDING
- ➔ EDUCATION
- ➔ EMPLOYMENT
- ➔ SPORTS
- ➔ SOCIAL REINTEGRATION
- ➔ ADVOCACY FOR DISABILITY RIGHTS AND WHEELCHAIR ACCESS
- ➔ SCI AWARENESS
- ➔ HOPE, MOTIVATION AND CONFIDENCE-BUILDING



PROGRESS REPORT:



1 Glimpse of few Gift Box Beneficiaries

- Monthly Stipend Provided to more than 20 people per month for the year
- Gift Boxes filled with **41** essential medical and day-to-day items provided to **550** persons living with SCI while struggling for survival below the line of poverty. The Total budget for this project was **₹ 15 lakhs**.

- **62** High-quality Wheelchairs Worth in nearly **₹ 8 lakhs**
- **37** Specially designed wheelchair cushions were provided with an expense of more than **₹ 40,000**
- **62** Airbeds valued in excess of **₹ 1.2 lakhs**
- For the first time a comprehensive Hospital Bed Donation Drive benefited more than **22** SCIs living under the most dire circumstances with an expense of nearly **₹ 4 lakhs**.

- A specialised and comprehensive program of support was instituted during the Quarantine Period comprising:

- **COUNSELLING:** For hygiene, self-confidence, depression, fear, safety measures to ensure good health during COVID-19.

- **FINANCIAL SUPPORT:**

QMSP or Quarantine Monthly

Stipend Program was instituted to support more than 16 people living without income during this period.

- **MEDICAL SUPPORT:** With the help of government sources, we were able to provide home-based nursing care for persons with severe bedsores, urinary complications and other critical scenarios.
- **DAY-TO-DAY ESSENTIALS:** Soulfree has received support from the government to ensure that all our beneficiaries, especially in Thiruvannamalai district, providing all our beneficiaries with grains, medical products and vegetables.

- **TOTAL:** With our INSPIRE Centre construction activities also being carried out at present, our annual expenditure has been greater than **₹ 50 lakhs**.



2 Overview of few Hospital Bed Beneficiaries



3 Person with severe bed sore receives treatments And Education in Bed sore Management

CHALLENGES:

❖ **COST:** Quarantine caused several essential products like latex gloves and catheters to double in price.

❖ **AVAILABILITY:** Products like wheelchairs, Airbeds and LED lights, which were being produced in China became completely unavailable. Also, as Chennai was under lockdown, products could not be sourced from our usual sources and we had to do a great deal of research and

identify vendors from other parts of Tamil Nadu.

❁ **CAREGIVERS:** Initially, several SCIs were struggling because caregivers were



4 Overview of Female Beneficiaries

unable to come for essential support. Once we started educating everyone that there is a special Government Order to ensure that Persons with disability had a basic right to receive vital care, this crisis was alleviated to a certain extent. Even otherwise, there is a dire scarcity of qualified caregivers who can be employed at reasonable charges. Soulfree has a plan to start Caregiver Training Programs whenever it becomes possible.

❁ **INCREASED RISK:** Persons with disability, and especially persons with higher level SCI are perhaps at highest risk to succumb to the virus attack because our lungs as well as immunity are compromised. With constant counselling, combined with educational and

awareness building exercises, we have tried to ensure that our beneficiaries stay safe during this difficult time.

❁ **ECONOMIC PRESSURE:** Several charitable organisations have been forced to halt operations or even close down due to the pandemic. However, Soulfree has been blessed with committed and dedicated staff, volunteers and donors and we have been able to continue with great momentum and build on our activities despite the quarantine period.



5 Discussion with District Collector And Team Regarding INSPIRE Centre

THE SILVER LINING

Adversity is a way of life for us at Soulfree. Perhaps because our lockdown is more or less permanent, we have easily adapted to the present challenges and continued all our activities and efforts to enable our beneficiaries. Not only have we survived, the current scenario has provided new avenues for us to thrive, with remote access and digital

participation becoming the norm, resolving mobility issues. Also, the pandemic brought focus on the atmosphere of fear, highlighting the tremendous difficulties caused by forced social isolation, exclusion and denial of access. We trust that it will bring people closer together and encourage us to unitedly work for a more open, inclusive society.

I have had the opportunity to raise awareness about SCI in the media, through online programs and also received recognition in the form of several awards this year, including from the Indian Medical Association and the Women Economic Forum. My presence at the [Vikatan Cinema Awards](#) and a [TEDx](#) talk have gone a long way towards raising awareness about the challenges faced by persons with Spinal Cord Injury in India and wheelchair users in general, due to social stigma and lack of accessibility.

We wish to express our deepest gratitude to all our supporters, our staff, volunteers and donors without whom none of this would be possible.

Yours Most Humbly,

Preethi S.

Co-founder

Soulfree, Thiruvannamalai

7 September 2020

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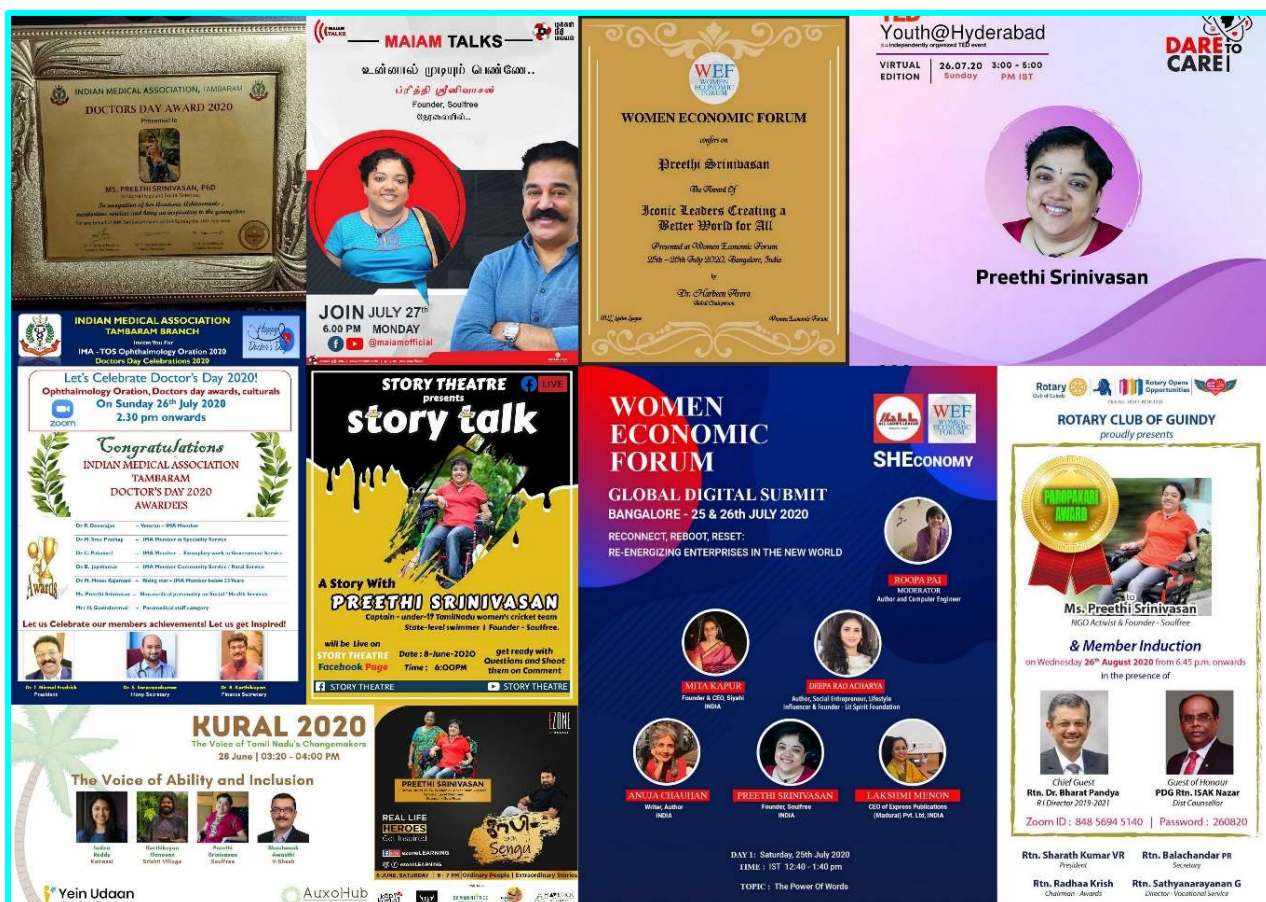
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Few Public Appearances and Awards