CASE STUDY

SUCCESS STORY OF DISABLED PERSONS:

Inspite of their limitation of accessibility the disabled excel in their field. Women with Disability face all sorts of problems very few encountered the problem and able to withstand with disability. Inspite of severity of the disability, several disabled persons have come up in life and become a standing role model for others.

To quote a few, the disabled persons with the professional qualification and also proving their talents to the world successfully. We are here to know about few WWD and their success story after their struggle.

Case Study-1

Ms. Amutha Shanthi
She is standing at the entrance of a Company with files. Oh, perhaps she might request employment expressing her disability, one might think….. Yes. Only half of this is true. She is seeking employment not for herself but for others ….like her. With broken feather she walks erect with confidence. She is young, beautiful, dynamic lady doing accounts work in a Theological Seminary in Madurai District of Tamilnadu. She is the only bread winner of her 4 member family. It is difficult to believe but absolute fact. Yes. Ms. Amutha Shanthy was born with one arm from her birth itself (80% of disability).

Ms. Amutha Shanthi, born on 28-06-1977 at Simmakal, Madurai in a lower middle class family. She was third one of the family. One elder brother and two sisters. Her physical disability was congenital. When she was born with one hand (She doesn’t have her left forehand) her mother Mrs. Jayamani burst out with a great agony and was in deep anguish. Relatives advised her mother, to leave the child in the hospital or in an orphanage due to their poor economic condition and social constrains. But her mother was not ready leave her child. She was the support and the confident builder of Ms. Amutha, Which made her to reach this position. The path Ms. Amutha shanthy treaded in the past was not the bed of roses but full of pricks and thorns. She could not crawl in her childhood. The troubles she had to undergo can never be expressed through words but can well be felt in one’s heart. She does not like to be looked after by each and every family member. She had joined in Avvai Ashram in Tirunelveli Dist. managed by Gandhigram Trust at the age of 11 for VI Std., Avvai Ashram is a residential hostel for destitute girls which gave her complete training and moulded her personality in all life skills. She also learnt there tailoring, candle making, camphor making etc. She got State Award in Essay Competition when she was studying her VI Std from then Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. (M.G.R.) This gave her self-reliance and motivated her to go forward. After that she completed her under graduation and post graduation with the help of the trust.

But, “the very girl who was referred by relatives as a bane to household has now lighting the lives of so many families – seeing this my heart is full” so says her mother Mrs. Jayamani with tears of joy.
Friend to Challenged Women

When she was working in the Seminary, after her working hours she used to spend her time to meet the various needs of Physically Challenged Women (PCW). She used to visit remote villages and identify challenged women in distress who knows no hold for their future. The conditions of many of these girls are very pathetic.

Their parents wouldn’t permit them to go outside from home. Due to acute poverty they don’t give them proper education. She talks to them lovingly giving courage and hope. She had to pacify and soothe their hearts with her loving words of solace and concern.

These challenged women immediately gather full energy on seeing Ms. Amutha Shanthy’s blooming face in spite of the fact she has been carrying on everything with just one hand. They instantly feel that she is their own sister and pour their hearts to her. Her feeling on oneness with the woes of challenged sisters and her deep concern for their welfare draws them towards her.

She says, ‘during weekends she used to go to their houses and meet them to understand their deplorable situation of discomfort. She bring them to training centre and show them how other challenged women affected with more disability lead a respectable life by earning their own livelihood. Putting them in a positive environment, slowly she change their outlook by feeding them with the soothing words of self-confidence.

She also reads situation vacant column in News Papers and visit small industries and private companies to identify vacancies. It would help her to arrange for the placement of deserving challenged women to suitable position.

Her care and service extends to Visually Challenged and deaf and dumb women. She used to write exams for Visually Challenged girls. She also does regular book reading for them. She gets numerous letters from her challenged sisters and brothers seeking solace and comfort. She answers every one of them giving them words of courage and confidence.
It’s always Possible

When asked what inspired Ms. Amuthashanthy to take such a decision to plunge into the service of Physically Challenged Women (PCW) she said, “For last 7 years she said that she got the blessed opportunity to associate closely with the world of PCW. The constant interaction with PCW in rural areas made her to think that she should act. This constant fellowship provided an in depth knowledge to the plight of PCW.

The needs are many. Some of them want to complete their education. Some are seeking an employment. Somebody wants wheel chair, crutches, tricycle etc. Ultimately they all expect a decent livelihood without depending on any one. Most of them are from very poor economic back ground, rather, struggling to maintain their livelihood.

She made a detailed research into the problems of PCW and subsequent personal visits to remote villages presented her clear action plan seeking permanent solution to their problems. It is a great pity to note that many of them are not even aware of the details of grants provided by Government for their development.

Ms. Amutha said “The deplorable condition is that even after many announcements of grants for the development of physically challenged, not even 1% reaches the ground level. The demonstrations, fasts are done by physically challenged in various districts is only to draw the attention of higher authorities to implement the statutes and grants already announced by the Government.”

Based on the above assessment and being a PCW by birth she is convinced that it is her prime duty to bring sunshine to the numerous lives and keenly felt the inner call to dedicate her life for the cause of rural based PCW. “Only a PCW knows the real situation of another PCW.”

Words of Ms. Amutha “No more weeping, no more blaming of any one above and doing – it is time to arise and awake and stop not till the goal of economic independence of PCW achieved. I strongly believe that mere economic independence without having faith in value of life will never result in contented life. All my efforts will go along with infusing positive approach in PCW by following cardinal value of life.”
The event that made her to focus her attention on rural PCWs (Physically Challenged Women), one she describes as “a pivotal moment in my life” was meeting a legless girl, hidden at the back of her parent’s home, neglected, shabbily dressed and malnourished. At their fourth meeting, the crushed nature of the girl became apparent, when she showed no interest in going to school, claiming that her only need in life was three meals each day. Ms. Amutha explains that “this is a prime example of the attitudes we are faced with overcoming every day when helping our PCWs”. While Ms. Amutha is reluctant to blame the parents, she must admit that it is common for PCWs to suffer mental abuse from them. This takes the form of seeing them as hopeless and lacking goals and dreams and the effect of this is all too often to make it reality. After this meeting, she reached the conclusion that a special organization, completely dedicated to rural PCWs, would be required to overcome the problem, empower these women, and enable them to stand on their own.

**Comfort to Challenged Women**

Ms. Amutha Shanthy has resigned her bread-winning job and started working full time for her cherished dream to become a reality from 2nd October 2005. And started a trust named Thiyagam Women’s Trust. It was founded in 2005 by Ms. Amutha Shanthy and three PCW friends. It started in a little shack, where 15 PCWs would tailor for a little income, earning between Rs.25 and 30 each day.

After a slow start, Thiyagam’s fortune picked up when Ms. Amutha had the chance to visit Mr. Anand, where apart from an individual donation for six electrical tailoring machines, devotional pilgrims agreed to donate each month’s rent until this very day. With the increased production from the machines, they could send finished articles in the area around the Madurai, receiving more media coverage and consequently more orders. Since then, the organization expanded and improved its ways of generating income for PCWs with the sale of various tailoring products, volunteer support, and financial backing by e.g. NGOs, banks, and corporations.

Ms. Amutha explains, “There are relatively few problems with running a women organization, one for PCWs at that, in the patriarchal Indian society. Overall, official institutions have been supportive, and we receive government funding. At the moment,
the Tamil Nadu government is proposing to implement a district federation for PCWs and hope this will be a good thing.”

She is now running a Tailoring Unit, Computer Centre, Stay home and self help group in Madurai in Tamilnadu, where 13 disabled women and 12 women from very poor families with little education have been provided job training and also earning. The poor women have also been provided free accommodation.

She is also running free tuition centers for poor children in 20 remote villages near Madurai, by employing 20 poor and qualified unemployed women (two of them are challenged women) and paying them honorarium.

At present, Thiyagam helps PCWs in twenty-two villages throughout Tamil Nadu which receive regular visits by a member of staff who sees all families. This personal bonding builds rapport and creates awareness everywhere Thiyagam goes. Additionally, one teacher is employed in each village who gathers statistics of PCWs and who has the authority and ability to deal with most cases. Those particularly notable are passed on to the office in Madurai.

Like a typical revolutionary, she has not thought about her own welfare or as to where she would get the resources from when she left her job and started this small service activity. Anybody who has an opportunity to meet this young lady and discuss the issues with her would be instantly impressed by her extraordinary commitment and conviction for the cause.

She says that the only way of ensuring that more physically challenged people are employed in public services is to sensitize them and launch an awareness campaign in their favour.

Counseling to challenge women has become a regular feature for her now. It’s unique sight to see the challenged women visit her place from far off places to get her guidance to make their livelihood meaningful. ‘It’s Always Possible’ attitude has been injected with physically challenged families during her village visits. Her very life inspires many PCW to take up an upright and meaningful life.
Several PCW tailors have banded together to start a cultural awareness programme, which frequently participates in cultural events at schools and other public functions, where PCWs perform dances or skits and recite poems with themes based on the topic of the event. Topics include social problems such as lack of water and pollution. Counselling is provided to rural PCWs and their families in a 75-km radius around of Madurai. Those who have benefitted from Thiyagam facilities are not forgotten, but are free to return anytime when they want or need to. Numerous PCWs have been married, and some have encountered problems between husband and wife, So Thiyagam has extended counselling to include married PCWs.

Because of her tireless endeavour, many have completed their studies, many have joined good employment, and still many have achieved laurels in cultural, sports field. She is not interested in any kind of awards or felicitations. She dedicates everything to her own challenged sisters. When asked, why she is not evincing any interest in awards, her crisp reply would be ‘if you do it to your own sister will you expect award or honour? I just fall like silent dew on the hearts of my numerous challenged sisters’. We come across in this world many great achievers who scaled the heights of success. Among these here is one who counts success of any physically challenged women as her own. Yes! She has no time to the thought of her own life. The journey of this humble soul is going to villages to wipe the tears of her own challenged sisters.

She has a vision to reach out to more and more of her challenged sisters in villages with a mission to enable them to join the mainstream.
Success story of Ms. Lakshmi

Born into a middle class family in the fifth month of 1973, Ms. Lakshmi is a victim of poliomyelitis right from when she was a one and a half year child (70% of disability). Ms. Lakshmi did her high school in TVS Sundaram School. Born with two siblings, a sister and a brother Ms. Lakshmi managed to complete her bachelor’s degree in commerce through correspondence education. She somehow educated herself with a diploma in computer applications in American college in Madurai (1993-1994) and learnt typography in both upper and lower cases.

Lakshmi’s Torment:

It wasn’t a cake walk for her to have acquired a degree. She was rejected to join a direct course at college. She was questioned on how she would come up with fellow students and make friends with them rather than focusing on her resilience which has made her to come so far. Every college refused to enroll her in direct education. Ms.
Lakshmi says that her father is her full support for all aspects in her life. It was her father’s support that she made it through schooling and college. He carried her to places with his bare hands without even crumbling her outfits. Ms. Lakshmi also opines her inconvenience in answering nature’s calls. She never uses toilets in the public place. After facing a hell lot of troubles and tribulations she is now an agent in a private insurance company earning an average of Rs.5000 per month and receives a monthly aid of Rs.1000 per month from the Government pension. Ms. Lakshmi’s face glows up when she hopes on to her two wheeler which she had got on her own without government’s support. Ms. Lakshmi is estimated to have a disability of seventy percent. Again it is not a plain sailing for Ms. Lakshmi to work as an agent. She was selected along with three others who were shortlisted from a group of 60 candidates. She has to reach out to people door by door and convince them for a policy in her company. She has been doing her job for over five years now, inspite of that she is not gifted with a consistent income and it depends on the number of clients she manages to pull.

Ms. Lakshmi reveals her displeasure when she tells there aren’t ample job opportunities for less than 3% people who are disabled. She also expresses minor fury when disabled people are treated in an inhumane manner. She also feels the indispensable need to stretch the upper age limit of writing government exam. Ms. Lakshmi attributes all of her success to her father and her incredible mentor, Mr. Radhakrishnan who is also a development officer in her office. She also adds that it is her Development Officer’s words which keep resounding in her head and give her hope.”Dependability is the worst disability” are those words. Now Ms. Lakshmi successfully says that she achieves a yearly target of 100 policies for her company. She also gets the spirit and strength from an anonymous Malaysian caller who keeps motivating her in all her pursuits. She also recalls that her friends have been of enormous support to her in distress.

**Failure of Treatment:**

She has been operated upon for deformity correction to fix callipers and it turned out to be a failure. She doesn’t have enough financial support and resilience to go through further surgeries.
She weeps when she recollects that she walked at the age of crawling and now crawls when one should walk.

**Lakshmi’s inspiration:**

When Ms. Lakshmi was residing in a hostel for disabled students, she met a woman who couldn’t even move an inch with her lower limbs and was severely disabled. She convinces herself that her only inability is that she cannot walk, can’t lift things and can’t dry out clothes. But she can move by herself and also do maximum of her domestic as well official work by herself.

Still she says that she is having the confident to be a successful woman and empower her much better than others show her confident level as a success woman.
Ms.K.M.Anandhi born as third child for her parents, with three of her siblings 1brother and 2 sisters. Her father was a weaver in Chennai. She was born at 1965 like normal child without any disability. In the fifth month of her age she got a fever resulted in polio attack. She lost the functions of both lower limbs (65% of disability). She says that she was treated on par with her siblings by her parents without any difference. In her house, she doesn’t have any special facilities for her. She uses the same as all do in their home. She uses callipers to move from one place to another. She completed her schooling in a convent. After that she completed her bachelor degree. After that she started writing various competitive exams and she got cleared her railway clerical post in an OC not in the physically challenged reservation. Her childhood was very pleasant which gave her willpower and the confidence level to win over her life even with her physical difficulties. Her siblings got married and settled. Then she started living with her parents.
One sudden day she lost her father. After that she lived with her mother and within a few years she lost her mother. Even though economically independent she felt very lonely after her mother’s death. Few years later she could able to recover herself and want to live her life with some social work. And she says that she was proposed by one her colleague without any disability wants to marry her as his first wife. And she is ready to start her marital life as soon as possible.

The success behind Ms. Anandhi is her positive attitude and confidence to achieve. She says that only because of her family and pleasant childhood this is possible for herself.
Case Study-4

Ms. Rasathi

Ms. Rasathi is not another athlete who focuses on a single game and gets accolades. Ms. Rasathi is a physically challenged prodigy who participates in shotput, disc throw, sprint, badminton, engages her soul into playing and brings laurels to Tamilnadu.

Rasathi’s woe

Ms. Rasathi (35) from Thirumangalam, Tamilnadu, became a victim of poliomyelitis at the age of one and lost the function of her right upper limb (50% of disability). Born to parents with five other girls, Ms. Rasathi’s parents dwelled in at most penury. She managed to study till tenth standard. Even as a child she had unrelenting thirst for sports. But the people around her pointed out her disability and rejected her. Her parents struggled to find a groom for Ms. Rasathi. But she managed to find her soul mate
who is also physically challenged. Her thirst for sports didn’t fade even after her marriage.

**Rasathi’s perseverance**

To her fortune, she came across an advertisement by Mr. Ranjith kumar who trains and provides assistance to physically challenged people who engaged in sports. Ms. Rasathi approached Mr. Ranjith kumar after reading it. That marked the change of Ms. Rasathi’s lifestyle. Ms. Rasathi underwent heavy practice with the help of Mr. Ranjith kumar for the next five years. She managed to learn the minute details of every sport she was interested in. Mr. Ranjithkumar who trained Ms.Rasathi was also a physically challenged person who have participated for India in the commonwealth games and received a bronze. None of Rasathi’s relatives helped her face her torments. Ms. Rasathi opines that other states other than Tamil Nadu provide financial assistance and employment opportunities. But in Tamil Nadu physically challenged people who involve in sports just get the title but no other form of support. Ms. Rasathi works for an export firm which pays her 2000 per month helped her with financially to participate in an international event in London. Her boss needs special mention here.

Ms. Rasathi’s practice starts by 3 am in the morning. Stretching practice, weight lifting using hands, bench press, and leg practice does backbreaking practice and does not mind the pain that comes with it. Ms. Rasathi doesn’t have a jewel to costume her but is adorned with 25 gold medals and 30 silvers.

Ms. Rasathi adds that her disability and pain do not show their face when she receives prizes but she is jabbed with worry when she enters her kitchen and finds nothing to cook. With Rs 2000 per month Ms. Rasathi finds it tremendously difficult to fulfill her children’s academic needs, to take care of her parents etc. Ms. Rasathi’s words reflected her resolve to win despite all odds. Adding to the struggle Ms. Rasathi lost her daughter.

**Rasathi’s battle with cancer:**

On her return from common wealth, she was able to find certain differences. She lost stamina immediately and went tired within few hours of practice. She lost many pounds of weight. She witnessed hair fall. A small lump started growing alongside her
neck. After biopsy when she was declared she had cancer, she felt like the land beneath her split up and engulfed her. Despite giving numerous petitions she received no help financially. Finally Madurai Government Rajaji hospital came to her rescue. She received good care and treatment from them and recovered from life stealing cancer.

**Confidence of Rasathi:**

Now she is undergoing practice for her next athlete meet under the guidance of Mr. Ranjith kumar. Even after so many struggles in her life still she has the confident to win over the struggle and want to be a well known athlete to the world.
Ms. Sunitha Rawat

Born in Kota, Rajasthan on 27th September 1970. Being the eldest of three sisters and a brother Ms. Sunitha was wed locked in 1988. Things were fine when until one November in 1991, Ms. Sunitha was diagnosed to have Rheumatoid arthritis (85% of disability). Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) is an autoimmune disease in which your body’s immune system – which protects your health by attacking foreign substances like bacteria and viruses – mistakenly attacks your joints. The abnormal immune response causes inflammation that can damage joints and organs, such as the heart. Early diagnosis and prompt treatment is the key to preventing joint destruction and organ damage. Ms. Sunitha was struck with fever and was totally immobilized for about two months. Immobility pervaded her entire body. Ms. Sunitha’s husband wasn’t very supportive but he didn’t seem to exhibit total resentment either. Ms. Sunitha gathered courage from her mother in law. She was her only emotional support back then. Her daughter twinkle was born.
Sunitha gradually found resentment in her husband’s behavior. She recalls with mild regret that society changed her husband’s nature. After which she underwent ten major surgeries, on her back, ankle, both the knees, on her elbows and one on her cervical spine. The pain she underwent during the course of her surgeries is unexplainable. Horror struck Sunitha right in her face when her husband moved away in February 1999. Her husband married another women eventually leaving Ms. Sunitha emotionally drained. From then on, it was only Ms. Sunitha and her daughter twinkle.

Ms. Sunitha’s foray into fashion designing: Ms. Sunitha was in Gurgaon in 2000 when she was depressed and couldn’t even pay attention to her kid. Being emotionally bruised by her husband’s marriage and others around her she wanted to reclaim herself respect. Self respect was all she wanted and not sympathy. She wanted to take care of the financial needs of twinkle and herself totally. This made her to start a small tailoring unit with some tailors she knew. In 2004 she opened a boutique with her sister and she faced heavy criticism from her sister’s in laws. By then she had about 600 customers in Delhi. She was forced to start a separate unit by her sister’s in laws. That when she came to Madurai after joining her daughter at a school in bhuivaneshwar. Now her daughter studies fashion designing in NIFT, one of the prestigious institutions for Fashion in India. Now Ms. Sunitha is a successful entrepreneur in Fashion industry. She handles designing classes for fashion students. Now she has established a firm with ten designers and she pays a maximum wage of 15,000 per person. Over the years Ms. sunitha earned trust worthy acquaintances like Ahmed who even helps her to answer nature’s calls. Now she triumphantly recalls that on the first month, she was barely able to pay the rent. She struggled during the first year because the meagre profit she made was just enough to meet the expenses. She struck a balance in the second year and eventually made a profitable sum in the third year. She has overcome the horrid troubles and tribulations with her own will power. She opines that she was not aware of any government schemes or processes and had no access to them. Ms. Sunitha’s experience with locomotor disability is truly inspirational for any person with disability or anybody to reflect upon.