



# Camp for Empowerment of People with Disabilities

**Strengthening Indo-Lanka Relations:**

**A Collaborative Effort for Global Inclusivity of PwDs**

**Spark Minda Foundation in collaboration with IIT-Gandhinagar, Gujarat**

**5<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> March 2025**





## About Spark Minda Foundation

Spark Minda Foundation (SMF) was incorporated under Section 8 of the Companies Act and has been the CSR wing for the group companies to undertake CSR programmes since 2014. The vision of the Foundation is to build a sustainable society by improving the quality of life; protecting the planet through affirmative actions and establishing integrated and inclusive growth of people and the environment. The main aim of SMF is to work for community development by catering to Skilling, Livelihood Promotion, Women Empowerment, Prison Inmate Reform, Facilitation of Healthcare, Empowerment of People with Disability and to sustain the Environment.

The Foundation runs projects and programmes for the communities in the rural and semi-urban regions, mainly in five states of India—Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Maharashtra, and Tamil Nadu. The approach is need-based and focuses on collaborating with like-minded institutions to cater to a wide range of people around the nation. The programmes are conceptualized in such a way that they can be easily replicated and provide avenues to gradually scale up the programmes in the years to come. The CSR strategies are designed to address some of the global concerns in the Indian context, keeping the programmes aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals offered by the United Nations.

## About University of Jaffna:

The University of Jaffna is a public university located in Jaffna, Sri Lanka. Established in 1974, it is one of the leading higher education institutions in the country, particularly recognized for its contributions to Tamil language, culture, and research. The university offers a wide range of undergraduate and postgraduate programs across disciplines such as science, engineering, medicine, humanities, and social sciences. It plays a vital role in the academic and cultural development of the Northern Province and serves as a hub for education and research in the region.

## Empowering 20 Lives from Sri Lanka Through Innovation & Collaboration

This year, as part of our ongoing Saksham programme aimed at empowering individuals with disabilities, Spark Minda Foundation successfully organised a five-day Camp for Empowerment of People with Disabilities in collaboration with IIT Gandhinagar, Gujarat, from March 5th to 9th, 2025. Our initiative primarily focuses on addressing the needs of People with Disabilities (PwDs) in Gujarat, we had the distinct privilege of extending our support to 20 PwDs from Sri Lanka. This was possible through the invaluable support from Professor Chelva Kumar from University of Jaffna. This initiative reflects our commitment to fostering cross-border collaboration and making a meaningful impact on the lives of individuals in need.



## A Collaborative Effort for Global Inclusivity of PwDs

### I. Kannaiya Subashkaran (49, Kilinochchi) – A Farmer's Revival

Kanhaiya from Kilinochchi, Sri Lanka, lost his right leg above the knee due to an unfortunate incident. Since then, he faced significant challenges in supporting his family, which includes his wife and three children, through agriculture and poultry farming. His mobility was crucial for his livelihood, but the prosthetics he received in the past were uncomfortable, hindering his ability to work effectively. Things took a positive turn when Kanhaiya was fitted with a new lightweight prosthetic leg through the Spark Minda Foundation. This new prosthetic, along with crutches, restored his mobility and has allowed him to work efficiently, securing a better future for his family.



*“This new leg has given me strength to work without pain.”*

### 2. Kathirkamu Gnanasegaram (52, Kilinochchi) – Second Chance at Independence

Kathirkamu, from Kilinochchi, Sri Lanka, lost his leg due to an unfortunate incident while pursuing his education in Trincomalee. Despite facing numerous physical and emotional challenges, he has remained the primary provider for his family of four. His wife helps manage the household, but Kathirkamu's mobility was crucial for his livelihood. He struggled with poorly fitted prosthetics from Caritas and Venpura, which caused discomfort and hindered his ability to work. His life took a positive turn when the Spark Minda Foundation, in partnership with Jaffna University, provided him with a flexible prosthetic leg, restoring his independence and enabling him to plan for a better future by opening his own shop.



*“This leg has given me back my independence.”*

### 3. Sellaiya Thurairasasingam (54, Jaffna) – From War Victim to Confident Worker

Sellaiya, a 54-year-old from Jaffna, Sri Lanka, lost his right leg in 1992 due to an unfortunate incident. As a hospital helper, he supports his wife and three children, who are studying. Before receiving a new prosthetic leg, Sellaiya had undergone two previous fitments at the Jaffna Jayapur Center. Although they helped him manage his daily tasks, they were uncomfortable and limited his mobility. His life changed when he was introduced to the Spark Minda Foundation's prosthetic fitment camp, which provided him with a more comfortable, flexible prosthetic. This new leg not only improved his work performance but also allowed him to drive.



*“I never thought I'd drive again, but now I can.”*



#### 4. Vethanayagam Linthujan (25, Vavuniya) – Overcoming Workplace Injury

Vithanayagam, a 25-year-old from Vavuniya, Sri Lanka, lost his left arm in a machine accident at a factory in 2027. Despite the severe injury, he continues to support his family of six, including his parents and three siblings. His father works as a laborer with a modest income, so Vithanayagam also works as a video editor. Before receiving his new prosthetic hand, he had been fitted with three non-functional prosthetics from the Jaffna Center, which limited his ability to perform daily tasks. After learning about the Spark Minda Foundation, he received a functional prosthetic that improved his ability to type, drive, and work more efficiently, significantly enhancing his independence and quality of life.



*“This hand has made my work and daily life much easier.”*

#### 5. Kunaratnam Theepan (43, Trincomalee) – A Library Assistant’s New Life

Kunaratnam, a 43-year-old from Trincomalee, Sri Lanka, lost his left leg in 2009 due to an unfortunate incident. As the sole breadwinner for his wife and two children, he works as a library assistant to support his family. Before receiving a new prosthetic leg from the Spark Minda Foundation, Kunaratnam had been fitted with three previous prosthetics, all of which were uncomfortable and inflexible. The new lightweight prosthetic has made a significant difference in his mobility, allowing him to perform daily tasks and ride his bike more easily.



*“Riding my bike and daily chores have become much more comfortable.”*

#### 6. Sooriyakanthan Nilukshan (25, Vavuniya) – Moving Towards Equal Mobility

Sooriyakanthan, a 25-year-old from Varunij, Sri Lanka, was involved in a bike accident in 2020 that severely damaged his right arm. Living with his father and four siblings, Sooriyakanthan faced significant challenges after the accident. Although he received a non-functional prosthetic arm, it lacked proper shoulder limb length and support, leaving him feeling demotivated and unable to perform daily tasks or work effectively. Despite these difficulties, Sooriyakanthan is determined to regain full independence. With the right prosthetic support, he aspires to overcome these challenges and live an equal, fulfilling life. As he says, “I hope to overcome challenges and live equally.”



*“I hope to overcome challenges and live equally.”*





## 7. Sellathurai Thayalan (44, Sandilipay) – Driving Towards a Brighter Future

As the sole breadwinner for his wife and daughter, he faced significant challenges in supporting his family due to his impaired mobility. Before receiving a new prosthetic leg, Sellathurai had been fitted with two previous prosthetics from the Jaffna Jaiyapur Center, neither of which were functional enough to allow him to drive his auto. The new prosthetic leg, provided by the Spark Minda Foundation, has transformed his ability to work. It enables him to drive with ease, greatly improving his quality of life and making it easier to support his family. Sellathurai expresses his gratitude, saying, “This new leg has given me a new life, making work easier.”

*“This leg has given me a new life, making work easier.”*



## 8. Somasundram Pavani (53, Batticaloa) – A Widow’s Hope Restored

Somasundram, a 53-year-old widow from Batticaloa, Sri Lanka, lost her leg due to an unfortunate incident. She now lives with her son. Despite the hardships, a friend helped her ensure her son’s education was completed. Before receiving her new prosthetic leg from the Spark Minda Foundation, Somasundram had been fitted with four prosthetic legs from the Jaffna Jaiyapur Center, but they were uncomfortable and heavy. The new lightweight and comfortable prosthetic leg, along with crutches, has transformed her daily life, making her work and mobility much easier. Now, she can ride a bike and feels empowered.

*“This has given me a better life and hope for the future.”*



## 9. Pulenthiram Antani Jeyanthan (52, Kilinochchi) – The Labourer’s opportunity

Pulenthiram, a 52-year-old from Kilinochchi, Sri Lanka, lost his left arm in an accident in 2003 while working as a laborer. Married with two children, he has been the sole provider for his family despite the challenges posed by his injury. Before receiving a new prosthetic arm, Pulenthiram had one previous fitment, but it lacked full functionality. His new prosthetic arm, provided by the Spark Minda Foundation, is the first one that truly meets his needs, giving him both mental and moral confidence. Despite feeling isolated due to comparisons with others, Pulenthiram is hopeful that this new arm will help him grow his own business and improve his quality of life.

*“This new arm will not only help me in my business but also give me the strength to face life without feeling different.”*





## 10. Jayashankar Thayuthshan (27, Kilinochchi) – Overcoming Dual Limb Loss

Jeyashankar, a 27-year-old from Kilinochchi, Sri Lanka, lost both his right leg and right arm due to an unfortunate incident in 2009. Despite these challenges, he is determined to continue his education and is currently pursuing university studies. He lives with his mother and two brothers, after losing his father in the conflict. Prior to receiving his new prosthetic fitment from the Spark Minda Foundation, Jeyashankar had been using a cosmetic prosthetic that lacked functionality. The new, active prosthetics are comfortable and provide him with greater mobility, making it easier for him to manage daily tasks. This newfound independence and confidence are helping him pursue his studies and career. As he says, “This new fitment will help me move forward with my studies and career, giving me the ability to live my life fully.”



*“This fitment will help me move forward in life.”*

## 11. Veluchchami Jeevakumar (38, Mullaitheevu) – Aspiring Athlete

Veluchamij Jeevakumar, 38, from Mulaithiru, Sri Lanka, lost his right leg in 2009. His first prosthetic was uncomfortable and limited his mobility. However, in 2025, he received a new, lightweight prosthetic from the University of Jaffna, significantly improving his daily life and work as a security guard. This breakthrough has inspired him to pursue sports, particularly cycling and running a 200-meter race. Despite financial challenges, Veluchamij remains determined to achieve his goals.



*“I want to become a sportsperson with the right support.”*

## 12. Pavalalingam Raguraj (37, Vavuniya) – Strengthening a Farmer’s Future

Pavalalingam Roguraj, a 37-year-old farmer from Vavuniya, Sri Lanka, lost his left leg below the knee in 2008. Despite using three previous prosthetics, he faced difficulties in farming due to their lack of durability and functionality. His life changed when he attended the Spark Minda IIT Gandhinagar camp, where he received a durable, functional prosthetic. This has significantly improved his mobility, allowing him to work more comfortably and efficiently. While he remains committed to supporting his family, he hopes for further advancements to enhance his independence.



*“This new prosthetic has improved my ability to work comfortably.”*



### **13. Muralitharan Sangeerthan (27, Mullaitheevu) – Breaking Barriers in Education**

Muraitharan Sangeertharan, 27, from Mullaithive, Sri Lanka, lost his right arm above the elbow in 2009 due to an unfortunate incident and delayed medical care. Despite receiving multiple prosthetic arms, he struggled with mobility and functionality, hindering his ability to drive and find suitable work. However, a new, lightweight prosthetic arm has greatly improved his daily life, enabling him to perform tasks with more ease and comfort. Living with his father and sister, Muraitharan dreams of opening his own studio and aspires to further enhance his mobility with a digital arm. “The new prosthetic arm is much lighter and more functional,” he says, reflecting on his hopes for the future.



*“I still dream of opening my own studio.”*

### **14. Kanapathipillai Kanthasamy Jeevarasa (45, Batticalo) – Business and Mobility Hopes**

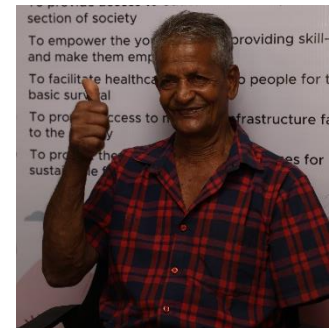
Kanthasamy, from Batticaloa, Sri Lanka, lost his left arm in 1996. Despite receiving a prosthetic neck cap and crutches, he has struggled with finding a functional prosthetic arm due to insufficient shoulder bone. This has limited his independence, especially in tasks like driving. Kanthasamy runs his own business to support his family of four, including two school-going daughters. He remains hopeful that advancements in prosthetic technology will one day provide him with a functional arm, improving his daily life and work.



*“I believe technology will help me regain more independence.”*

### **15. Rajarathnam Puvaneswaran (72, Mallavi) – A Grandfather’s Strength**

Rajarathnam, from Mallavi, Sri Lanka, lost his arm in a work-related accident in 1998. Now, he cares for his grandchildren while his wife manages the home. Though he initially received a prosthetic hand from Metha University, it was uncomfortable at times. Despite this, he remained confident and continued to perform daily tasks and work as efficiently as anyone with two hands. With the new prosthetic hand provided by the Spark Minda Foundation, Rajarathnam has gained improved comfort and functionality, allowing him to work even more effectively. He is grateful, saying, “Thanks to the Spark Minda Foundation and Prof. from Jaffna University for giving me the ability to do my work confidently, just like others.”



*“I can now work confidently like others.”*





## 16. Karunaraththinam Karunakaran (48, Kilinochchi) – Rebuilding Life Through Prosthetics

Karunaratnam Karunakaran, a 48-year-old from Kilinochchi, Sri Lanka, lost both of his arms in 1992 but has shown incredible resilience in maintaining his independence and providing for his family. After receiving functional prosthetics at a camp, he has regained the ability to perform daily tasks like signing documents and engaging in social and professional activities. One of his notable achievements is riding a bike, a skill he developed over 10 years of training. Running his own business, Karunaratnam has regained a level of independence close to that of a person without disabilities, demonstrating how advancements in prosthetics can transform lives and empower individuals to overcome challenges.

*“My new artificial arms have given me the independence to support my family and lead a fulfilling life.”*



## 17. Velu Niksan (29, Kilinochchi) – Mobile Repair Specialist’s Comeback

Velu Niksan, a 29-year-old from Kilinochchi, Sri Lanka, lost his right leg below the knee in an accident but continues to support his family of three with resilience and determination. After receiving his first prosthetic leg from the Mehta Foundation in 2009, he found it lacked the functionality he needed. However, following his recent participation in a camp, he received a new prosthetic leg and crutches, significantly improving his mobility and daily functioning. Velu works in mobile phone repair, but mobility challenges make it difficult to secure a better job. Despite these obstacles, he remains optimistic about his future.

*“This leg will open new opportunities for me and my family.”*



## 18. Balasingam Thushyamtham (44, Kilinochchi) – Business and Independence

Balasingam Thushyamtham, a 44-year-old from Kilinochchi, Sri Lanka, lost his left leg below the knee in 2008 but remains determined to lead a productive life and support his family of four. After receiving his first prosthetic leg in 2011, he found it lacked functionality. Balasingam runs his own business, and with the new prosthetic, he feels more confident in managing both personal and professional challenges. His story underscores the power of innovation,

*“I’m more confident about managing my business.”*







## 19. Ratnasingam Tharshini (35, Kilinochchi) – Aiming for Sports Excellence

Ratnasingam Tharshini, a 35-year-old from Kilinochchi, Sri Lanka, lost her right leg above the knee in 2009, but has shown remarkable resilience in both her personal and professional life, working hard to support her family. She learned about a new prosthetic leg and crutches through a YouTube press release from the University of Jaffna, which significantly improved her mobility. With this new fitment, Tharshini can now cycle for commuting and perform her job as a laborer at the Siva Arul factory more effectively. Despite the physical challenges, she is determined to pursue her dream of competing in athletic events and is committed to training for it. Tharshini also aspires to use an electric prosthetic to further enhance her performance and remains connected to the University of Jaffna for continued support. Her story is a powerful example of perseverance, inspiring others facing similar challenges.



*“I want to be an example for others like me.”*

## 20. Yosochini Sabaratnam (40, Kilinochchi) – A Step Towards Independence

Yosochini Sabaratnam, a 40-year-old from Kilinochchi, Sri Lanka, lost his right leg above the knee in 2009. Previously working as a computer operator and data entry specialist with World Vision, he faced significant challenges with mobility and transport, which prevented him from working recently. Over the years, Yosochini received four artificial legs, but they were often cumbersome, making daily tasks and commuting difficult. After learning about an opportunity for a new fitment through a press release from the University of Jaffna, Yosochini received a lighter, more functional prosthetic, which has significantly improved his independence and daily mobility. Now living with his family of three, with his younger brother as the breadwinner, he remains hopeful about the future. His story highlights the resilience and impact of advancements in prosthetic technology, restoring his confidence and autonomy.



*“I feel much more independent and hopeful.”*



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