

Dear Sir / Madam,

The donations and encouragement which I have been receiving from personalities like you are responsible for this recognition. Thanks.

Dr R Ganapati

Director Emeritus, BLP

Times of India, 12.06.2010

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chembur ghatkopar plus

BLP bags best employer award

CHUNABATTI BASED BOMBAY LEPROSY PROJECT WON THE BEST EMPLOYER AWARD FOR ITS EFFORTS TO REHABILITATE A MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS PATIENT.

Janaki Krishnamoorthi

Bombay Leprosy Project (BLP) an NGO working for the cure and rehabilitation of leprosy patients won the Best Employer 2010 Award from Multiple Sclerosis Society of India (MSSI) which was presented to them at MSSI's silver jubilee function held on May 26 at Masina Hospital, Byculla.

The award was conferred on BLP for its efforts in successfully rehabilitating Rahul Gupta, a multiple sclerosis patient. While MSSI took care of Rahul's medical treatment, BLP trained him in computer operation and provided him employment. He has been working as a computer assistant at BLP for the last five years and is also doing his BCom by correspondence at

Mumbai University

"Highly committed and hard working Rahul has been an invaluable asset to BLP. He is also fighting the disease with great determination. We have always found that people with disability are far more diligent, honest and committed to work than the able-bodied" states Dr Ramaswamy Ganapati, director emeritus BLP

Rahul attributes his success to the two NGOs' support "I am grateful to MSSI and BLP for their physical and moral support that helped me considerably and instilled confidence in me" says Rahul a resident of Kurla. Rahul is not alone. There are many others who have learnt to fight their disease and disability with BLP's support as this NGO has a tradition of training and employing those handicapped not only by leprosy but by other diseases as well

Sanjay Kulkarni who suffers from paralysis of right leg due to polio, Anton Fernando a cerebral palsy patient with severe neurological and physical disabilities, Baby Pujary with gross mutilation of right hand and leg from birth, DV Raja suffering from schizophrenia, Ashok Kute and Mahendra Shinde disabled due to leprosy have all been trained in different areas and employed by BLP.

Presently there are around 15 men and women with different form of physical and mental disability working either at BLP's office in Chunaratti or in the field in Mumbai and in rural Maharashtra. While some work as computer assistants others do filing, update records and maintain the library. A few are also part of BLP's paramedical team. Several others who were thus helped by BLP in the past are now well-placed in life.

"We have so far trained and employed around 150 disabled some of whom are now working in government, municipal corporation, corporates and banks. Some have also come back to us due to ill-treatment either by the employer or co-workers" reveals Dr Vivek Pai, director, BLP

"We are often looked down upon by employers and not treated on par with normal staff, more so if one is a leprosy patient. Though the stigma attached has reduced over the years it is still prevalent to some extent" laments Mahendra Shinde who was diagnosed with leprosy at the age of twelve. The disease spread and one of his leg had to be amputated. Again BLP came to his rescue. After training him as a paramedical worker BLP also raised funds to provide him with an artificial limb. Today Mahendra who has an outstanding memory maintains clinical records of all patients and does analysis for research work.

"There are many unsung heroes like Mahendra and we would like to help more of them. But we are constrained by lack of funds, space and qualified personnel to train them. But we always give priority to handicapped people when selecting our staff. Ours is a cost effective model where both BLP and the handicapped benefit. Our model of integrated rehabilitation, bringing together leprosy and other handicapped persons also leads to abolishing the stigma associated with leprosy" avers Dr Ganapati.

DNA Mumbai, 12.06.2010

Mumbai, Wednesday, June 9, 2010

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DNA MUMBAI

COMMUNITY LIVING



Along with their general rehabilitation process, the Bombay Leprosy Project (BLP) introduced employment training for leprosy patients, and physically and mentally challenged people in 1993, at Dharavi and in other slum areas across

Then, a decade back, computer training was provided to the leprosy and disabled patients in the slum centres. "Today many of these trained patients assist BLP in academic work," added Ganapati. These patients also help doctors in their routine chores and chat up with other patients, giving them company. "Over the years, these disabled people have managed to break the barriers and mingle with the abled persons. It has also boosted their morale and self-confidence," said Ganapati.

According to Ganapati, these differently-abled people are more sincere and duty conscious than normal workers. "Many of these people get trained by us, work here and then move on for better opportunities. We are very happy for them. Many even come back later to offer their expertise and share their experiences with us," he said.

One such person who has made it big working with BLP is Rahul Gupta, a multiple sclerosis patient. The Multiple Sclerosis Society of India (MSSI) honoured BLP for its efforts with Gupta, who is trained as a computer assistant at BLP. The organisation was presented with the Best Employer 2010 award at function held to celebrate the MSSI's silver jubilee this year. "Working at BLP has instilled a lot of confidence in me. My workplace has also supported me by offering a job that involves me working on a computer," said Gupta.

Sanjay Kulkarni, who has been working as a computer assistant at BLP for the last four years, said the understanding and homely atmosphere at BLP has helped him gain confidence. "I commute from Dombivli by train everyday as I get to learn a lot of things here," said Kulkarni, who has also picked up lessons in photography.

However, even though the organisation keeps doing some great social work, they are facing a shortage of funds. "It is difficult to ensure continuous flow of donations. We have had to close down several training centers that were imparting lessons in tailoring and painting due to lack of funds. I appeal to the people to contribute towards the society," said Ganapati.

Have an interesting story about your community you want to tell? An achievement you want to share or an event you want to showcase? The community you belong to could be any of the following: your locality (say, Andheri); your 'community' (say, Gujarat); your interest (say, cycling, music) - all of these matter to us. Do write in to us at communities@dnaindia.net.

VISIONARY: Padmashree awardee Dr R Ganapati, who is the director emeritus of the Bombay Leprosy Project, urges citizens to come forward and donate

Unique jobs for leprosy patients, differently abled

Poornima Swaminathan

In an attempt to ensure equality and instil a sense of pride among the city's physically challenged population, the Bombay Leprosy Project (BLP) has floated a unique employment programme. As part of their rehabilitation process, BLP is offering jobs at their premises to leprosy patients, and physically and mentally challenged patients. Most of them work as computer assistants, research assistants and help out in the BLP's clerical department.

"We began employing patients from within our institution as we wanted them to be integrated with the mainstream employment sector," said Dr R Ganapati, director emeritus, BLP.

The employment training was introduced in 1993 at Dharavi and other slums in Mumbai along with the general rehabilitation process. It was started as a part of the integrated vocational rehabilitation training programme. "The purpose behind it was to abolish the stigma attached to these patients," said Ganapati, who is also a Padmashree awardee.