

City students help make contact tracing easy, develop app to record travel details

● Gautham S

As Kerala witnessed a sudden surge in the number of Covid-19 cases, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan had urged people to maintain a 'Break the Chain' diary to record their travel history. However, the increasing cases of infection from unknown sources everyday, shows that the CM's appeal has fallen on deaf ears. This is where 'BreakTheChain Diary', an app developed by four final-year computer engineering students of Marian Engineering College, Kazhakoottam, Thiruvananthapuram, comes to the aid of both the government and patients.

This simple, easy-to-use app developed by Aswin S, Melvin

Ebenezer, Sambhu S S and Akshay Mohan can record time and place of a person's travel everyday. "The date is automatically shown when a person opens the app. All he or she has to do is to enter the location and time. A user can also enter the previous days' travel too, thereby maintaining an accurate travel record," says Aswin.

Other than entering one's travel records, the app has another great feature called 'Route Map'. "On selecting a range of dates, the app will generate the route map of that particular person. This will be a great help to the health department if the person tests positive for Covid-19. Also, we have enabled the option to call the department helpline number directly from the app," adds As-

win. It was Sambhu who came up with the idea for 'BreakTheChain Diary'.

"We developed the app in Google Flutter software and took around two weeks to complete. The app went

live on Google Play Store on Wednesday," says Aswin. The team has support from their families, teachers and friends. "Everyone was impressed with our concept. They installed and have started using it, they

are also sharing the app with others."

Ashwin says it's important that people record their travel history. "It is due to our negligence that the cases are increasing. The virus is mutating and most of the patients are asymptomatic." He believes that people will prefer an app over a diary as mobile phones have become an integral part of one's life.

"Everyone carries their mobile phone wherever they go. All they need to do is to enter the details," says Aswin. Though some may feel that

manually entering the details on the app is difficult, the creators are working towards automating its features further. "We haven't enabled the location tagging feature due to privacy issues. However, it will soon be enabled so that people can automatically enter their location by clicking an option."

The four-member team is planning to email the details of the app to the government. "We need to break the chain. If the government makes it mandatory for all to record their travel history, this app will reach more people," adds Aswin.

A great initiative

"This is not the first time the four-member team is coming up with an app. They developed one for recording college attendance for students. Their newest creation will be of great benefit to the society," says Sangeeth N, assistant professor, Department of Computer Science, Marian College of Engineering. "When Kerala Technological University announced the schedule for final-year examinations, a circular was released asking the students coming from different places to keep a travel diary. This sparked the idea in them and I advised them to think about further applications of their proposal. So, they developed this app which can be used by anyone. It is a novel idea," he adds.



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—Aswin S, developer, BreakTheChain Diary