

Godavari Biorefineries: Underprivileged Students Achieve Over 90% Marks in Karnataka State Exams

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SAMEERWADI, Karnataka: In the recent 12th grade results in Karnataka, 12 students sponsored by Help A Child, an initiative of Godavari Biorefineries Limited, scored more than 90% in the exam and 3 students have scored 100/100 marks in Physics and Math. 'Help A Child' in association with Somaiya Vidyavihar provides scholarships to highly motivated students. The resounding success of this program has shown that children when given an opportunity have ability and a will to succeed despite insurmountable odds.

Abhishek Karadi, from S.R. Pre University College, Banahatti who has secured 95.66 % in HSC Commerce stream, said that "I come from a humble family background, where my father is a weaver and mother is a housewife. Even though I excelled in school and got 91.84% in the Xth exams, I never thought that I could study further for graduation, as financially it was not possible. Graduation was a distant dream. 'Help A Child' sponsored my education. They not only provided me with financial support but also moral support. This has helped me secure good marks in the 12th grade".

Another topper, Dixita Vare who has secured 94.83% in HSC Science stream from S.R. Pre University College, had secured 94.24% in the Xth, Banahatti says "I was planning to quit studies due to lack of finances, since I come from a very poor financial background, my father is a daily wage labourer and mother is a housewife. 'Help A Child' provided me access to textbooks, financial help and kept me motivated which made it possible for me not only study but also excel in my exams"

Further, one student Prashant Hangandi B.A III (S.T.C. College, Banahatti) has bagged two gold medals in Economics and Geography subjects from the Rani Chennamma University, Belgaum. He did B.A from S.T.C. College, Banahatti and scored 89.93% in final year. He has been sponsored by 'Help A Child', since 2009.

"Education is the backbone of every society in this world. However, underprivileged children from rural areas often have to drop out from school denying themselves access to quality education and professional skills and continuing the cycle of poverty. We aim to reach out to those who need our help the most, to ensure that they do not have to give up their education simply because of a lack of funds. He adds, "Much more needs to be done. Many individual and corporates have joined hands with us in this initiative, sponsoring students for their higher education. Many of our ex -students today have become sponsors. We are proud of the achievements of our students." - **Samir Somaiya, Chairman, Godavari Biorefineries Limited**

Nandan Mehta, who has sponsored a student through Help A Child says " I have supported Help A Child for some years where I have had the opportunity to witness growth and development of the child I supported. The importance of enabling Higher Education, especially of rural and underprivileged children, can be really understood when one meets these children and sees their determination to achieve in life. I am very happy to be able to contribute towards this initiative".

'Help A Child' is an initiative of GBL initiated in 2001 in association with Somaiya Vidyavihar. 'Help A Child' sponsors higher education of students from underprivileged backgrounds for courses above the 10th grade. This includes 11th and 12th, undergraduate and postgraduate courses. The underprivileged students come from diverse backgrounds. Some of the parents are laborers, weavers or farmers in rural areas and the children are often first generation learners. Some students are orphans or belong to single parent families, with the children working part time to help their families survive.

Some children are from the slum in a large city. Despite these insurmountable conditions, the students have shown the capability and a will to succeed. GBL started this initiative with the belief that talent of a child should not be denied an opportunity simply because the family does not have the financial resources to help them continue.

Samir Somaiya, Chairman of Godavari Biorefineries Limited (GBL), founded Help A Child when, during one of his visits to the farmers in a village near the GBL Plant, he met a meritorious girl, who had to give up her studies due to lack of finances. Help a Child, was born out of the belief that that education is the key to socio- economic transformation.

Godavari Biorefineries Limited initiated the program for the children in the villages around its factory in Sameerwadi, Karnataka. Seeing the positive impact that it had in the lives of the selected students, their family and the community it was extended to the villages in and around its second plant at Sankarwadi, Maharashtra. Started in rural Karnataka it has now expanded to Mumbai and Pune. Since 2001, it has supported more than 3500 students to achieve their dreams. The Alumni have gone to become teachers, engineers, doctors and accountants. Some of the engineering students are now working in companies such as TCS, Mahindra Tech, L&T, and Mindtree.

The students sponsored qualify based on two criteria: merit and need. For merit, girls need to have scored 70% or above in their previous course/year while boys need to have scored 75% or above. The need criteria this is based on both family income and circumstances. Priority is given to students who are orphans, from single parent families, alcoholic parents or students also working part time to support their families.

Help A Child takes a holistic approach to supporting the children in their higher education, from financial support, material support, personality development to also engaging with families and communities. In the case of girls, in rural areas, Help A Child works closely with the parents and communities to garner support for higher education create understanding of issues and thus reduce pressure on girls for marriages.

Link: <http://www.indiacsr.in/en/godavari-biorefineries-underprivileged-students-achieve-over-90-marks-in-karnataka-state-exams/>