

The Times of India

Title : Students 'book' a better future for needy children

Author :

Location :

Article Date : 08/25/2015

Subhash Hansda and Shantilata Hansda, two 12-year-old tribal kids from Odisha, had almost given up on their dream of studying due to lack of books till four students from Bengaluru turned a new page in their life.

Sudhansu Nath Mishra, a Bengalurean studying at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), realized not many kids were privileged enough to have access to quality books. What began as a free library at his home with a sizeable collection of unused text and story books for needy kids in the neighbourhood, is a full-fledged venture today. Share your Books has donated over 8,000 books worth Rs 16 lakh to 25,000 tribal children across seven states and 1,500 kids from 69 slums and four orphanages in Bengaluru.

Sudhansu, 19, works with three of his friends and spends his vacations (he is currently in the city) distributing books among underprivileged in the country. "The idea struck me in 2013 when I was visiting my village Khandasai in Odisha for a vacation. I realized children studying in government schools there didn't have access to good books, and this was affecting their performance at competitive exams. That's when I thought of collecting books from students in cities and distributing them among the underprivileged. During our last drive, we partnered with organizations like Sri Ramakrishna Mission to distribute over 3,500 books. Today, we have teachers and students from reputed schools contributing to our cause."

Arjun Gandhi, another member of Share your Books and a student at Washington University, said: "Last summer, when many of the old members of Share Your Books were headed to college, Sudhanshu was worried about how he'd keep the initiative alive. I distinctly remember my mother telling to store old books safely every year as they might be of help to someone later. I never touched those books again."

"Thanks to two other friends, Prapti Mishra and Prithvin Manjunathswamy, we were able to remotely partner with our alma mater National Public School (NPS), HSR Layout and sister schools, NPS-Indiranagar and Rajajinagar, to support established NGOs such as Parikrama Humanity Foundation in Bengaluru, Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS) in Odisha and Goonj in Delhi," said Arjun.

Surjya Kanta Mohanty, chief operating officer at KISS, said: "The 1,500 books donated to tribal children housed in our institution will be of immense help. Access to them will boost their career prospects which, till now, suffered due to lack of money and facilities."

WE'LL KEEP IT GOING

Initially, I had my fingers crossed, but was blown away by the overwhelming response from students on the very first day. The initiative taught them the importance of sharing and reusing books. We look forward to keep this initiative going

Bhagyam Shekar
VICE-PRINCIPAL, NPS-HSR LAYOUT



HAPPY READING: Arjun and Sudhansu (inset) have helped spread cheer among many underprivileged children by providing them books

