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Email: mediarelations@ishafoundation.org

Isha scholarships help first-generation learners complete education, find mainstream employment

29 September 2020, Coimbatore: Equal opportunity is a great equalizer. This has been proven by 10 first-generation learners from the tribal communities of Thondamuthur region in Coimbatore where the Isha Yoga Center is located. Supported by scholarships from Isha Foundation, these young men and women have not only become the first graduates in their communities but also the very first ones to secure mainstream employment opportunities, giving them a chance to lift their families out of generations of poverty and script a new destiny for themselves.

For over a decade now, Isha Foundation has been supporting educational aspirations of these bright young students. Disadvantaged by their socioeconomic status, the students neither had access to educational opportunities nor skill sets to make them employment ready. Their determination to help themselves received a boost with Isha's scholarships which covers not only tuition fees but also transportation, uniforms and stationery. The 10 youngsters have become role models in their community and created a sense of pride and aspiration in younger children.

Isha is assisting students of tribal communities located in the remote hilly regions of Thondamuthur. Isha's Tribal Welfare Program covers 15 such villages including Madakkadu, Thanikandi, Muttathuyal, Mullankadu, Singapathi, Nallurvayalpathy among others.

The terrain is difficult to access which has excluded them from mainstream development. Poor connectivity and lack of educational and employment opportunities have ensured these communities remain poor over several generations. Most of them walk long distances to find daily work and almost all are unlettered. With no means to educate their children, most tribal children follow in their parents' footsteps. Isha Vidhya School in Coimbatore's Sandekavundampalayam offers free education to tribal children in addition to a supportive ecosystem to keep them in school. The children are ferried to and from their homes. Merit-based full scholarships encourage them to work hard. Those who graduate from high school are free to pursue college to enable them to compete for mainstream employment opportunities. Isha also invests in improving their communication and computer literacy skills with weekend courses.

With equal access to learning opportunities thanks to a supportive donor network, a new generation is emerging from these remote villages – one that is determined to pursue self-reliance and break the cycle of poverty to become productive citizens of their community.

If you would like to know more about this, please write to mediarelations@ishafoundation.org.