



For these girls, earning means helping their village

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Youngsters from the tribal hamlets of Thane district have come to Thane city for their apprenticeship and the stipend they earn from this task are being used by them to form a disaster management unit in their adivasi hamlets. A group of ten girls who work in a software company near Yeoor, through their internship programme, have learnt to use their limited resources well.

"When we left our villages to come here and finish our internship, the most common problem in the area was deaths due to snake bites. We noticed this is a very rare phenomenon in the cities so were thinking hard to solve this issue. When we started getting our stipend we decided to use it in small ways itself to develop a technique that would give immediate relief to people with snake bites," says Sonali Chaudhary, one of the girls interning here.

As per the research done by these girls, there are 60,000 incidents of snake bites in the country and out of them around 10 deaths in a day happen in Thane itself. "This was a very startling figure and we realised this is the need of the hour. Although there are hospitals available in the city, services to reach there are difficult and many a times the victim dies even before reaching the hospital," says Rekha Maule, another intern.

During their internship, they work on data entry in various languages, digitisation of ancient manuscripts, website designing and 3D and 2D graphic designing. "We saw these girls working and discussing over some plan so we decided to help them with it. They wanted to prepare a makeshift stretcher that can be pulled with a cycle in case of medical emergencies. We guided them with it and

will be supporting their endeavour as well," says Apoorva Agwan, member of Creative Responsible Integrated Systems, software firm.

The girls have also come up with an emergency medical kit that will be handy in these cases. The villagers are also taught about the measures that need to be taken to resolve these issues. "We have learnt a lot within a year of internship and as we have a lot of free time after the six-hour shift, we plan more about the betterment of our villages in Mokhada and Jawahar areas of Thane. People here usually defecate in the open and this is not only unhygienic but also leads to snake bites; we need to arrange more funds for these and hence we are planning," says Neelam Rohankar, an intern.

"When we go home during vacations we explain about our nature of work to youngsters in our villages as well. Looking at the changes we are bringing in our village, they are impressed and would like to take up similar jobs. For this, we have convinced and gathered around 60 youngsters who will intern from the new academic year in June. This is our way of doing propaganda; if we get more students to intern, it will increase our funds and help us improve the living conditions of our families," says Radhika Khutade, another intern.