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Chennai
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● SCARCITY OF OPTIONS

Visually challenged regret lack of career options



Sangeetha Neerajal ENS
Chennai, June 13

LACK of career options is pushing visually-challenged toppers of the Plus Two exams to become teachers, since the rest of the reservations for the disabled in various other government departments are hardly filled up.

As they gathered on Sunday to receive felicitation awards from Nethrodaya, an NGO which works among the visually-challenged, most of the toppers expressed their desire to do B A Literature and become teachers,

while some wanted to pursue an M Phil degree and become lecturers.

According to Govind Krishnan, founder of Nethrodaya, "Most of the meritorious visually-challenged students right from their school days are groomed by their teachers to become pedagogues, as we are left with no other options that will fetch us jobs. The primary reason being most of the government departments do not fill the 3 per cent reservation meant for the disabled under the Disability Act of 1995 and because of this we hardly have any other

option after graduation or post graduation."

Govinda, a visually-challenged person, who plans to pursue an M Phil degree, alleged that there were no proper records of unfilled vacancies for the disabled in the government sector.

Jareen Bantu from Karur said, "I want to do B A English and then become a teacher, because that is one sure way to get a government job." Saravanan from Madurai who had scored 1108, said, "I want to become an English professor, but if there is an opportunity I would be happy to become a top official."

Justice S Nagamuthu blessing a differently-abled boy who secured high marks in Standard XII exam at Nethrodaya, a home for visually challenged, in Chennai on Sunday as (from right) Home founder Gopi and Sriram Life Insurance MD Akhila Srinivasan look on

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4,000 VISUALLY CHALLENGED SEEK GOVT JOBS

They staged a fast in front of the office of the State Commissioner for the disabled to press their demands

Sangeetha Neeraja | ENS
Chennai, June 14

AFTER waiting for years, visually challenged persons and the Qualified Unemployed Association for the Blind — an outfit fighting for unemployed blind people — staged a fast on Monday in front of the office of the State Commissioner for the disabled.

Members of the association said, "There are more than 4,000 visually challenged people who are qualified and have registered at the employment exchange. They have been waiting for jobs for many years."

According to the Persons with Disabilities Act 1995, three per cent of jobs under the 'C' and 'D' categories should be given to the disabled. These jobs are called 'Identified Jobs' as they are identified for physically challenged persons. One per cent of these jobs is allocated for the visually challenged.

C Vijayaraj Kumar, State Commissioner of the disabled, said there were no existing vacancies meant for the visually handicapped. When Express asked him to release the list of appointments made to visually challenged persons, Vijayaraj said he did not have statistics on that. "We have not asked the various departments to send it to us," he said.

In 1991, Selvakumar, a visually

challenged person, registered himself at the employment exchange. He is yet to be employed. He said, "I have taken training as a telephone operator, and in re-winding and electrical and electronics. I am suffering a lot doing odd jobs. I really need this job." During his wait, he completed MA and M Phil.

Noor Mohammed makes both his ends meet by selling odd things at the railway station. He registered himself in 1984. He said, "I have completed stenography training. Year after year I hope I will get a job but

Their right

According to the Persons with Disabilities Act 1995, three per cent of jobs under the 'C' and 'D' categories should be given to the disabled

nothing has happened so far. I have a blind wife and also a son to take care of."

Govinda Krishnan, founder of Nethrodaya, an NGO working with the visually challenged, asked if the government had consulted experts on issues faced by the physically challenged when they had identified jobs for them.

"It was the bureaucrats who decided what jobs the physically challenged were capable of doing. This has to change first," he said.



Visually challenged persons protest in front of the Commissionerate for differently-abled in the city on Monday
— P JAWAHAR

MK ASSURES DISTRESSED STUDENTS OF ACTION

Express News Service
Chennai, June 14

A GROUP of students from Government School for Visually Challenged at Poona-mallee finally met Chief Minister M Karunanidhi on Monday at his Gopalapuram residence. They had earlier tried to do the same on Saturday. The police asked three students, Thangaraj, Dharmam and Ramkumar study-

ing in Class 12 to meet the CM and tell him their grievances. When they reached the CM's residence, Thangaraj met Karunanidhi for 10 minutes and talked about the state of his school premises and also about the other demands they had made when they had begun their indefinite fast on Friday. The Chief Minister reportedly assured him of immediate action.

Last Friday, over 70 students of the school staged a strike on their school premises, seeking the immediate removal of their headmaster, David Wilson. The students alleged that their headmaster, who was a temporary replacement, had misused government funds meant for the development of the visually challenged. They also alleged that he had ruined their school infrastructure.