

FINDING THE BEST VERSION OF YOURSELF

Struggling with under-employment, Manjula longed for a way out of the vicious cycle she was trapped in. Her experience at DET was just what she needed.

“When all the members of your family are women, and you are that poor, you dismiss any fancy ideas about not letting women work.”

“I grew up watching the women in our family work hard because we needed as much money as we could get. My grandmother still works as a coolie and earns around Rs 5,000 a month,” says Manjula. Agriculture and casual labor at the local cotton mills are the chief sources of income in her village, with better jobs and opportunities found only in neighboring Hubballi. “When all the members of your family are women, and you are that poor, you dismiss any fancy ideas about not letting women work,” she says wryly.

A recent statement by NITI Aayog describes how underemployment, not unemployment is a larger issue among the labor force in India today.⁽¹⁾ The severe lack of high productivity and high-wage opportunities adversely affects youth forcing them to struggle with low-wage jobs. Manjula too experienced this as she worked two jobs as a teacher at a local school and taking private tuitions, but was still not able to earn more than Rs 3000 a month.

Her BA and Diploma in Education seemed worthless in the light of sparse local opportunities. There seemed only one way out – building her English skills and joining an English medium school with higher wages.

The DET Value: Something new every day

From day one, Manjula recalls being very excited about the course. “There was something new to learn every day,” she says. “Every module was different with a different teaching style and activities.” She was especially amazed to finally be introduced to digital literacy through email, internet, and typing. When she first started, Manjula’s typing accuracy was six. Encouraged by her trainers, who asked her to keep practicing until she reached a speed of

1) The Hindu, 2017



MANJULA R CHULKI | Akanksha Program (Education and Training), Alumna, 2016

Now after DET I have **learnt how to deal with students** and manage them **without resorting to scolding or punishment**. I have learnt how to **assess their learning levels** and teach them accordingly.

10 at least, Manjula put her best foot forward. Today her typing accuracy is 52. As she reflects on this achievement, Manjula adds, “DET helps you find the best version of yourself and teaches you how to work hard to achieve it.”

Apart from the tremendous growth she witnessed in her technical skills, Manjula still contends that her best memory of DET was the annual Development Dialogue event. She vividly recalls how she met a famous fashion designer and an IAS officer. Development Dialogue, prominent in the social sector, has several events for students, which serve as opportunities for them to engage with and learn from the best in the sector.

Productive Careers: The gift of change

Manjula’s first job on graduation was an associate position at an NGO, where she was responsible for facilitating interactions between teachers and the school





management committees. An accident during the job forced her to take time off, during which she was replaced. “It was a difficult time. But in retrospect I am glad because it led me to better things,” she says, thoughtfully. She soon got a new job as an English trainer with a leading NGO. Happy with her work, she feels she is making a real difference as she works with children with special needs.

“People in my office often ask me why I talk so much about DET,” Manjula says, laughing. “I tell them it’s because DET changed my life.” She believes her personality has changed for the better, as a person and as a teacher. No longer struggling with under-employment, she leans back happily as she concludes, “It’s a big gift when someone changes your life into something wonderful. I believe DET gave me that gift.”

“She is the only one from our village who can speak English fluently and is working in an organization that helps disabled children. I am very proud of my granddaughter. I call her Multitalented Manjula.”

- Manjula’s grandmother

WHAT WORKED FOR MANJULA

-  • Best practices in teaching
-  • Typing skills
-  • Stage courage
-  • Creative thinking

STUDENT PROFILE AND IMPACT POST-DET

Educational qualification	B.A., D.Ed
First generation learner	Yes
Pre-DET monthly household income	Rs. 20,000
Sector of employment	Teacher
Hailing from	Annigeri
Working in	Dharwad

Salary Increment (INR):

