

Students lead from the front

Staff Reporter

HYDERABAD: Whether it is the need to do something for others or the want to reach out to the deprived classes, students have always been in the forefront when it comes to volunteering.

Take the example of Nirmaan, a social service organisation started by students of BITS Pilani. Initially started as a student group, My India, at the Pilani campus in 2005, it later became a registered NGO, Nirmaan, in 2007. What started with a handful of students, it now has over 500 members and eight chapters in four different states including Andhra Pradesh.

"Most of the volunteers believe that they should be the change that they want to be and they feel that there is no point in waiting for something to happen," says Subhash Chandra, president of JB Institute of Engineering and Technology chapter. Two government schools in Yenkapally and Old Safilguda have benefited by the efforts carried out by JBIET volunteers.

Teaching on weekends

"We have managed to achieve a 97 pass percentage in 10th standard in Yenkapally Government School," says a proud Subhash. Nirmaan's corporate chapter headed by Harish Kambam too is doing similar work.

They have adopted a government school in Madhapur where the volunteers teach on weekends. The group in BITS Hyderabad is currently conducting evening classes for children of migrant labourers around the campus.

A similar student group in Indian Institute of Information Technology (IIIT), 'Ashakiran' has helped conducted several health camps in slums around the campus, says Pulkit Parekh, alumnus of IIIT. Organisations such as Make A Difference (MAD), Bhumi and others too depend on the student crowd too. "Of the 70 mentors we have, 40 are students," says 23-year-old Gloria Benny, one of the founders.

She attributes the sudden interest in volunteerism among students to increased awareness on social issues.