

ITI reopens after 5 years, alumni extend support

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MUMBAI, MARCH 14

AT THE Industrial Training Institute in Mankhurd, 34-year-old Nandkumar Shende and other alumni assembled last week to mark the reopening of the institute, which had been shut for around five years. Established in 1989, the only ITI in the city to be run by an NGO had been providing skill development to students like Shende before it shut for want of funds.

"For many like me who did not have financial assistance, the Mankhurd ITI with its nominal fee

provided skill development to be able to earn a livelihood. We were in touch with many of our staff and students and realised that the shutting down was having an impact on students from custodial institutions seeking vocational training," said Shende, a 1999-batch alumnus of the institute.

Due to the poor financial condition at home, Shende's labourer mother had sent him to an institution to study in Satara. He eventually did a course at ITI and worked at multiple jobs before becoming an entrepreneur.

When the alumni, including Shende, heard of efforts being made to reopen the institute

through funding by Stock Holding Corporation of India, they came forward to support it. While the cut-offs for the ITIs run by the government, providing vocational courses are high, priority to students from custodial institutions, in some cases, made them accessible.

Though the contribution by the alumni were small, many like Shende marked their presence just to see their institute reopening. Corakh Sanap (23), now employed with the Maharashtra Police as head constable, had been living in multiple institutions throughout his childhood before undergoing training at ITI

in its last batch of 2012 before it shut down. "My parents were labourers and employed in sugarcane cutting. Due to their job, they sent me to a children's home. I was living in a hostel in Chembur through which I got admission at the Mankhurd ITI. For children living in institutions, it is necessary to get access to such courses and when I heard it was reopening, I wanted to be a part of it to see other students also benefit from it," said Sanap, who was present at the re-establishment day on March 6.

"The institute was shut due to lack of financial assistance from the government of Maharashtra.

We began the effort to reopen it along with Hurt Foundation and Stock Holding Corporation... Since its reopening in September, 50 students have been enrolled, six of them orphans. We are planning to give priority to children who are in institutions run by the Children's Aid Society from next year onwards," said Bapurao Bhavane, chief executive officer, Children's Aid Society in Mumbai. The society runs institutions for children in need of care as well as special home for children in conflict with law and other custodial care institutions for children which would get access to vocational training at the ITI, he said.