

ENABLING THE WEAKER



An interview of an aspiring fellow and her parent in progress

Manash Pratim Gohain/TNN

HELP is at hand for academically inclined female students from weak socio-economic background of the National Capital Region (NCR) and West Bengal. Udayan Shalini Fellowship programme (USFP) for the girl child from underprivileged section of the society has announced 200 new fellowships for female students from the NCR and 150 for West Bengal from 2007. This is apart from the 355 previous fellowships worth Rs 36 lakh.

So far, 448 academically inclined female students from the weak, socio-economic backgrounds have received this fellowship in the last five years. And this new fellowship, worth Rs 24 lakh, would be distributed to class XI, first-year undergraduates, first-year postgraduates and students of vocational studies.

According to Kiran Modi, managing trustee, Udayan Care: "Of the continuing fellowships, we have 148 school students, 175 undergraduate students, two postgraduate students, 10 students from vocational studies and three differently abled students," adding that, "this year we are going to

offer Rs 7,000 annually per school student, Rs 9,000 per undergraduate and postgraduate student, Rs 7,500 for students pursuing diploma or vocational studies and Rs 18,000 per year for students pursuing professional studies such as medicine, engineering, chartered accountancy or company secretary."

The fellowship is for disadvantaged girls living with their natural families. The recipients of the fellowship are given not just the financial aid

GIRL-CHILD EDUCATION

but also the mentor-

ing support to continue their academic and vocational training.

Explaining the selection process - Needs, Ambition and Talent (NAT), Modi said, "After the submission of applications, a committee shortlists 800 candidates for a written test followed by an exhaustive interview of not just the 500 short listed candidates, but also their parents. Finally, the selection committee visits the homes of 300 further short listed candidates from which the final list is declared."

The fellows are attached with senior educationists, who mentor them through their high school, college or vocational education.