

## DARING TO DREAM

From working odd jobs in the village and not having enough to even pay for school fees, Harish Hardolli is now an associate with TCS. The transformation has required more than just being technically competent, he says, reflecting on the long marathon run to success that rural poverty entails.

*"I had to start working at the age of 12 just to pay my school fees."*

Recent studies have pointed out that the India's young demographic dividend will wane if concerted efforts are not made to skill the labor force, even for existing jobs.<sup>(1)</sup> A chunk of India's youth hails from rural areas where the lack of good quality skilling programs is further compounded by problems of poverty and healthcare. "I lost my father to alcoholism last month and my mother to poor health at the age of six – it's only me and my sister now," says Harish Hardolli. He recalls life in Belgaum district as one steeped in difficulty for years at a stretch: "I had to start working at the age of 12 just to pay my school fees."

As with most children who are exposed to hardship from a young age, the muscles of resilience began to grow early. Harish went onto finish school and completed a Bachelor's degree in Commerce. But in a country with a young population exceeding 100 million, a Bachelor's degree holds little market value. According to the Employment and Unemployment Survey (EUS) 2016, 58% of unemployed graduates and 62% of unemployed post-graduates cited the unavailability of jobs that matched their skill and education as a primary reason for their unemployment.<sup>(2)</sup>

"I worked odd jobs after this degree – whatever job I got –from repairing TVs to working in data entry at a dairy farm – to support my family. My village is not a place for someone who wants more out of life," he adds, matter-of-factly.

### The DET turning point: Preparing for a productive life

While the DKF program sounded worthwhile to learn accounting and business finance, Hardolli's financial situation didn't permit him to apply. A partial scholarship from the Foundation helped seal his decision and take the plunge.

1) Business Line 2) Fifth Annual Employment and Unemployment survey



**HARISH HARDOLLI** | Deshpande Koutilya Fellowship (Accounts), Alumnus, 2016

During B.Com, we would spend **just 4-5 hours in college** and **feel bored. At DET**, we would be **occupied the entire day and enjoy it.**

It was a rough start, Harish confesses. But help poured in from all corners. His teachers would take the extra measure to be attentive to Harish's classroom needs, while his batch mates supplied him with books and stationery. "Everyone knew that I wasn't from a well-to-do family, but nobody made me feel different. I have truly felt a part of a big family at DET."

Harish had to learn everything from how to use a computer to speaking English. The faculty would insist on enforcing grooming and communication etiquette, skills that prove to be pre-requisites in today's evolving job market. DF also taught him everything from Tally and Advanced Accounting to fundraising and digital literacy, key work-skills and adaptability that has stood him well after the course.

Harish is most moved by the warmth and support he received at the Foundation. "I remember being broke and unable to attend a job interview. It was a teacher at DF who offered me some money, just like families do," adds a grateful Harish. By the end of the program, Harish knew he had experienced a professional and personal transformation.

### Productive Careers: Entering the workforce with confidence

Life after DF bears little resemblance to his early years. A job as a trainee associate at Tata Consultancy Services has afforded him health insurance, substantial savings and to a large extent, a stress-free phase in his life. "It was a dream come true to be placed at TCS," recalls Harish. "Three months ago, I bought my first mobile phone with my own money. It felt liberating not to have to ask anyone for assistance to do that."

Harish is looking excitedly at the future and making plans to pursue a degree in hotel management, a dream that he had to forego due to financial constraints. With savings and a newfound confidence in his abilities stemming from the DF experience, Harish feels a better future is within his reach now. "I feel like I can achieve what I set my mind to, thanks to the DF experience that shaped my life," says the proud alum.

*DET is always best in terms of providing quality candidates. I personally like the culture of DET, reflected in the positive attitudes and capacities of the youth.*

- Anil Vishwanath, senior HR recruiter, HGS

### WHAT WORKED FOR HARISH

-  • Digital literacy
-  • Tally
-  • Professionalism
-  • Self respect

### STUDENT PROFILE AND IMPACT POST-DET

Educational qualification	B. Com
First generation learner	Yes
Pre-DET monthly household income	Rs. 8,000
Sector of employment	Finance
Hailing from	Ramdurg
Working in	Pune

Salary Increment (INR):

