



Refreshments seller scripts success story

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
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FOURTEEN year-old K Chandru, who once sold refreshments near playgrounds to generate extra money for his family, has now emerged first with his Class X Board examination marks.

One among the 18 rescued by the Child Labour Elimination and Effective Rehabilitation Society (CHEERS) in the district, he scored 374 out of 500.

The boy, the eldest of five children, had to bear the family's financial burden.

"My family was in debt and I had no better option than to discontinue my studies and work," Chandru said.

His father, A Kumar (37), is a painter who gets jobs off and on. Chandru's mother, K Fathima (35), is a sanitation worker in a city college. "In spite of poverty, my parents did not force me to go to school," Chandru said.

During a survey in the locality, CHEERS officials spotted the boy working. Soon, he was admitted to a special training centre near Khajapettai and then to RC Boys Higher Second-

ary School near here.

Chandru said that his parents were striving hard to make both ends meet after he was sent to school. Fathima was not sure of what the future held for her and her son when Chandru was sent to school.

"Chandru was admitted to the special training centre where he was provided guidance and then mainstreamed to

another school. A Tamil teacher in the school, John Britto, helped him to with his studies and supported him financially," his mother said.

Chandru said he wants to pursue a diploma when he gets into higher studies.

Said N Mohideen Fathima, educational instructor at the special training centre in Khajapettai, "Our students hail from very poor backgrounds. Our aim is to identify the children working and away from studies and mainstreaming them. The NGO New Life's secretary F Patrick Vanaja provides support to us."

As many as 18 students from CHEERS in the district appeared for the Class X Board examination and all cleared it.



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