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# Indebted siblings rescue decrepit alma mater

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**HUBBALLI:** Take lessons from siblings Ajith Prabhu and Ajay Prabhu on giving back while paying it forward. The alumni of Government Junior Technical School here have adopted the institute, helped renovate it and launched a scholarship programme.

The Prabhus took up the initiative of helping their alma mater get back on its feet two years ago after the state government's alleged neglect of it left the institute with leaky roofs and gaping pits. The threat of the derelict technical school being replaced with a diploma college hastened their rescue plan.

Ajay, who is the chief controlling officer of QuEST Global Engineering, a product development solutions company, says the adoption of the institute is part of a plan to churn out quality engineers. "My brother and I were products of this technical training school. My father was a lawyer and he wanted us to follow in his footsteps. But the school introduced us to the field of engineering and has been an inspiration for me."

The institute, he explains, teaches the basics of mechanical and electrical engineering, along with six other academic subjects. It lays the foundation for the study of traditional engineering. "The three years spent there have a formative influence on students," says Ajay.

The siblings have spent Rs 5 lakh to date on the institute's renovation. They also offer scholarships of Rs 1 lakh to meritorious candidates. Those who clear SSLC can get Rs 25,000, Rs 15,000 and Rs 10,000 each, whereas candidates who have studied only till classes 8 or 9 can bag Rs 12,000, Rs 8,000 and Rs 5,000 each.

The benefactors also help elevate the standards of teaching. "We arrange for students' visits to the special economic zone in Belagavi as well as our sister company - Aegus - to give practical knowledge of industrial units. We have also had our company's engineers give special lectures to students every three months."

This year, the Prabhus plan to introduce the institute to the smart class concept as well as give priority to sports and access to computers.

Akshaya Kittur, a student, says QuEST Global Engineering meets all of the needs of the institute. "The scholarships encourage us to work harder."

Principal Sumitra Kokane says the financial aid has helped the institute sail through tough times. "We managed to get the roof of the workshop repaired in the first year. In the second, we bought reference books for technical education and other accessories for the workshop. Computers and electronic devices are a part of the curricula, but the institute has no computers. So, we sought sponsorship for 12 computers for our students."

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