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'All communities have deficiencies'

Special Correspondent

Members of the minority community should stop thinking that they are being discriminated against, said Khaleel Ahmed, Chairman, Karnataka Zakath and Charitable Trust (KZCT). He was speaking at a programme where the trust distributed scholarships to poor and meritorious students in the city on Sunday.

Discrimination is in the minds of people and they should banish the thought from their minds. Instead, they should work hard and adopt a positive outlook, he told the audience, which consisted mainly of students. "Discrimination is there everywhere, in every community, it is a human trait"....this (the thought of being discriminated against) has to stop. Put your best foot forward, apply for jobs, there is no discrimination," he said.

Mr. Ahmed said there were leading businesses in India that were owned and run by people from minority communities. He named at least six companies from automobile, pharmaceutical, and cosmetics sectors (Tata, Ranbaxy, Cipla, Himalaya, Wockhardt, and Hamdard). In business, a businessman wants competent people and his aim was to have a profitable business. "There is ample opportunity to those who work hard and destiny will come forward to help you," he said. The Constitution guaranteed equality regardless of caste or creed. The community might face deficiencies and problems but it was not limited to it. It was the same with other communities too. "We are not alone," he said.

Instead of criticising and complaining about the government's acts of commission or omission, people from the community should work on their own (that is, without expecting the government to do everything). "The government has too many priorities," he said.

At the event, 2,500 students belonging to different communities, got scholarships from the KZCT, which works in 13 districts of Karnataka. Of them, 64 students had secured more than 90 per cent.

While the money for the scholarships was sourced from donations, affluent people could do more to support the cause so that more people could benefit, he said.

Mr. Ahmed said that The Hyderabad Zakath and Charitable Trust was set up with the objective of spending zakath money on the education of poor Muslims enabling recipients to study and make a demonstrable change in their lives. "It was a revolutionary thought," he said. Its founder, Giyasuddin Babukhan, was criticised by many saying he could not spend the money for education. Traditional recipients of the money were people who run "madrassas".

Ummer Singh from Puttur, who scored 95 per cent, said he was studying to become a chartered accountant. Ilham Sheikh, with 94 per cent, said she was studying PCMB while Swati, who had scored 96 per cent, said she was studying for CA and doing her B.Com.

Mr. Ahmed, who cofounded Shanta Biotech and been executive director for 15 years, is a resident of Mumbai. His family is originally from Punaroor, near Kinnigoli. He said boys should not give dowry and girls must refuse to marry men who seek dowry. They must mix with people of other communities, he said.

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