

Name	Annakodi M Pannaikadu BT	Sponsor:
Institution	Government Polytechnic College	
Location	Madurai	Accommodation Hostel
Course	Diploma in Mechanical Engineering	3 years
Start	01 July 2014	End 30 June '17 Year 2



Although Apprentices are living and studying away from their Boys or Girls Town, they continue under the overview of their Apprentice Officer who is in regular contact, monitoring progress, welfare and attendance and liaising with faculty members. In first year the youngsters will have completed studying their core academic subjects to higher secondary school level (equivalent to UK 'A' levels) and started new subjects, both theoretical and practical, specific to their discipline and for some requiring a new technical vocabulary. Some are confronted with English medium throughout and all have more involvement with computers, those who had worked on these skills while at school will have reaped the benefit. Most Polytechnic courses include an English Communications module but not always in year 1. Well motivated 'self-starters' can achieve a good first year and be eager to progress. For some year 1 can be tough, with referral in failed subjects for retake compounding their workload in later semesters.

Annakodi has had an excellent first year, achieving 82% and 85% overall in the first two semesters respectively and placing him among the top contenders on his course of 60 boys. Teaching medium is Tamil, test or exam questions are in English, with answers in Tamil or English. For third semester his subjects are:

Manufacturing Technology Thermal Engineering Electrical Drives & Controls theory
ED&C Lab. Lathe Lab. Foundry Lab. Welding Lab.

Thermal Engineering is his favourite subject, with Electrical Drives & Controls Theory proving tough, but overall he rates this semester easier and more interesting than earlier ones. Additionally he's taking a Computer Aided Design course (Auto CAD) in his own time at weekends (having learnt to use a computer while in his Boys Town).

Annakodi still stays in the campus hostel. He has received his free laptop donated by Government and uses this for course work and private study or browsing; his hostel has WiFi internet connection and he devotes at least 3 hours to private study daily. He continues on the college cricket team and enjoys volleyball with his friends. Trips home to Kodaikkanal take 4 hours on the bus and are confined to semester leaves or major festivals.

The family situation is largely unchanged; both elder sisters have completed their further education and commenced work, one as a teacher and one nursing. Annakodi's aim remains to work with the Madurai-based conglomerate, TVS but he hasn't decided if he intends to study for his Bachelor's degree by correspondence (his diploma giving him exemption from first year).

A smooth transition from school to polytechnic and a very good first year marks Annakodi's final phase in changing his life, to lift himself and his family out of poverty. Although he's had no contact from his Sponsor, he hopes they did enjoy seeing his photo video, he's well aware of their role in supporting him and sends his grateful thanks, adding that he prays for them and their families. He's certainly taking full advantage of his opportunity and giving it his best shots.

Interviewed and Written by: Terry Quadling, Volunteer January 11th2016