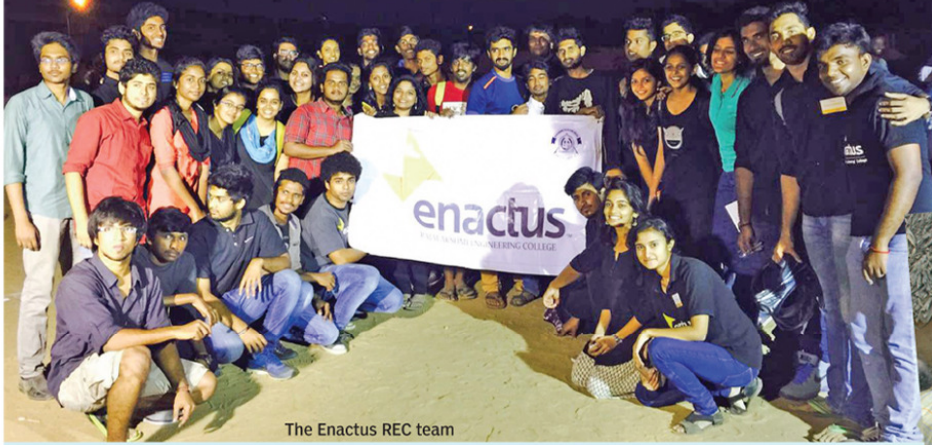


EMPOWERMENT THROUGH ENTREPRENEURSHIP



The Enactus REC team

Rajalakshmi Engineering College, in association with an organisation called ENACTUS, mould people below the poverty line into entrepreneurs



Gayatri engaging in an on field project

BALAJEE C R
DECCAN CHRONICLE

The present is an exciting time for aspiring entrepreneurs. Wouldn't it be good if young, enterprising people added a social angle to their ambitions? Students from Rajalakshmi Engineering College (REC) are doing precisely this, as they don't only develop entrepreneurs through their initiative — but also empower the underprivileged.

ENACTUS (ENable ACTION US), an NGO, has undertaken an exciting initiative through which

they bring together students and business leaders, who tender to the economic needs of society's lower strata through an entrepreneurial approach. REC, in association with this organisation, has been doing interesting things.

"Enactus REC has directly impacted the lives of about 60 people over the past year alone. Considering the fact that we're

youngsters lacking experience, what we have achieved has given us the

courage to feel that we can further improve on it," starts Gayatri Rajagopal, the student president of this initiative. Elaborating on the project, she says, "To break the stereotype that entrepreneurship is only a about rich people making money, we identify target individuals who are below the poverty line and mould them into entrepreneurs."

Our initiative has directly impacted the lives of about 60 people over the past year alone
— GAYATRI



The current undertakings that are part of the initiative — Project Parisutham, Project Dhanyam and Project Avantik — empower downtrodden people efficiently. Speaking about the success of these activities, Gayatri explains, "Parisutham deals with the production of cleaning aids impacting a group of women who were financially devastated due to the Chennai tsunami attack, while Dhanyam is an initiative to produce healthy millet-based food products by a group of women who suffer from poverty as well as various social issues. Avantik is another inter-

esting project which involves the production of biomanure and restoration of the lost fertility of agricultural lands. Through this, farmers and low-income rag pickers become potential entrepreneurs."

Recalling one particular instance which involved a touching gesture, she reveals that during a field project, a woman walked to them and said she became the breadwinner of her family through the profits she earned from Parisutham — "It was

heartwarming when her young daughter wrote 'Thank You' on a paper for us."

On a concluding note, she speaks about their plans for the immediate future. "Now that we've started everything on a positive note, we've to work on the sustainability of all the projects. Further, we need to make our project completely self-sufficient. On a bigger level, we aim at bringing economical, social and environmental changes in the near future," she signs off.