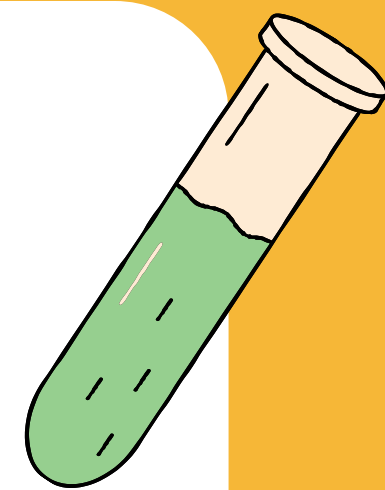


FROM CURIOSITY TO COSMOS : SNEHAL'S JOURNEY FROM SMALL VILLAGE TO IISER, BHOPAL



In the year 2016, a group of friends united to form the Vidyoday Mukhtangan Parivar Foundation, dedicated to fostering scientific temper among rural children and nurturing their life skills. What began as science skill schools on Sundays in villages like Rukdi, Hatkanlagale, Abdullat, and Ichalkaranji, soon evolved into a vibrant center for learning and exploration.

Among the bright young minds touched by this initiative was Snehal Neje, a girl from Gangamai School who joined the study center in Ichalkaranji during her 7th standard. Snehal stood out with her insatiable curiosity and diverse interests—from academics to arts, experiments to acting. The study center provided her the perfect environment to explore and excel, earning her admiration from the mentors.

While the science skill schools targeted students up to 8th grade, Snehal's bond with the foundation endured. She maintained contact even after leaving the center, eventually achieving an outstanding 95% in her 10th-grade exams. Her dedication and passion continued to shine as she scored an impressive 99.71 percentile in the CET exam during her 12th grade.

Unlike many of her peers who opted for conventional career paths, Snehal harbored a different dream—to become a scientist. She pursued this ambition relentlessly, appearing for the selection test at IISER (Indian Institute of Science Education and Research) and achieving her goal with flying colors. Her acceptance into IISER, Bhopal was a moment of immense pride and joy for the entire foundation.

Snehal's journey is especially poignant against the backdrop of her family's modest background—her father runs a water filter installation business, while her mother contributes financially to their house through working at self-help groups. She represents the first generation in her family to pursue higher education, making her success all the more remarkable and inspiring.

As Snehal proudly prepares to embark on her research journey at IISER Bhopal, the foundation celebrates her achievements as a testament to their mission's success. Her story epitomizes the transformative impact of nurturing curiosity and providing opportunities in rural education, proving that with determination and support, dreams can indeed take flight.

