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Pune's CBSE toppers prioritise knowledge over marks

Class 12 students say success is anchored to their passion for subjects

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Ananya Barua
Hindustan Times, Pune

Aastha Tiwary with her parents at her home on Saturday. She topped the CBSE board exams in the city, scoring 98.4 per cent in the Humanities stream. (SHANKAR NARAYAN/HT PHOTO)

The exam is not a boulder rock on your head, it is just a test,” said Utkarsh Singhanian, one of the city toppers of the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) Class 12 examination for which results were declared on Saturday.

Prioritising knowledge over marks, city toppers say that their stories of success were anchored to their passion for the subjects.

Singhanian, a student of Delhi Public School, Mohammadwadi, who scored 97.2 per cent in Commerce, said that merely knowing a subject is not enough to do well; understanding it, is the key to success. “A subject will only seem easy when you are interested to understand and involve yourself into it,” he said.

Aastha Tiwari of Army Public School (APS), Camp, who scored 98.4 per cent in the Humanities stream, said, “I am truly dazed by the marks I received, because that really did not matter much to me. I do not understand the amount of stress associated with Class 12 exams, after all it is just a test or a step for you to cross to reach your goals.”

Amisha Banerjee of APS, Ghorpadi, who scored 95 per cent in the Science stream, said, “The key to scoring well is consistency and balance. I began my preparation from day one and not just a few months before the examination. That made all the difference.”

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She said, “My parents are always behind all of my achievements, but most importantly, they kept me motivated. The point is, scoring high is not really that big of a deal. It can be achieved with a consistent and balanced study routine as well as the true will to understand the subject. If you like what you study, half the battle is won.”

An avid reader and a musician, Tiwari shared that her routine would always include a number of balanced breaks where she would indulge herself in her hobbies. “The mind is not a machine, so regular breaks are very important. I would always take little breaks to read or play my guitar. Sacrificing things you love, just to earn a few extra marks, is not the correct way to address education,” said Tiwari, who is also preparing for the civil service examinations.

Parnika Pitale of Orchid School, Baner, said, "It is not about topping anymore, but how much you can use that knowledge to carve out your future." Pitale scored 97.4 per cent in the Science stream.

"I have always been passionate about public speaking and debating. I can never completely forsake that for the sake of marks. It is important to prioritise at times and create a balance between your hobbies and exam preparations," she added.

Akshay Shanbhag of Orchid School scored 95.6 per cent, despite his learning disability. Shanbhag, who was diagnosed with borderline autism spectrum at the age of two, was also the Indian School Certificate Examinations (ICSE) Class 10 examination topper in 2016.

He said, "These are small achievements that would lead to a bigger future. For me, the highest point of this result was that I could overcome my weakness in the English paper and score a 95 in it." He aspires to pursue scientific research at Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Pune.

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