## Medical student does farm work to pay college fees

Balajee CR | TNN | Sep 11, 2018, 11:36 IST















TRICHY: It's a mammoth task for P Kanimozhi's impoverished family to fund her medical studies that run into several lakhs. After mortgaging and selling every little possession they had, it's a daily struggle to eke out a living. To make sure the family manages to make ends meet, Kanimozhi, who

agricultural fields on weekends for a meagre Rs 150 a day. Her father, P Pichaimani, 45, is a farmer at Veppanthattai in Permabalur.

The 21-year-old medical student fears she will have to discontinue her studies in the final year of her MBBS course if she is not able to pay the fees.

Kanimozhi joined the MBBS course in 2014 after she secured a government quota seat at the Dhanalakshmi Srinivasan Medical College at Siruvachur, Perambalur. Kanimozhi said her annual fee was around Rs 5 lakh, of which she had been paying Rs 2.2 lakh and around Rs 2.8 lakh to Rs 3 lakh was provided as scholarship for the scheduled castes by the government. But the scholarship is only for 4 years and 6 months.

Kanimozhi's paltry earnings from farming can only pay for her family's daily expenses. A day's work is generally from 7am to 1pm. "Along with my mother, I go to farms and do work like weed removal. Our family has been struggling with poverty and meeting the medical expenses of my sister, who has a hearing impairment," she said.

N Selvaraj, at whose farm Kanimozhi has been during the past few weekends, said: "In Veppanthattai, wage workers go to farms wherever they're required. As far as I know, Kanimozhi has been doing wage work for over two years and in recent weekends she has been working at my farm. Though I have advised her not to do such work as she's an MBBS student, she said that she was doing it so that she could help her family."

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Her father said he had mortgaged all he could to pay Rs 8,80,000 as fees so far and he had nothing left to pay for her education. "I was a daily-wage worker in Dubai for a few years, but after suffering an accident I returned home and have been farming in a one-acre land. I sold my wife's jewellery and mortgaged my farming land to pay Kanimozhi's fees. My only dream is to make sure my daughter finishes her MBBS course," he said.

College sources said the due date for Kanimozhi to pay the pending fee was in February. They said that knowing her situation, at no point did they compel her to pay the fee or ask her not to attend classes. "We always understand when a student is struggling financially. She's regularly coming to college. If she had brought up the issue straight to us, we would've seen what could be done," the source added.

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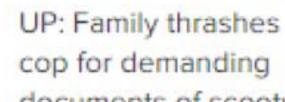
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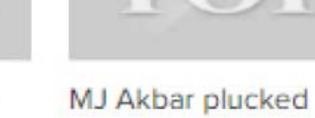


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