School students turn authors, publish book of short stories

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Coimbatore: At a time when a plethora of youngsters are giving a cold shoulder to reading and putting off writing, a bunch of young talents from Coimbatore have taken a plunge into the world of writing and are coming up with a book – Homegrown Tales. The book which has 28 short stories has been written by students between the ages of 8 to 18. These 28 young writers spun out fiction stories based on their perceptions which was released in Isha Home School on Friday in the presence of Isha yoga center founder, Jaggi Vasudev. The book, published by quill club, is available in all leading book stores and a few online sites as well.

For many of them, this was their first attempt at writing a story.

“I want to be a scientist like my father and when I was asked to write a story, I thought I won’t be able to do it,” said Mervin Mahendran, 9, who wrote ‘For his mother’. “Several of my ideas were earlier rejected, but then I lost my mother at an early age and decided to write a story based on my experiences,” added Mervin. Many others such as Harshita and Ruthija also wrote stories based on their life. While Harshita wrote about her dad who is a teacher, Ruthija wrote on Goa her native place.

Ashmita Kumar, who wrote ‘footsteps’ said that writing was her passion and yet she found it difficult to write this story. “I have always been passionate about writing but as we were working in a professional environment, it was difficult for me. My idea was rejected nearly 20 times before this story was selected,” she said. Ashmita and three other students have already applied for a writing course in USA and UK as they plan to make it their profession. Sanjana Chandrasekaran who wrote the story – a cupboard full of coats – based on domestic violence on women has already enrolled herself for a course in New Jersey.

Manjusri Gopinath Nair, the english teacher at the school, said that the process of selection began in June 2013. “Three were three rounds of selection to pick these 28 students. They worked really hard and were completely exhausted at the end of the sessions. But these children surprised us with their perceptions of the world and their ideas. Many of these students were introverts and some with learning disabilities. But they all managed to come out with great pieces.”

The children were given a professional environment of ideating, pitching their ideas, drafting, re-drafting and final editing. “We ensured that they were treated as professional authors,” said Manjusri. She added that the school was planning to integrate this writing course with their learning.

“The students in the city are very talented, and we thoroughly enjoyed working with them. We are working with six other schools in the city that are associated with Coimbatore art and theatrical society. The book written by 21 students will be published in June, this year,” said Hemant Kumar, partner and editor at Quill club writers.