

NATION, CURRENT AFFAIRS

Cyclone-hit Filipino students graduate with Mata aid

DECCAN CHRONICLE.

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KOCHI: A total of 480 students, the victims of typhoon Haiyan-Yolanda in Philippines in 2013 who received scholarships from the Amrithanandamayi Math, have graduated from the senior high school with a culmination ceremony held at the Oriental in Palo, Leyte, in Philippines. Typhoon Haiyan-Yolanda hit the Philippines in November 2013 and over 6,300 people were killed, 7, 50,000 displaced, and financial losses were in billions. In April 2014, as part of its disaster-relief initiatives, 'Embracing the World,' the international humanitarian organisation of Mata Amritanandamayi, donated US\$1 million to help the victims of the typhoon.

The donation went into reconstructing destroyed schools, the construction of a community hall and the provision of scholarships to 530 disaster-affected students. Of these, 480 students have now graduated. 'Embracing the World' provided the scholarships in partnership with the Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation (PDRF) and the Scholarship Project for Senior High School (PBSP) and in cooperation with the department of education through the respective division offices. The students attended San Jose National High School (Tacloban City) and Palo National High School (Palo). The recipients of the scholarships were chosen based on poverty level, previous school marks and attendance and their interest to continue their education.

In conjunction with their education, the students were also given vocational training in disciplines such as business and accounting. To further enhance the classroom learning of the students, leadership training, career guidance, coaching and counselling were included. They were given monthly allowances. The programme also saw five top-ranking students from each school receiving 5,000 Philippine Pesos per person as a token of appreciation for their hard work. In addition to the scholars and their parents, guests at the graduation ceremony included Swami Ramakrishnananda Puri of the Mata Amritanandamayi Math, Lucy Fernandez of 'Embracing the World,' Butch Meily, president of PDRF and Ms. Marilyn Muncada, director for education under PBSP.

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