

Ambegaon teacher on mission in city: telescope for her school students

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WHILE many take up telescope-making at the Inter University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics (IUCAA), Kamini Rakhmagadge, a primary school teacher from Peth in Ambegaon taluka, has come to the city with a mission – to return with a telescope for her students.

After attending a workshop in December 2009 at IUCAA, it struck her that just like any other kid in the city, her students in Peth would also understand their science textbooks better if they got the opportunity to actually look at Mars, Venus, Jupiter and the Spatarshi or the Great Bear constellation of stars. Since then there was no looking back for her.

“It was amazing to see the excitement among children when a team from IUCAA came to our village and showed them the moon and Jupiter on the last day of school before the summer



Kamini Rakhmagadge

vacations this year. While I had been thinking of following up my visit to IUCAA in some way, the gleam in their eyes on seeing the telescope in their school made me think about the possibility of having one permanently in the school. Since then I have had the constant support of the school and IUCAA,” said an overjoyed Rakhmagadge. She said it made her realise that there were so many kids in the school who were really interested in such activities but for the lack of access to such opportunities they were missing out on the fun of learning science by actually doing things rather than mugging up chapters from textbooks.

Arvind Paranjpye, scientific officer from IUCAA said, “Usually people who come here for our telescope making programme do it as a hobby, but the passion and commitment of this young lady is exceptional.

Within a record time of four days she has made the telescope. Her eagerness to do something for her students is something very few teachers have today. So a part of our rural outreach programme we decided to guide her in whatever way we could.”

Rakhmagadge hopes to organise open programmes for other school students of the village also where even secondary school students could come and learn more about the sky. She also has plans to set up an Amateur Astronomers Club in Peth and provide a channel to those who want to pursue astronomy as a serious passion.