

Helplines ready for call rush after HSC results

Shreya Bhandary | TNN

With the HSC results scheduled to be declared today, helpline numbers in the city are preparing for a barrage of calls. Even though some helplines have already received many calls from anxious students, they say the numbers will increase once the results are out. "We are still receiving calls from CBSE and ICSE students who got their results last week and are worried about various things related to their results and careers," said a volunteer from Samaritans, a helpline that caters to the depressed and suicidal.

One of the most common times when these help lines receive innumerable calls are either

The board feels by putting marks online before giving mark sheets, they have helped bring down the level of curiosity in students. "This time, results are coming out almost 10 days in advance. Students can make the best of this time and apply to colleges," said Balasaheb Thorat, state school education minister. "Students are so well versed with technology, the best we could do is provide them their results in a manner they are best comfortable with. They can later pick up the marksheets," said board chairperson Vijaysheela Sardesai.

before or after examinations. "These calls are not just restricted to board examinations. Students who appeared for any exam have called us and discussed their fears with us. All they need is someone to talk to," said Freny Mahendra, director of Samaritans.

"We received a call from a young girl who was telling us that she was on the verge of committing suicide since she had not done well in her papers and was fearing the result. She knew she could pass but her parents wanted her to get into

medicine and she knew her score wasn't up to their expectations," said Johnson Thomas, director of Aasra, a helpline number which has received up to 45 calls since Sunday.

Volunteers at the Vandrewala Foundation, one of the only 24/7 help lines in the city, says most calls come only after the results are out. "We pacify the students and advise them to talk about all their problems and not run away from them. After every result, we have been flooded with calls from young students with various problems," said Dr Arun John, executive vice president of the foundation.

Anxiety management and career counselling are one the two main topics addressed by most of the helplines.

"The most important thing about the helplines that attracts so many callers is the fact that they can be anonymous and pour out all their problems to us. There is no compulsion on them to disclose their identity and yet they can tell us everything about themselves. We don't even advise them to do anything most of the times, we just listen to them," added Mahendra.

ADVICE FOR PARENTS

- Never compare your child's marks with their siblings or friends
- Don't label children as failures, losers, etc. This will only affect your child's self-confidence
- Making a statement like 'I told you so' will not help
- Accept and stand by your child, whatever be the result
- Appreciate your child's efforts
- If a child shows symptoms of depression like crying, change in appetite, no socialising, contact a counsellor or psychiatrist immediately

ADVICE FOR STUDENTS

- Don't panic
- Don't compare your results with others
- Talk to someone outside the situation
- Running away from the situation will not help, rather turn around and face it
- Remember that this is not the last exam of your life, so take it easy
- Express yourself
- Challenge and re-affirm your aims/goals for yourself for the future
- Avoid negative coping strategies like smoking, drinking, drugs, etc

Take it easy, former toppers counsel anxious students

Shreya Bhandary | TNN

Mumbai: "I was apprehensive, but managed to keep myself distracted," said Manali Lakhotia, who had topped HSC in the commerce stream last year with 91.33%.

Manali's trick was to stay engrossed in preparations for the Chartered Accountant (CA) entrance tests she was to appear for later. "It helped me take my mind off the results," she added.

Devika Garge was unaware of what was in store. "I left home after praying that I score well in my paper. While on the train, my friends called me up and congratulated me that I had topped the Arts stream in the

boards. I didn't know if I could believe them," said Devika, who had been thrilled with the news. "I knew I had written my papers well so the results were the last thing that bothered me. I had never aimed at topping the board but since I did, the excitement was unparalleled," she added. Garge is now pursuing a degree in exhibition design from the National Institute of Designing in Ahmedabad.

But Viral Raythatha's excitement leapt all boundaries. "I was quite excited about the results since I had least expectations. All I wanted was to score well enough to get admission in a good college. But the results just made my day and my year ahead," said Viral, who had topped the board in the handicap section with 85.83%. "Before leaving my house to collect my marksheet, I had decided that I will be happy with what I get and will celebrate anyway. The moment I realised I had topped the board, I thanked God for the same," he said. Viral is currently pursuing his degree in commerce as well as doing an extra course in finance to take up a job as a finance advisor in the future.

"Exams are not the most important part of your life, the life that comes after these exams is. So nobody should take the results too seriously," was Manali's advice to students.

'No toppers'

Hemali Chhapla | TNN

Mumbai: The government has decided against publishing names of SSC and HSC toppers from this year. The decision was taken on Monday after it realised "students face tremendous pressure and stress levels go up when toppers' marks are revealed." Till last year, the state declared the toppers of every region in Maharashtra, names and marks of girl toppers, backward category and physically challenged high scorers and night school toppers. "This year, we will merely declare the names and marks of the individual subject toppers and felicitate them," said school education minister Balasaheb Thorat. Maharashtra had done away with a merit list in 2006. Vijaysheela Sardesai, chairperson of the board, said, "We are felicitating subject toppers because we want to promote excellence in subjects. Donors who have given money for the overall toppers will be asked to divert the money for subject toppers, or we'll return their gifts."

DIAL FOR HELP

Vandrevala Foundation: 25706000 | Future Launcher Counselling: 9322485609, 9867900174 | Aasra Suicide Prevention Centre:

27546669, 27546667, 9820466726 | Maitri Institute of Psychology: 25364041 | Mindtemple: 26289792, 26288928 | Aavishkar: 9821114805

How students can get marks from the Net

- HSC results will be declared at 11 am
- Students can log on to <http://mahresult.nic.in> and type in seat numbers to get their results online
- Students can also follow the results on rediff.com/exams, www.msbschse.ac.in and www.mh-hsc.ac.in
- BSNL users can type 'MHSC'

- to 57766
- Through the mobile shortcode on rediff.com, students can get their results by typing 'MHSC' and send this to 573335000
- Students in Mumbai can call on the following helplines for any assistance: 27893756 and 27881075

Desirable options for less than desired marks

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: Didn't quite make the grade you were expecting in the board exams? Disappointed with your score? Don't lose heart. There are a whole range of career options which don't call for high marks.

HEAD FOR A DIPLOMA IN ENGINEERING

• Instead of a degree course in engineering, you can opt for a diploma in the very same subject. While engineering degree courses focus largely on theory, a diploma in the subject involves more practical, hands on experience. A diploma in engineering also helps students gain lateral entry into the degree course. Around 200

polytechnics in Maharashtra currently offer the diploma and students can apply directly after Class X. Class XII students too can apply for these courses, but it's their Class X marks that count. The course is for three years. Those with a diploma in engineering are not full-fledged engineers, but have the hands-on training to be technicians in a whole range of industries. Those in the field say there's a great market for technical skills in several industries, like software, production, mechanics. Companies, too, are increasingly opting for diploma holders instead of engineers.

HOSPITALITY SECTOR

• You don't need to ace your math paper for a course in hospitality. Some

of the best hospitality colleges accept students with 45% in Class XII. One of the largest employers worldwide, the hospitality sector gives you options that range from working in some of the biggest brands in the hotel industry to turning entrepreneur and setting up your own business.

SPORTS MANAGEMENT

• Are you the athletic kinds who would much rather score on the field than in a classroom? If so, how about a degree in sports management. Several universities offer a Bachelor of Physical Education (BPEd) degree and the Master of Physical Education (MPEd). A BPEd course qualifies one to teach sports in school, an MPEd is required to teach in college.

THE NGO SECTOR

• Are you passionate about social work but afraid that you'll never be able to earn a decent living as a do-gooder? Sample this. The turnover of the NGO sector in India is valued at thousands of crores. In addition to NGOs, all corporates have been directed by the government to utilise 2% of their profits for corporate social responsibility. The government, too has several development-related programmes.

HAIR DRESSING

• If you're good with your fingers, have a flair for the creative and are clued in to the latest fashion trends, a career in hair dressing may suit you fine.