

# Expensive treatment for scoliosis free at SVIMS

- Spinal curvature disorder is diagnosed mostly in children
- 80 cases were cured in the last 15 months at SVIMS
- Treatment provided free of cost under TTD Pranadanam Scheme

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**Tirupati:** Scoliosis is a rare spinal condition in which the spine abnormally rotates and curves from side to side. It usually develops later in childhood or adolescence and is more common in young girls and boys. But, for various reasons including no regular medical checkup for early detection for treatment due to economic condition and lack of awareness, the spinal curvature disorder is proving a curse on scores of children. The children with the disorders suffer potentially serious complications such as respiratory difficulty and physical deformities. The condition may be a source of body image anxiety and low self-esteem for many teens tend to remain alone and aloof coming in the way of leading normal life.

Kanchi Ramudu, son of Eswarappa of Beluguppa village, Anantapur, is one such victim of scoliosis, who became normal after treatment in SVIMS. SVIMS Neurosurgery Head and Professor BCM Prasad said the boy was suffering with the spinal disorder due to tuberculosis which remained undetected till he had a fall in the school. Though the fall is small in the sense he collapsed while trying to sit when he was playing in the school. Panicked family took him to the hospital where he was diagnosed of suffering with TB in the spinal cord



Neurosurgery professor Prasad and surgeon Ramesh Chandra examining Kanchi Ramudu in the Neurosurgery department at SVIMS in Tirupati

leading to scoliosis. On the advice of a well-wisher, the boy was brought to SVIMS for treatment in July 2016, as the poor family was not able to afford the treatment cost.

After treatment in various spells including surgery and post-operative treatment for the last one year, the boy is now normal. Prasad said SVIMS Director cum Vice-Chancellor Dr TS Ravikumar directed Neurosurgery department to develop a full-fledged facility in SVIMS after finding that number of children screened in SVIMS Rural Health Camps at various places were found with scoliosis.

Accordingly, the doctors in the Neurosurgery department were trained by renowned Orthopaedic Dr HS Chabra, Chief of Spinal Service and Director of Indian Spinal Injuries Centre, New Delhi at a weeklong workshop on 'scoliosis' treatment. The

doctors in SVIMS also availing his expertise and guidance regularly helping them take up more and more cases of children suffering with various spinal disorders, he explained. Kanchi Ramudu (16) who was in SVIMS, few days back for follow up checkup said he had no word to express his joy. "My family and I never thought that I will become normal. After the disorder became severe, I was forced to discontinue my education and confined to the four walls of my home as walking even few steps become painful. Further, breathing also become difficult and unable to answer natural call that made my life more miserable and leaving my parent worry about my future," he said. When asked how he is now, he said in a hushed voice so that the doctors nearby should not know that he went to Tirumala Hills on foot to offer prayer to Lord Venkateswara as

Besides, free treatment, we are providing free food, transport and to the patient and one attendant to ensure no expenses at all by the patients. In the coming days, we will see no pendency of cases to ensure early relief to the children with scoliosis, says SVIMS Director Dr TS Ravikumar

thanks giving. "I am joining the school after a gap of three years," he said beamingly.

Dr TS Ravikumar said that the hospital is now fully equipped for treatment of scoliosis. To reduce pendency of cases of children suffering with scoliosis, Ravikumar said that the SVIMS is now conducting a special drive once in two months in the hospital and performing 4-5 surgeries daily. So far, 80 cases from various districts mostly Rayalaseema in the state were cured in the last 15 months. While another 50 cases were waiting for treatment, Ravikumar said adding that TTD's 'Pranadanam Scheme' came handy to SVIMS for providing free treatment to the poor children. As the treatment involves Rs 10-15 lakh, the poor families cannot afford it and even the financial support from NTR Vaidya Seva is inadequate to meet the treatment cost, he explained. "Besides free treatment, we are providing free food, transport and to the patient and one attendant to ensure no expenses at all by the patients. In the coming days, we will see no pendency of cases to ensure early relief to the children with scoliosis".