

# NAMASTE AMERICA

Indo American Association for Art & Culture



# AFTERNOON DC,

**AUGUST 03, 2013**



DEANNA ABDEEN, SHWETA KATTI, SARAYU DOSHI & ATUL NISHAR

## Dream come true

**SMILING** students were seen as Urvashi Devidayal, president, American Alumni Association and Atul Nishar, president, Namaste America, hosted the 32nd Annual Scholars Abroad Program 2013 at CCI. Students were presented grants and Shweta Katti, the girl from Kamathipura who has overcome a lifetime of adversity to realize her dream of studying abroad, was felicitated. And looking happy was chief guest Deanna Abdeen, Chief of Consular Section, US Consulate.

### Kamathipura girl off to US to pursue higher studies

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**F**or 18-year-old Shweta Katti, who grew up as the daughter of a devdasi in the infamous red-light area of Kamathipura in the city, getting scholarship to study in the US is a dream come true.

Shweta, who once studied in a civic school, flew to New York on Thursday to pursue a course in psychology at Bard University.

"Shweta has got the opportunity to study in the US. I don't know what she would be studying there. But I feel proud of her," her mother Vandana, a devdasi, told reporters on Sunday.

Devdasis are girls who are 'dedicated' to a life of sex work in the name of religion.

"Since childhood Shweta had been good at studies. Earlier, she studied in the municipality school. From class VIII, she started going a private school in south Mumbai," she added.

After Shweta completed her higher secondary school (HSC), she approached Apne Aap, an organisation in Kamathipura to which she was associated since her class IV. Apne Aap then took her to Kranti—an NGO—which educates and empowers trafficked girls, to help her in pursuing further education.

Knowing well about her field of interest, the organisation then cleared the deck for Shweta to get further education in the US.

When asked about the funding part of Shweta's education abroad, Robin from Kranti said, "Around 200 people from all over the world have contributed to towards her education in the US. She would be studying psychology over there. She had told us about her dream and we promised that we will make it happen."

Her mother says that Shweta would come back only after four years. "I am missing her. But I have to make myself strong," she said.