For first time in 100 yrs,Dalit student tops KGMU

Breaking Barriers Vandana is first SC student to bag Hewett Gold Medal and Chancellor's Gold Medal; hopes to become a Paediatrician.

For a medical university that has been in news time and again for alleged discrimination against Dalit students,King George Medical University (KGMU),Lucknow,is all set to award its most prestigious awards to a student belonging to Schedule Caste —for the first time in over 100 years of its history.

Vandana,an MBBS student of SC category of 2008 batch,has topped the university and bagged a total of 17 medals,including the most prestigious Hewett Gold Medal and Chancellor's Gold Medal,apart from two other gold medals for academic excellence.

The medals would be bestowed upon Vandana in the ninth convocation ceremony of the university Sunday.

The Hewett Gold medal is awarded by the varsity for obtaining highest marks in Final Professional MBBS Part II examination whereas Chancellor's medal is given for obtaining highest aggregate marks in MBBS.

Confirming that Vandana is the first student from SC category to get the top two gold medals,KGMU Vice-Chancellor Prof DK Gupta said: " In the last 100 years,we saw no student from SC category get an award (in academics)…I am very happy that this student (Vandana) bagged both the gold medals this year."

Vandana maintained that her achievement is more of an individual success,which she owes to her family rather than a story of community struggle and victory.

" I do not really relate to ' Dalit struggle' because I have had the good fortune of getting excellent education and my parents and siblings have been very supportive,"

Vandana,youngest of the three children of Harish Chandra Ram,a PWD junior engineer,told The Sunday Express.

Even in the past,Vandana has proved herself as a meritorious student with an outstanding 91 per cent marks in 10th and 89.64 per cent in 12th.

After completing schooling from Lucknow Public School,Vandana got 37th rank in SC category in medical entrance examination which secured her a seat at KGMU.

Ruling out any discrimination by KGMU faculty members,Vandana said her struggles are similar to any other student and she has faced no biases against her in university.

The V-C also made Vandana' s achievement a case against the allegations that the university teachers discriminate against students of SC category. " Allegations have been made that teachers discriminate against Dalit students in the university but they are false. In our university,education is the only priority," said Gupta.

The 24-year-old doctor,who hails from Ballia,said her success would be more meaningful if it becomes an inspiration for girls of her community.

Vandana believes discrimination against Dalits is prevalent in the society and it can be eradicated by providing good quality education to Dalit children.

" Many intelligent children from my community in my village do not get the opportunity to study in good schools or colleges. They have no money and have to work to fulfill their necessities," she said.

After completing her MBBS,she wants to pursue a masters in medical science and excel as a medical professional.

Hard work and ' interest' in the subject remains her key to success. " The MBBS course is so vast that it is impossible to mug up the entire syllabus. If we study with interest,only then can we succeed in our field," claimed Vandana,who puts in four to six hours of study every day,and hopes to become a paediatrician one day.

KGMU convocation today

LUCKNOW: King George Medical University will host its ninth convocation ceremony on Sunday. While Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav will be the chief guest at the convocation,a total of 305 students will be awarded their degrees.

Addressing a press conference in Lucknow Saturday,KGMU Vice-Chancellor Professor DK Gupta said the CM will also inaugurate three new buildings,including a dental building,an OPD building and Advance Centre for Research,ahead of the the ceremony.

Governor B L Joshi,who is also the Chancellor of the university,will preside over the ceremony.