

## ATOMIC ENERGY EDUCATION SOCIETY, MUMBAI

Sub: English

Handout: 1

Module: 1/2

Lesson: 8

Reach for the Top

Class: IX

Santosh Yadav

*She is an inspiration to all the ambitious girls. Her mental toughness, strong determination and will power inspires us to undertake any task that we dream of, for nothing is impossible if one is determined and clear about one's aim like Santosh.*

### Introduction

Ms. Santosh Yadav is an Indian mountaineer. She is the first woman in the world to climb Mount Everest twice, and the first woman to successfully climb Mt Everest from Kangshung Face. She first climbed the peak in May 1992 and then did it again in May 1993. During her Everest mission of 1992 she saved the life of another climber, Mohan Singh, by sharing oxygen with him. As she believes in preserving the environment, Santosh did her bit by bringing down five hundred kilograms of garbage from the Himalaya.

### Explanation

#### Wished for a girl not a boy

Santosh was the youngest child, a sister to five brothers. Santosh was born in a village named Joniyawas in Rewari district of Haryana. Her society was biased towards having a male child over a female child. When Santosh was to be born, a saint, visited her family. As her mother already had five sons, Santosh's grandmother said to the saint that they wanted a girl. The saint was amazed to hear this and blessed her as per her wish. The blessing turned into a reality as Santosh was born.

## **Opposing tradition**

From a young age, she started living life on her own terms. While other girls wore traditional Indian dresses like salwar kameez, she preferred wearing shorts. She believed if she was right in her way, then others would have to change their way and not her.

Santosh's parents were wealthy. They could even afford the money to send their children to study in schools in Delhi which was near their village. Still, due to the prevailing customs, they decided to send Santosh to a school in the village. .

At the age of sixteen, as most of the girls in her village were married off, she was also pressurised by her parents. She wanted to get proper education before getting married. Santosh left home and got admission in a school in Delhi. Her parents threatened not to fund her studies, she gently told about her plan of working part-time to arrange money. Seeing her determination, the parents agreed to pay for her education.

## **Inspired by the Aravalis**

After passing high school, she joined Maharani College at Jaipur and stayed at the Kasturba hostel. The Aravalli hills were near the hostel. Often she saw villagers climbing the hills and disappearing behind it. She was curious to know what was beyond the hills. One day Santosh found a few mountaineers who allowed her to join them in their mountaineering expedition. Gradually she became an accomplished mountaineer. She saved money to get enrolled in a mountaineering course at the Nehru Institute of Mountaineering at Uttarkashi.

## **Iron will, mental toughness & physical endurance**

Santosh went on an expedition every year and improved her skills gradually. She developed immunity to cold weather and heights. In 1992, four years after her first casual climb on the Aravalli hills, she climbed Mount Everest. She was twenty years of age. That time Santosh became the youngest woman in the world to climb the peak. Her seniors were impressed by her qualities of physical strength, mental strength and strong will power.

Within the next year, she had joined a group of Indo - Nepalese mountaineer women. Then she climbed the peak the second time, becoming the only woman to have climbed the Everest twice at that time.

## **Compassionate companion**

Her companions on expeditions found her to be concerned for others and willing to work as a team. During the 1992 expedition to Everest, she tried to save a fellow climber but was unsuccessful. She was successful in saving another fellow climber - Mohan Singh who fell short of oxygen by sharing her oxygen with him.

## **Proud Indian & Padmashri**

Santosh made India proud by getting her name recorded in the Historic records of mountaineering. The Indian government honoured her achievement by giving her the Padmashri award.

She hoisted the Indian flag atop Mount Everest, on the highest point of the world. She cannot put the great feeling into words. She felt proud to be an Indian.

## **Environmentalist**

The Everest is littered with ripped tents, butane stoves, old sleeping bags, empty food containers, ropes, broken tent poles, oxygen bottles and corpses. As she believes in preserving the environment, she did her bit by bringing down five hundred kilograms of garbage from the Himalayas.

-----The End -----