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Bringing laurels home!

Moment of Glory

They worked, they dreamt, they applied, they won. It was as simple as that. The 219 girl winners of the Fair and Lovely Foundation Scholarships were gushing with joy and pride, and some with tears at the felicitation programme held in the city last week. There were several criteria on which the applicants were judged to be awarded the scholarships, but the main one was that they had the potential to make a difference - to their own lives, to their family and to society at large.

Amidst this gathering floated in the voice of Paulo Coelho, the noted Brazilian Novelist who said "Fair and Lovely Scholars... Sharing my personal experience, I had to overcome a lot of prejudices, difficult moments. I was down and out many times in my life just because I wanted to fulfill a dream; that was to be a writer. I think if I were a woman, it would have been three times more difficult. So you're not alone, the prejudices are there". He went on to encourage the Fair and Lovely scholars and said "If you are guided by enthusiasm, if enthusiasm is in your heart, if you are committed to what you want to do, you are going to succeed". He was to be there in person to felicitate the winners, but could not make it.

The winners were all proud, soaking in their moment of glory. An engineering student Daksha Gurnani said that she was now relieved that her mother did not have to go to her extended family to ask for paltry sums as loan whenever her fees were due. She could use the scholarship amount for it. In fact, she was certain that she wanted to impart her knowledge and wanted to become a teacher after.

MBBS student Naz Yasmeen from Patna Medical College in Bihar was elated when she heard that she had won, but she is not one to show off her joy. She took it silently and then told her brother and cousins whom she was close to. They congratulated her and wished all her dreams came

The Fair and Lovely Foundation Scholarships awarded last week, will enable the winners to go a long way



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true. One of eleven siblings whose father has passed away, Naz has worked hard to come this long way. Long ago she was inspired by someone who saw on television. He was a cardio-thoracic surgeon imparting voluntary medical services in the rural areas. She still holds that dream

dear to her heart, and wants to specialise to become a cardiothoracic surgeon.

Varsha Madhav of Mumbai is pursuing her master's in pharmacy in Nagpur. She was overjoyed at receiving the scholarship, since it will enable her to chase her dream of completing her PhD on the human nervous system.

The room was full of such stories and many more, from the guests of honour, Santosh Yadav, the lady who scaled the Everest twice; Harshini Kanhekar, India's first lady fire fighter; and Shahida Ganguly, Police Gallantry award winner from Jammu and Kashmir. Chief Guest Padmashree Prof Sukhadeo Thorat, Chairman, Indian Council of Social Science Research and Former Chairman of University Grants Commission congratulated the winners. He also outlined a few measures adopted by the government, the private players and more importantly the corporate sector in the upliftment of women's education in the country.