

Brother-sister duo - fruit vendor's grandchildren - in civil services

Their grandfather worked as a fruit vendor and grandmother did motley jobs, including providing water in a government office. Now a brother-sister duo from a marginalized community has made it to India's prestigious civil services.

'We are very happy to see our name in the selected list. My grandparents were very humble people and they did their best to help my father crack the civil services and now we have cracked it too,' Mukul Arya told IANS.

Mukul and his sister Mukta Arya have made it to the final 734 candidates whose names were announced Friday for appointment in various civil services positions, including the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Indian Police Service (IPS) and Indian Foreign Service (IFS).

While Mukta, 26, has been ranked 48, Mukul, 23, has secured the 343rd position. Their family - the father is a civil servant himself - lives in Delhi but originally hails from Andhra Pradesh.

An M.Phil student at the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), Mukul said as they belong to the Scheduled Tribe category, he and Mukta would try to create an inclusive atmosphere for one and all.

'Being from a socially lower strata, you tend to face difficulties. General people doubt your talent but its not like that always. My sister's ranking is very good and she will be an IAS officer,' he added.

'Once we get into the service, we will promote inclusive growth and try to reduce prejudices around the caste system. All sections of society should grow together,' he added.

Speaking about his family, he said his grandfather was a fruit vendor and daily wage labourer, and after his death, his grandmother used to do sundry jobs, including providing drinking water in an office.

'They helped my father study and become a civil servant, who is currently serving in Lakshadweep. But we still have the old customs at home - touching the feet of seniors, manners and down to earth attitude.'

He said from her grandmother to his mother, who is a housewife, to his sister, women in their families had helped them flourish.

'I owe my success more to my sister and mother. Mukta made our house a research centre of sociology. Both she and I had sociology as a subject.'

Sri Ram, the man who had taught both of them at his Sriram's IAS Coaching Centre in Delhi, said: 'Mukta is an unassuming, simple girl with profound depth of knowledge on her subject. She was very mature.'

'Mukul is intellectually sophisticated. His knowledge of economics is really good and he is never confused,' Sri Ram added.

This year 734 candidates have made it to the elite civil services, of which 286 are from the general category, 266 from the Other Backward Classes, 128 Scheduled Castes and 54 Scheduled Tribes candidates.

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