Teen mountaineer on a new high

Poorna becomes youngest tribal girl to scale world’s four highest peaks

Malavath Poorna has added another feather to her snow-capped hat. She has become the world’s youngest tribal woman to scale four highest mountain peaks across four continents.

The 18-year-old successfully climbed Mt. Aconcagua, the highest peak in Southern and Western Hemisphere on February 15. “I cannot even describe how difficult the climb was; it was much tougher than Mount Everest but I was determined to go ahead with the mission,” Poorna said, speaking from Mt. Aconcagua.

Before this, she had scaled Mt. Everest (Asia), Mt. Kilimanjaro (Africa) and Mt. Elbrus (Europe).

‘Sky’s the limit’
The sky should be the limit for girls hailing from marginalised communities, she asserted. “We can achieve great goals in life,” she said. Poorna was a student of Telangana’s Social Welfare Residential Educational Institutions. She is currently pursuing her undergraduate studies at Telangana Social Welfare Residential Degree College for Women in Kamareddy.

“My goal is to make Telangana and India proud by becoming the youngest tribal woman in the world to scale the seven highest peaks across all seven continents.

Now, I have set my sights on scaling Mt. Denali in North America, Vinson Massif in Antarctica and Mt. Kosciuszko in Australia,” she declared.

Sekhar Babu, director of Transcend Adventures, had sponsored Poorna’s Aconcagua expedition.

Reacting to Poorna’s latest achievement, TSWREIS secretary R.S. Praveen Kumar said, “What makes her feat unique is that she hails from a poor tribal community and her parents, Laxmi and Devidas, work as agricultural labourers in Pakala village of Nizamabad district. Poorna has become a role model and source of inspiration for millions of girls from marginalised communities throughout the world.”

Poorna also participated in the 70th United Nations General Assembly in New York in September, 2015, to speak on equal rights for girls. In 2017, Bollywood actor-filmmaker Rahul Bose released a film on the young mountaineer that he titled ‘Poorna: Courage Has No Limit’.