

In focus

Kavitha Reddy

# Mountaineering is her passion

SHE HAS BEEN TREKKING ACROSS KARNATAKA, TAMIL NADU AND KERALA AND IS A REGULAR VISITOR TO THE HIMALAYAN RANGES OF UTTAKHAND, JAMMU AND KASHMIR AND NEPAL. SHE HAS ALSO DOCUMENTED MANY OF THESE TREKS IN HER WRITINGS AND PHOTOGRAPHS AND WAS RECENTLY PROFILED IN MEDIA AS ONE OF THE VERY FEW WOMEN IN INDIA WHO ARE INTO EXTREME AND ADVENTURE SPORTS.

She is Kavitha Reddy, a hard-core Bangalorean residing at 7th Cross, Sector 1, HSR Layout. She is a qualified mountaineer and a passionate nature lover. Kavitha did her college education at Vijaya and NMKV and later got a PGDM. She got married to a businessman who is also a lover of sports and adventure. Her father, who retired from Bharat Electronics, was a famous volleyball player during his time and her mother is actively involved in social work through Lion's Club. She has a younger brother who is an environmentalist.

Kavitha believes that adventure is one of the best forms on learning and relaxing; it not only gives the adrenaline line rush but more importantly helps in building up self-confidence and personality development. She aspires to be the first woman from Karnataka to climb the Mt Everest and is working towards this goal, and also to climb at least four more 8000+ metre peaks by 2015.

Asked about her journey in adventure, she said: "My love for adventure started very early, mainly since I dreamed of a career in armed forces. During my NCC days I represented Karnataka Directorate in Republic Day Parade in Delhi. I also received the best contingent trophy for Karnataka Directorate from the Prime Minister in 1993. In NCC, I was part of many camps that were related to adventure and the interest continued thereafter."

Kavitha spent 14 years in the private sector, working in Marketing, PR department and in Training and Operations. Later she started her own company with a friend and they are into Outbound Training and Experiential Learning.

She learnt mountaineering from the Nehru Institute of Mountaineering and an associate member of the Indian Mountaineering Foundation. She was first introduced to adventure in 1988 when she attended a basic and advanced rock-climbing course with General Thimmaiah Academy of Adventure and since then she never looked back.

Asked how she prepares herself for all her adventurous activities, she said: "Safety comes first. In whatever adventure I undertake or personally help other do it, I ensure that we use the best and right equipment. As



far as the preparation goes, one has to stay fit all the year long and should have a very calm and fit mind. I run 6-8 km every day; sometimes I cycle or go for a swim. I also do breathing exercise and have a healthy eating habit."

"So far as my mountaineering experiences taught me a lot. Adventure has made me a better person, helped me take risk and made me more confident. When one is on the mountains, one has to be alert, calm and team-oriented even during the worst times," Kavitha said.

Her love of nature has made her choose nature photography as a hobby. She has also taken to adventure writing. Kavitha is concerned about the impact of global warming on the mountains and the local population that is dependent on the mountains more closely than others. So she spends a lot of time spreading the message and educating people as much as she can about global warming.

"To reduce global warming in a small way, I have

Coming back to her favourite subject, mountaineering, she said: "It is expensive, more so when one is really aiming high. Honestly, anything to do with life and death cannot be cheap. Equipment, training, etc. are definitely expensive compared to any other sport but mountaineering for me is not just a sport; it's an attitude and a frame of mind. Generally, people say mountaineering is not for weak hearts, but my take is that good mountaineers always take calculated risks; they put safety first hence I feel that the 'dare' word is slightly over-rated. One just has to believe in oneself and take

that extra step if one wants to be part of any adventure activity."

She cherishes the experience in one of her many expeditions. "I was climbing to reach Camp-2 with two of my friends and suddenly we realized that there was an avalanche coming down. There was no place to run or move to safety. So we decided to sit behind our backpacks and take videos and pictures of the approaching avalanche till we are alive. To our luck, the avalanche was not huge and it just blew over, covering us with a mild powder of snow," Kavitha said recalling the chilling experience.

—PUNNIVATHI GOULI S.

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