**Chapter-8**

**REACH FOR THE TOP**

**Santosh Yadav**

`Reach for The Top’ topic has been bifurcated in two part. Each part of the topic contains a heroic story of two young girls. The heroine in the first part is a young Mountaineer Santosh Yadav and the heroine of the second part is Maria Sharapova a tennis sensation of the world. Santosh Yadav was born in a small village of Haryana state. She belonged to an agriculturist family. Her family was of the opinion of traditional values and they were patient to keep their prevailing customs but she rose to the highest glory by her hard efforts. In the same way, Maria Sharapova rises to the top of the tennis world by her hard efforts. She became the world’s number one tennis sensation and now becomes the most glamorous sensation of the modern world.

 “Reach for the Top” (Part I) is an inspirational account of the phenomenal success and achievements of an Indian woman mountaineer, Santosh Yadav, who beat all odds and prejudices to script a success story, thanks to her sterling qualities of perseverance, patience, commitment, persistence and constancy of purpose.

**CHARACTERS**

**Santosh Yadav**

 Santosh Yadav has been portrayed as a firm-willed, decisive, courageous, adventurous girl endowed with a rational mind and physical and mental toughness. Born in a small village of Haryana, Santosh Yadav had an independent temperament right from the beginning and wished to live life on her own terms. She knew full well that her conservative family would pressurize her to adhere to the traditional way of life. But at the same time she was aware that if she chose a correct and a rational path, she would be able to change others and win their support.

Santosh Yadav had the courage to oppose what she considered to be wrong. When her parents insisted that she should get married on turning sixteen, she put her foot down and made it clear that her first priority was getting educated. Determined as she was, she got herself enrolled in a school in Delhi. When the parents threatened that they would not pay her school fees, she told them that she would work part-time to pay for her education. Her parents had to finally relent before her determination. Later on, her iron will, physical endurance and mental toughness helped her to first join Maharani College Jaipur and then Nehru Institute of Mountaineering at Uttarkashi. Her hard work and determination, mental strength and physical fitness equipped her for undertaking the dangerous journey to reach Mt. Everest, the ‘top of the world’ successfully, not once, but twice.

Santosh Yadav’s humanitarian attitude and team-spirit came to the fore during her expedition when she helped her fellow climbers. Her concern for the environment was evident when she brought down as much as 500 kilograms of garbage from the Himalayas.

 All these qualities and amazing achievements helped Santosh earn one of the nation’s top awards, Padmashri. She is a motivation for young men and women in the world.

**Santosh Yadav’s Parents**

Santosh Yadav’s parents were affluent but orthodox, conservative landlords. They liked to live according to the prevailing customs in the family. However, whenever they tried to make Santosh toe the line set by traditions and the girl offered resistance, they yielded because they loved her from the core of their hearts, and knew that she had chosen a correct and a rational path. Thus, Santosh kept on getting support from her parents, which in the long run helped her reach the zenith of glory.

**THEME**

“Reach for the Top” is based on the theme that success comes to those who dare and do. This theme runs throughout the account of Santosh Yadav’s education, training and success as a woman mountaineer in a country where discrimination against women is rampant. Santosh defied all odds, customs, traditions and prejudices to script her phenomenal success through hard work, persistent effort, focus on the goal and mental and physical toughness. Santosh has really reached the highest top that a woman mountaineer could reach, not just once but twice. She is a wonderful role-model to emulate.

**TITLE**

The title “Reach for the Top” is an appropriate title for the biographical feature on Santosh Yadav, both literally and metaphorically.

means the mountaintop, especially of Mt. The ‘top’ here not only Everest but also the pinnacle of glory. Santosh reached both the tops with Elan, thanks to her sterling qualities of body and mind, and thanks also to the training and support she received.

 “Reach for the Top” as an imperative phrase gives a call to the readers to do their best and strive to achieve excellence and glory in their own area of interest through hard work, persistent efforts, the constancy of purpose, strong will and meticulous planning.

***Summary:***

Santosh Yadav was born in a traditional family. She had five brothers. She was born in the small village of Joniyawas in Haryana. The girl was given the name Santosh, which means contentment. But Santosh was not always content with her place in a traditional way of life. She began living life on her own terms from the start. Where other girls wore traditional Indian dresses, Santosh preferred shorts.  
Santosh’s parents were affluent landowners who could afford to send their children to the best schools, even to the country’s capital Delhi, which was quite close by. But, in line with the prevailing custom in the family, Santosh had to make do with the local village school. At the age of sixteen years, her parents wanted to marry her. She threatened her parents that she would never many if she did not get a proper education. She left home and got herself enrolled in a school in Delhi. When her parents refused to pay for her education. she politely informed them of her plans to earn money by working part-time to pay her school fees. Her Parents then agreed to pay for her education.  
Santosh passed the high school examinations and went to Jaipur. She joined Maharani College widget a room in Kasturba Hostel. She developed a love for mountaineering while watching the Aravalli Hills’ She saved money and enrolled in a course at Uttarkashi’s Nehru Institute of Mountaineering.  
Thereafter, Santosh went on an expedition every year. Her climbing skills matured rapidly’. Also, she developed a remarkable resistance to cold and the altitude. Equipped with an iron will, Physical endurance and an amazing mental toughness, she proved herself repeatedly. The culmination of her hard work and sincerity came in 1992, just four years after she had shyly asked the Aravalli mountaineers if she could join them. At barely twenty years of age, Santosh Yadav conquered Mt. Everest, becoming the youngest woman in the world to achieve the feat. If her climbing skills, physical fitness, and mental strength impressed her seniors, her concern for others and desire to work together with them found her a special place in the hearts of fellow climbers.

During the 1992 Everest mission, Santosh Yadav provided special care to a climber who ‘lay dying at the South Col. She was unfortunately unsuccessful in saving him. However, she managed to save another climber, Mohan Singh, who would have met with the same fate had she not shared her oxygen with him. Within twelve months, Santosh found herself a member of an Indo-Nepalese Women’s Expedition that invited her to join them. She then conquered the Everest a second time. –  
She was given a Padmashri Award. She is also a fervent environmentalist, Santosh collected and brought down 500 kilograms of garbage from the Himalayas.

**Value Points**

* Santosh Yadav is one of the few women in the world to have climbed the Mount Everest twice.
* She first climbed the peak in May 1992 and then did it again in May 1993.
* She was born in 1969 in Rewari District of Haryana state in India and is an officer in Indo-Tibetan Border Police.
* She is an alumnus of Maharani College, Jaipur.
* Living in Kasturba Hostel, she joined Uttarkashi’s Nehru Institute of Mountaineering.
* While studying, she prepared herself to climb two greatest peaks in life namely, mountaineering and Indian Civil Services and was successful in both.
* She prepared for her IAS exams in a hostel provided by Indian Mountaineering Federation at Connaught Place, New Delhi. Her brother is an officer in the Indian Army. She was also conferred Padma Shri award in 2000.