

### I owe it to The Hindu - Sandeep Kaur, UPSC Civil Services 2009 winner

Overwhelmed by a deluge of accolades for clearing the civil services examinations, Sandeep Kaur, daughter of a peon, acknowledges the major role played by The Hindu in her success.

*"I did not miss any article on the Edit page as well as in the Opinion section,"* the civil engineering graduate from the Punjab Engineering College told this correspondent.

As her family resources were limited, Ms. Kaur never opted for any formal coaching for the civil services examinations, in which she had not succeeded in a previous attempt. She chose Sociology and Punjabi literature as her subjects for the civil services examinations, in which she was ranked 138th this year.

For nearly five years, she had followed the guidelines given by her teachers, seniors and friends. "But the most important factor in my preparations was thorough reading of The Hindu, which provided a proper insight into current affairs, national and international developments."

Ms. Kaur's father or her cousin Jaspreet Singh would travel nearly 20 km by bus to get her a copy of the newspaper from an agent at Kharar town.

"The agent was kind enough to keep copies for a few days, in case we could not collect them," she recalled, adding that interviews by successful candidates and advice by her teachers led her to reading The Hindu regularly.

While the Punjab government plans to use her success in its fight against female foeticide, Ms. Kaur says she is prepared to serve anywhere in the country. Poverty eradication and equal opportunities for all will remain her priorities, avers the eldest of the three siblings, whose father, Ranjit Singh, is employed in the sub-tehsil office at Morinda, about 30 km from here.

