

# Muslim girl tops Vedanta course

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**A**N ORTHODOX Muslim girl has bagged the first rank in the Sanskrit Vedanta degree course conducted by the University of Kerala, dispelling the Hindu tag attached to that stream of education.

A Rahmath, 21, a native of Kayamkulam, has emerged the topper in Sanskrit from the college run by the State Temple Affairs Board in Kollam. Daughter of an NRI, Rahmath had first embraced Sanskrit as a second language at the higher secondary level after abandoning Arabic, which she studied till Class X.

"I have genuine interest in Sanskrit, which is part of the Indian tradition and culture. Despite being Orthodox, my parents supported the decision to take Sanskrit as the main subject. I will pursue higher studies in Vedanta," Rahmath said.

She said no one from the Muslim community raised an eyebrow when she decided to take up

Vedanta. "Being a non-Hindu, the teachers too gave special attention to me. As my Sanskrit learning began only at the higher secondary level, I had to take extra effort to gain upon others," she said.

The rank-holder's father, Abdul Latheef, said, "We were of the opinion that since she had studied Arabic in her religious classes, Rahmath could learn another language as part of her main stream education."

What brings extra sheen to the Muslim girl's achievement is that she stuck with the Vedanta course when many of the 30 students in her batch had abandoned the programme half way. Besides, Muslim girls pursuing Vedanta is rare as Sanskrit

literature is more popular among students of all religious communities.

According to Sanskrit teacher R Anand, the religious barrier towards Sanskrit is slowly crumbling. "Every year, two or three Muslim students join for Sanskrit degree course. Several Muslim students are pursuing post graduation and research in Sanskrit in the University of Kerala."



**Rahmath wants to pursue higher studies in Vedanta**