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Blindness no hurdle for girl who gets IFS posting

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PARTHASARATHY | DC**
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It was the abhorrence she exhibited in her teenage years, when it came to people wasting even a drop of water and the subsequent response from her relatives and friends, which inspired N.L. Beno Zephine, now 25 years old, to attempt the civil service examinations. While she went around

urging them to conserve natural resources, they would tease her, calling her nattamai (village head) and collector (IAS officer). Now, they would have to call her not an IAS officer but an IFS officer, for Beno has become the first-ever 100 per cent visually challenged person to enter South Block (Union foreign ministry) as an officer.

Ms Zephine remembers that "While pursuing class



Beno Zephine

11 at Little Flower Convent, I remember giving a piece

of my mind to those who let the taps run. I made sure to make them understand that water was precious." If that quality, shown while trying to protect a natural resource, inspired her to become a civil servant, the reaction from her close ones; who called her nattamai and collector, made Ms Zephine, visually impaired from birth, determined.

So, when in 2014 she secured an impressive all-

India 343 rank in the prestigious examinations, it was with some considerable excitement that she waited for the service allotment. On Friday evening, after a year's time, Ms Zephine was informed about her appointment to the Indian Foreign Service. She thus became the first-ever 100 per cent visually challenged person to become an IFS officer.

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