

Transgender student heralds change

Creates history by becoming the first in Malappuram to study on a college campus

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Riya Isha walked into the Malappuram Government College campus to an enthusiastic and colourful welcome on Saturday.

Her entry created history of sorts. She became the first transwoman in the district to study in a college.

The students' union, led by the Muslim Students Federation (MSF), gave Ms. Isha a welcome that no student at the Malappuram Government College has got so far.

They gave her gifts and books, and took her through the corridors of the college to her B.A. (Economics) classroom.

"I was thrilled by the reception I got from the



Memorable entry: Students welcoming transgender Riya Isha at Government College, Malappuram, on Saturday.

students on the campus. No transgender has stepped on to a higher education campus in this part of Kerala so far. I wanted to not only break that barrier, but also to set a model for others to emulate," Ms. Isha told *The Hindu*.

Ms. Isha's entry to the campus stood out as she joined the Calicut University's undergraduate programme after some dealy. She had got the authorities, including District Collector Amit Meena and Vice-Chancellor

K. Mohammed Basheer, to make special intervention in her favour.

Larger message

The new entrant did not hide her excitement at the friendly treatment she got. "I am touched by their gesture. I am happy people's attitude towards us is slowly changing," Ms. Isha said.

Students union chairman Shamseerul Haq said they had a larger message to send home by according a memorable welcome to Ms. Isha. "We wanted to underscore the importance of equality among students. We wanted to highlight that there should be no discrimination of any sorts against transwomen in our society."