

# "Our Hospitality Industry should be world class"

**Q: This being the year of 'sustainable tourism', as declared by the UN, what is your take on the current standard of the hospitality industry?**

**A:** I think it is pretty good right now! I think they (hotels, hospitals, etc) have all improved by leaps and bounds compared to what I knew them to be 10 years ago. Especially the hotels, thanks to Saravana Bhavan, who were the first to start wearing plastic gloves! They also brought in disposable leaves on a plate, they set the standards high and also maintain them. Hospitals too, I think have maintained a very good standard of hygiene. There is greater awareness among the public, so they are also demanding and expecting it and so it is being provided. I feel the government and the organisations are doing a good job with tourism. However what is lacking is - civic sense among tourists, especially Indians, and here we have a long way to go! Somehow, awareness should be created to take ownership and responsibility for maintaining our own tourist spots. Pollution is really bad. Otherwise the organisations are doing a very good job.

**Q: According to you, what is the importance of the hospitality industry?**

**A:** It is very important if India is to be seen in the global market. I have met many people abroad and it is their dream to come to India. You won't believe that for them, coming to India is a bigger dream than for us going to the US. If they are going to come over here and see the filth, it is going to be miserable. So I think it is very important that the hospitality industry should be world class.

**Q: On the basis of your frequent interaction with the students, do you believe hotel management is a viable career for this generation?**

**A:** It is a viable career no doubt, but how many will take it, I am not sure. The problem with doing hotel management is that it is too specialised. How to motivate more students to take it up, I really do not

## Interview with Mrs. Vasanthi



know.

**Q: India has the potential to be an ideal tourist destination. Do you believe that this dream can be realized in the near future?**

**A:** It can definitely be realised, it already has been! India is already a dream destination for most people and if we just lift the standards a little more regarding the cleanliness of our country, I think India will have the maximum number of tourists in the world! People in the tourism industry will have to be a little more innovative; Mix and Match. When you go to England, they have a Harry Potter tour. We have such a rich cultural heritage; I feel that we should also have a thematic tour like a Raja Raja Sholan tour. If they read about him or the Mughals, there should be some guided tour or even a Ramayana tour.

**Q: What are the initiatives that can be taken at the school level to ensure that students are aware of the tourist spots in various other countries?**

**A:** I feel the heritage club has a major role to play in this. The heritage club in our schools can definitely spread awareness. They can also organise more visits to such places. Let's begin at home! There is so much to see even around us, like a tour to Kanchipuram; the number of temples that are there is astonishing and their architectural beauty is awe-inspiring. They also have the silk and weaving industry besides the local cuisine. All of this should be combined and made into an attractive package. Most people think India is only a land of temples, but there is more to India than what meets the eye.

**Q: Some say that India's tourism industry will benefit from hosting major events like the Olympics. What are your views?**

**A:** I think so too. Definitely! I still remember the Asiads which we had when I was in school. It was talked about so much and even a big village came up. There will be scandals and corruption, these are the by-products. However I think we can learn from the lessons of the

past. I think we should, it will definitely help.

**Q: Do you think it is beneficial for India to increase investment in the hospitality sector?**

**A:** It is definitely beneficial. The world is shrinking and if we want to be seen as part of this shrinking world, we have to play a big role in it. And this sector is also providing so many employment opportunities also.

**Q: What are the initiatives the government could take to improve the functioning and the efficiency of this sector?**

**A:** It has to be made corruption free. Stringent rules regarding hospitality, health and hygiene of all the places, whether it is a hospital or a hotel should be followed very strictly. Soft-skill training is also something we are excellent at. Indian hospitality is too good; nobody can beat us at that. The government should keep the city clean, create more awareness, and cleanliness of the country should be improved.

**Q: Do you agree that medical tourism is a sustainable path for India to go down?**

**A:** As I mentioned before, the tourism can be made thematic to attract different types of visitors. Chennai is known for its medical tourism. If you go to Miot, they have a huge building with a separate wing for only people from the middle-east.

**Q: Do you think India has the potential to make significant contributions to the field of medicine?**

**A:** Most certainly. We have a few of the best doctors in our country, particularly in Tamil Nadu. Nowadays because of all the technology, doctors are able to give instructions across the air. I happened to meet a Paediatrician recently, and he was telling me, the best place for old people and children is India, and he is a doctor who has been in USA for many years.

-Aditi Baskar, Sadhana Madhavan

## Kon'nichiwa Japan!

We interviewed Tejas Sudarshan who had visited Japan as a part of the World School Forum. We learnt that the World School Forum is an international platform where student delegates from different countries like the USA and Romania come together to learn from each other.

This year's theme was 'Food and Culture.' The discussions mainly involved around how food and culture has changed over the years. Tejas was part of the three member delegation the school sent. The students had to undergo many stages of selection like essay writing on topics such as Organic Farming and the lavishness of Indian weddings.

This was followed by a presentation on India's Food and Culture and a group discussion for the same. The top three students got the opportunity to visit Japan. Tejas mentioned some of the cultural differences between the two countries. The Japanese are very practical and courteous. Everyone used the public transport system regardless of their economic status. He narrated an incident in which the senior official of the metro system personally apologized to them as the train was

late by two minutes!

Tejas added that participating in the World school forum was a very rewarding experience. Being able to interact with different students from various cultural backgrounds and ethnic differences led to many memorable moments. After all "The more that you learn, the more places you'll go."

By: Shruti Balaji 9B



## Public Private Partnership for sewage treatment

The second day of discussion in the committee on construction and restoration of infrastructure began with great vigour. Questions raised regarding ecological systems, management of sewage, development of infrastructure and funding that were proposed were discussed and the committee moved closer towards a common, credible solution. The second day was a continuation of the flurry of thoughts that had manifested formally and informally on the first day.

Out of the many ideas that were put forth, some which stood out and were appreciated by the committee included ideas to set up desalination plants close to the city of Chennai. Plans to set up more sewage treatment plants to deal with excessive wastes under public private partnership for mutual benefits was mooted. There other scientific measures that were put across included the construction of a filtration system consisting of primary, secondary and tertiary filters for treatment of wastes. The setting up of tanks and pits was also approved by the committee. Great importance was given to the treatment and management of sludge.

The formal discussion was followed by an informal dialog between the various delegates from which they drew other ideas. The committee broke into another formal session to finalize the previously discussed solutions which was followed by the paper presentation by the delegates, summing up the solutions. The committee then voted on the various presentations that were presented. This was followed by a paper presentation by the chair, Shreyaa Suresh, concluding the session.



-Sudharshan, Ansh