

Know India Workshop

at Sathya Sai School, Toronto (Online)

Friday November 13, 2020



The workshop started with the introduction by Know-India Workshop technical host Mr. Pulkeet Mehra with the welcome remarks by President of India International Centre of Canada, Dr. Nvedita Das Kundu. The workshop started with the special lecture and presentation by Honourable Ms Apoorva Srivastava, Consul General of India in Toronto.



Discover India: Overview of India's History, Geography, Culture & Heritage

Consul General of India in Toronto Ms Apoorva Srivastava gave the presentation on the overview of India which is a 7th largest country by land with 3.3 million sq.km of area and having 1.3 billion population. There are 22 official languages and more than 19500 spoken languages. Apart from major religions such as Hinduism, Sikhism Buddhism and Jainism, the Jews and Christians marked their presence since 200 B.C and 52 A.D respectively. In Ms Srivastava's presentations, she explained how India is incredible as it is home to Himalayas, Great Indian Desert-Thar, unique backwaters of Kerala, lush tropical Konkan to lavish Ladakh including abundant natural resources. India being located at a peculiar geographical location enjoys all the four weathers. Discussing ancient India and comparing it to the new digital India a lot of issues were touched upon in her presentation, starting from pioneers from India in the field of Mathematics, Medical Advancements, Ayurveda, Astronomy and Yoga which is a gift to the world. Consul General Ms. Srivastava briefed that, India's ranking on Global Indexes 2019 has improved being 9th in climate change performance index;34th in Travel and Tourism competitive Index;44th in Digital Competitive Index;48th Global Innovation Index and 63rd in Ease of Doing Business in India. She further explained how India is working towards, \$5 trillion economy considering financial inclusion a right step in that direction, focussing more on education, decimating gender differences and making a Self- Reliant India.



Significance of Hindu Heritage Month Celebration in Ontario

Mr Prashant Srivastava, Executive Body member, IICC gave a detailed and informative session on the significance of celebrating Hindu Heritage month in Ontario. Mr Prashant discussed that as of 2015, approximately 15.1% of the world population practices Hindu religion. According to Pew Research Center, 94%of world's population of Hindus live in India. Also, Ontario is home to more than 700,000 Indians. Mr. Srivastav mentioned about the key beliefs and practices which are very much scientific in nature are performed by Hindus. He mentioned that the concept of Reincarnation, Karma and Dharma is a strong belief of Hindus, they also consider their teacher ahead of God and parents. Talking further on contribution of Hinduism, Mr Prashant said, Yoga and meditation are the gift which India has given to the world. Ayurveda is based on the belief that health and wellbeing is based on the overall balance between mind, body and spirit. Numeric Zero (0) and decimal system was given by India and modern sciences especially astronomy is largely counted as India's contribution. Mr. Prashant briefed the three important festivals that Hindus celebrate are Navratri, Dussehra, Durga Puja and Diwali.



India's Economic Snapshot: The Reform Journey & the Current Snapshot

Dr. Vandana Kumar, a senior government official with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry explained about India's economic reform journey and gave cultural snapshots as well. She explained how India is on the world stage in terms of growth rate % shining at number 5 with 7.4% the reason for the same lies in 3D's, demographic dividends, demand and democracy. Subsequently, explaining the economic activity ranging from being a milk producer, largest rail network, largest automobile industry and domestic aviation market. Dr. Kumar mentioned

that India is an importer of petroleum oils, unworked diamond, machinery and natural gas, on the contrary, India exports petroleum products, diamond, art jewellery, medicaments and rice. At the end Dr. Vandana suggested that India's transformation lies in collaboration, decision making, social inclusion and cooperative and competitive federalism.



India's Space Program and Innovation

Mr V Gopalakrishnan Former Policy Analyst (Space Law & Policy) Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) in Bangalore initiated his lecture by saying that India's Space journey has been very progressive so far as India is following a strategical approach for the same. Briefing about the key elements of strategy Mr Gopalakrishnan added the judicious mix of build and buy options dovetailed to user needs enabling timely introduction of services and establishment of self-reliance pragmatic way. Also, time and cost advantage through the ability to continuously upgrade the technology through adoption and absorption. It also includes evolution of various phases to progress in a positive manner starting from initiation-experimentation-Operationalization - commercialization-expansion-public private partnership and hard work of the people in the field which have resulted in self-reliant India having immunity against technology denials. Discussing the Architecture of space activities Mr Gopalakrishnan explained about the various department of Indian Space Research Organization and how they operate. The department have space transportation, infrastructure, applications and capacity building offshoots. Irrespective of the problems faced by the organization, they have always worked on two crucial sectors of space application, remote sensing and telecommunication & meteorology which has led India self-reliant.



India's Advancement in Information and Communication Technology

Mr. Gaurav Sharma a technocrat from Pegasystem Canada gave an insight on India's advancement in Information and Communication Technology, as time to change/adapt/transform is reducing because of digital transformation and disruptions. Evolution of media from television, radio and Internet and their development over the period of time since 1960 was very well depicted by Mr Sharma. He mentioned that India is among the top two countries globally on many key dimensions, also he said that every 6th person with whom today we interact would be Indian in coming days, because of large demographic dividend. Promising an evolution is already underway by 2023, number of active citizen developers at India will surpass US in numbers of software developers. He summarized, that there are huge opportunities in IT domain and students should explore numerous scholarships that are available to study IT related subjects and topics. He also mentioned that students should also read about successful IT sectors petronels achievements, to learn about their journey and take inspiration from them.



Tourism in India

Mr. Senthur Kumaran from Ministry of Tourism in India, explained how India is a favourite destination for Tourism. Mr. Senthur mentioned that in India one can eat a variety of foods, pray different religions, love nature and can enrich all senses of discover India and one self. Mr. Kumaran mentioned India is also a land of 35 UNESCO world heritage sites, he stressed that also it is not just the world's old civilizations, it is also the world's largest democracy and has made stupendous progress among developing nations. Mr. Sethur mentioned that as a tourist destination, India has a bustling cosmopolitan cities to the quiet countryside, hill stations, beaches, resorts etc. It has destinations which offers a backdrop of unmatched beauty for a business meet. It has literally everything that a visitor wants to experience and offers people a complete holiday, both physically and mentally. India's tourism remains one major economic driver of the world. Adding to it, medical tourism, places for marriage ceremonies, for adventure, for golfing, for conferences and summits. He concluded saying that festivals of different culture makes India indeed an Incredible place.



Dr. Archana Srivastava an executive body member of IICC thanked the Seneca college, all the participants, organisers, and also volunteers of Know-India Workshop.

The Workshop ended with a Quiz – (Ka hoot) participated by the Sathya Sai School students enthusiastically and prizes will be given to the winners.



Indian National Anthem was sung at the end of the workshop by Rajat Singh, middle school student of Toronto District Public School

And

Canadian National Anthem was sung by a group of Sathya Sai School students.

Prepared by Team *Know India* Workshop
India International Centre of Canada