

## **"#HiddenNoMore: Empowering Women Leaders in STEM"**

I am glad to know that I was selected for the International Visitors Leadership Program (IVLP). The IVLP is one of the U.S. government's most prestigious professional exchange programs for foreign opinion leaders. Many key members of the Indian academia, civil society, business and media have participated in this program in the past. I was offered to visit the U.S. on a 3-week group project entitled "**#HiddenNoMore: Empowering Women Leaders in STEM**", a Multi-Regional Project from October 28 to November 15, 2019. The 50 international women leaders in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) who participated in United States as part of the U.S. State Department's third-annual Hidden No More IVLP are trailblazers in fields such as computer science, robotics and spacecraft engineering etc.

Inspired by the 2016 film *Hidden Figures*, which told the story of the brilliant women who were unsung heroes of the Space Race in the 1960s, whose contributions in mathematics launched the first U.S. astronaut into orbit, the U.S. State Department launched the Hidden No More program three years ago to shine a light on today's innovators in the STEM fields. It brings to the U.S. women from across the globe for three weeks of networking, sharing of best practices for fostering "hidden talent" and examining ways to inspire the next generation of women in STEM. This project was sponsored by United States Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and was administrated by Institute of International Education. Our group was assigned with six International Visitor Liaisons (IVLs) who accompanied the group throughout the program. IVLs are the official administrators of the program and provided insights into the various aspects of the tour, appointments, and the diversity of the U.S.

Participants had chance to examine women's contributions to STEM through research and development, education and teaching, leadership, and public policy formation. This project sought to empower global leaders in STEM who may represent 'hidden talent' in their home communities. Participants could explore best practices in the effective recruitment, training, and development of women and other underrepresented groups in STEM and learnt how they can institutionalize opportunities for women in their own countries. The project focused on the advances of women's employment in STEM fields and address how they are mentoring the next generation.

The Department of State has outlined the following specific objectives for the project:

- Review the evolution and advancement of women in scientific research and innovation in America

- Explore policies of organizations and educational institutions that champion the interest of women in STEM
- Provide opportunities for participants to network with professional counterparts at scientific academies, associations, universities, businesses and agencies across the United States
- Share best practices for fostering “hidden talent” through initiatives that support the recruitment, training and development of women in STEM
- Examine public/private partnerships designed to accelerate student learning in STEM subjects, especially for girls from diverse backgrounds

These objectives were realized by visiting 4 different states of U.S. First visited state was Washington, DC from October 26 – November 2, 2019. This visit focused on overview of U.S. Federalism, Women in Science at the National Level, Workshop: Mentoring and Negotiation Techniques and Hidden Figures Screening. Followed by it was visit to Orlando, Florida from November 2 – 6, 2019. STEM Education and Youth Engagement was explored in this state. Boston, Massachusetts was the third state visited from November 6 – 10, 2019. Here Research Institutions and Laboratories, Women’s Leadership in Innovation and Technology and Science Communication were the topics covered. Finally, we visited Los Angeles, California from November 10 – 16, 2019. This visit had Intragroup Discussion, University-Based Robotics Centers, Women’s Representation in the Media, Disney Studios and Project Closing.

I'M happy to be part of this project representing India. I am grateful to God for His blessings on me, to my Institute family for the prayerful accompaniment and giving me the permission to participate; our Embassy for nominating me to be part of this project; the Program Sponsor United States Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, International Visitor Leadership Program; Ms. Anne Grimes, Director; Ms. Sana Abed-Kotob, Ph.D. Division Chief; Ms. Kimberly Jenkins, Program Officer; Ms. Amanda Schoppet, Program Support Specialist; Program Administrator: Institute of International Education (IIE); Mr. Alexander Gorev, Director; Mr. Daniel Labarca, Project Manager; Ms. Erin Amato, Project Coordinator; IVLs: Ms. Leesa Fields, Mr. Brion Johnson, Mr. Frank Kasell, Mr. Marek Kuzma, Ms. Brittany Lynk, Mr. William St. John. Many thanks to all of you for this unique opportunity to connect with women leaders

across the globe and the great journey with galaxy of stars. May God's wisdom be uncovered and replenished in all that we choose to do and live.

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