

## Thrilling experiences in Welsh land

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These teachers had a lot to teach about India.



**TEACHERS AS AMBASSADORS: Jessy and Catherine, the two teachers from Nava Nirman Public School, in Wales.**

Is India a land sans electricity, water and roads? Do people live in utter poverty?

Despite the talk of strides made on the overall economic front, people have stereotyped visions of India in many parts of the world. "Majority of the primary students and teachers with whom we interacted in Wales, UK, believe that India is a country living in the Stone Age. We could at least dispel the misconception of 500-odd students and teachers of Cwmrhydyceirw Primary School, Swansea, Wales," says Jessy John and Catherine Thomas, Vice-Principal and English teacher respectively of **Nava Nirman Public School, Vazhakkala, Kochi.**

The teacher duo was in Wales recently as part of a Global-School Partnership programme with the school. In Welsh language, the Welsh school's name translates into 'deer crossing the stream'. The sprawling eco-friendly campus has 500-odd students. Being a Government school, children need not pay fees. After 11 years of age they are sent to comprehensive schools (high schools).

### Exchange programme

"We conducted a power-point presentation about the new and resurgent India, especially metro cities, including Kochi. The IT-enabled India with abundant talent in soft ware and hardware was shown to the Welsh children.

The Gandhiji-led independence struggle too was elaborated on. Students listened curiously as

we spoke of the waterways and lush greenery of Kochi. They were astonished by the fact that we could drape a 5.5 metre sari in less than two minutes," says Ms Thomas. The kids wanted to know more about colourful Indian festivals like Deepavali. Their curriculum includes study of festivals. An 'Indian Day' was celebrated in the school in their presence. The teachers draped in sari tied rakhis on children's wrists. The students had heard about Sachin Tendulkar but no other Indian sports personality. Two teachers from Wales - Mark Williams and Darwyn Hopkins had visited **Nava Nirman School** in June this year.

It was at the initiative of the school's chairman C.V. Paul and secretary Jabeena Abraham that the Global School Partnership programme materialised. The classes in Wales were mostly interactive sessions, with the major part done by the students. After listening to the teachers, the students would raise their hands, seated in their place and speak when they are asked to do. For every teacher, there is an assistant teacher to help academically weak students. There are counsellors, psychologists and trainers for 'special students'. Each class consists of 20-25 students. The students have facilities for practising aerobics, sports and other things. "They are less religious compared to Indian children and are always active with some projects.

### Exciting visit

Teaching mathematics is unique as they follow the problem-solving technique," says Ms John. The visiting teachers were taken on educational tours, alongwith the students during their 10- day stay at Wales. There was a visit to the Welsh Parliament, which is an architectural marvel. Another novel experience was the visit to a coalmine called The Big Pit. They also visited a cattle farm, where cows are milked mechanically. Another place of interest was the University of Wales, where an exhibition called the Egyptian Talisman was on. The visiting teachers stayed in one of the teacher's home. Global School Partnership visits involving students too are on the anvil.