



THE HOST'S TAPESTRY

2nd Edition : May 2025

Introducing

The Binoy Bhuson Choudhury Memorial Award

Where Passion meets Recognition

Decades of Dedication:

A Conversation with Our First Batch Alumni, Sanjeev Saikia

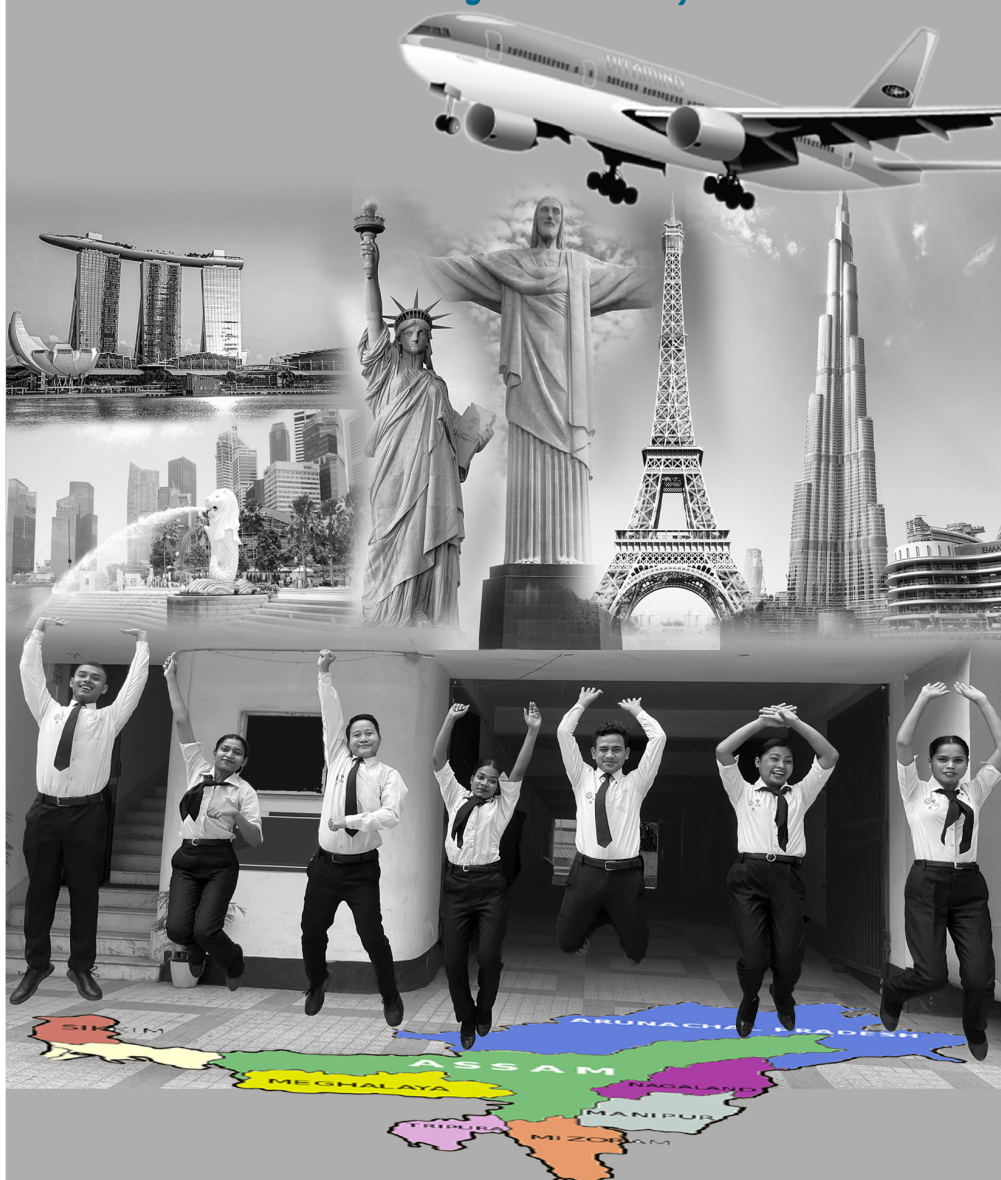
The Architect of Growth:

A Rendezvous with Hospitality Visionary Leezandra Dkhar

From Classroom to Career:

Kishore Talukdar's Impact on Hospitality Education

Alumni Recognition Gallery





PRAGATI EDUTECH

(ISO 9001:2015 Certified)

Pragati Edutech – a name synonymous with the hospitality industry and skill development – has come a long way since its inception. Two young gentlemen from Assam left their most sought-after corporate jobs to forge ahead with their aspiration to work towards the upliftment of the educated, unemployed youth of the North East and enhance their employability.

2011, a year to remember: Pragati Edutech was envisioned by Sanjit Raaj Choudhury and Sujoy Baruah, an institute designed following the guidelines of the Sector Skill Council, with a goal to skill youths from economically challenged backgrounds. Thus began the undaunted journey, with the first batch of 12 students passing out in 2012. Pragati Edutech has since never looked back; it has upheld its vision and transformed lives resulting in a better, more stable society.

The journey starts at the grassroots level in rural areas where job opportunities are scarce. Ample potential exists but guidance toward skilling oneself is not widespread. Pragati Edutech, with its experienced team, forges ahead into the interiors of the North East, covering all the states to raise awareness of the importance of being skilled and employed in the tourism and hospitality sector.

Moving forward since 2012, Pragati has now trained more than 10,000+ youths from the NE region, with a 94% placement record, and most of the trainees have been placed in marquee hospitality brands like Taj, Oberoi Hotels & Resorts, Hyatt, Marriott, Le Meridien, Radisson, Ramada, Holiday Inn, Sheraton, etc. Many of Pragati's alumni are today pursuing their careers abroad in countries like Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Malaysia, the UK, Italy, Germany, Canada, UAE, and the US, working on cruise liners and in hotels like JW Marriott, Ritz-Carlton, etc.

Most of the trainees of Pragati Edutech come from economically backward and challenged conditions, belonging to different marginalized societies. Today, when they are enjoying sustainable careers, it really helps their families lead better lives — providing financial support for medical costs, proper nutrition, education for siblings, etc., which contributes to the overall socio-economic growth of these families and society at large.



www.pragatizone.com



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MESSAGE *from the* EDITOR

Ibarikynti Kharshiing

Dear Readers,

It is with immense pleasure and boundless excitement that I welcome you to the second edition of "**The Hosts Tapestry**"—the vibrant digital heart of **Pragati Edutech**!

The overwhelming warmth and positive reception of our inaugural issue truly inspired us. We've been working diligently behind the scenes to bring you an even more captivating and insightful collection of stories this time around. This edition continues our passion for showcasing the dynamic and ever-evolving world of hospitality and with a special heartfelt focus on the remarkable journeys and contributions of our incredible alumni.

A true jewel in this edition is our exclusive interview with Sanjeev Saikia—an alumnus from our Inaugural Batch. Sanjeev is making significant waves across the hospitality industry and his journey- from his formative experiences at Pragati to his current triumphs offers not just invaluable lessons but also a compelling glimpse into the diverse and rewarding career pathways possible. His story powerfully underscores the exceptional education and training provided here in Pragati and we are absolutely delighted to share his inspiring narrative with you.

As we continue to embrace the exciting challenges and vast opportunities within the global hospitality landscape, please know that your engagement is incredibly important to us. We warmly encourage you to explore every page, absorb the rich knowledge shared and connect with the diverse perspectives brought to life by our talented contributors – our esteemed faculty-**Kishore Talukdar**, brilliant students, and the invaluable industry expert; **Leezandra Dkhar**.

This edition is a labour of love, made possible by many dedicated hands. My deepest gratitude goes to **Chinmoy & Krishna** for their exceptional artistry in designing and curating this magazine. A sincere thank you also to our faculties and staff for their efforts in fostering connections with our alumni. And last but certainly not least, a huge thank you to our alumni-who came out in tremendous numbers to participate and generously share their invaluable experiences. Your involvement made this truly possible!

We invite you to enjoy this edition, much like a perfectly prepared and presented dish.

Happy Reading, and may your hospitality journey continue to flourish!

“In the tapestry of hospitality, every thread tells a story—and every story inspires a journey.”





CELEBRATING OUR STARS

Binoy Bhuson Choudhury Memorial Award

Where Passion meets Recognition



Late Binoy Bhuson Choudhury, an electrical engineer and alumnus of Assam Engineering College (AEC), had an illustrious career as a technocrat and retired as Member (Technical) of the Assam State Electricity Board (ASEB). After his retirement, he played a pivotal role in establishing Pragati Edutech, leveraging his experience and expertise to make a meaningful impact in the skill sector by empowering the educated unemployed youths of the North Eastern States.

Pragati Edutech is thrilled to launch the Inaugural **Binoy Bhuson Choudhury** Memorial Award—an extraordinary opportunity for our Hospitality and Tourism alumni to shine and be celebrated for your remarkable achievements! **This marks the first year of what will become an annual tradition, coinciding with our Foundation Day.**

Imagine being recognized among the BEST

3 outstanding alumni will be selected as winners.

 **Cash Prize upto ₹ 60,000/-**

We invite every eligible alumnus to share your unique journey and inspire the future generations.

Don't Miss Your Chance!

REGISTER TODAY AND LET YOUR STORY BE TOLD!

Be part of something special. Be recognized. Be celebrated!

For Details Contact:

+91 73990 13336, +91 98540 38830

A MEMORABLE FIRST ENCOUNTER: MY FIRST INTERVIEW



Nitumoni Chetia

Clubway Grand - A Boutique Hotel, Jorhat

My first interview will always remain as one of the most impactful and eye-opening experiences of my life.

Before I begin, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to Pragati Edutech, Guwahati. The platform played a vital role in preparing me for the journey. Beyond academic learning, I gained essential skills in grooming, personality development, and the confidence required to face the professional world. Throughout the three-months training program, every teacher guided and motivated us, helping us grow both personally and professionally.

I still remember the butterflies in my stomach the night before the interview. I reviewed my resume multiple times, practised common questions in front of the mirror, and carefully planned my appearance, hoping to make a strong first impression.



The opportunity came from The Oberoi Vanyavilas Wildlife Resort—for a Front Office position—my first real step toward a career in hospitality.

Preparing for the second round proved challenging. I was staying in a hostel and finding a quiet space was difficult. After speaking with my warden, I secured a private corner. The next morning, I woke up early, went up to the terrace, and spent some peaceful time rehearsing.

Soon after, I received a call from the Front Office Manager asking me to be ready within ten minutes. Fortunately, I was already dressed, so I joined the video call with confidence—and cleared the round.

The third round of the interview which was conducted by the HR Manager, felt more intense. I was nervous, but her warm, welcoming smile eased my anxiety.

Finally, came the fourth and last round with the General Manager-A mix of excitement and nerves filled me as I prepared for what I hoped would be the final step toward my goal.

When the GM was connected via video call, I took a deep breath and greeted him with a smile. He asked about my background, education, general knowledge, details of the property, and why I chose hospitality. I answered sincerely, emphasising my passion for creating memorable guest experiences. Then he asked a question on current affairs—an area I hadn't prepared explicitly. I paused, gave a basic response, and sensed it didn't impress him. Still, I gathered myself and completed the interview as confidently as I could.

A few days later, I learned I hadn't cleared the final round. Naturally, I was disappointed. Yet, thanks to the continuous encouragement from my class teacher, I reframed the outcome: I hadn't failed; I had simply fallen short in one stage.

Rather than seeing it as a set back, I viewed the experience as a powerful lesson. Going through multiple rounds gave me exposure and confidence for future challenges.

Most importantly, I learned how to prepare better for situational questions, manage my nerves, and present not just my knowledge but also my personality. Interviews are not only about answering correctly; they're about communication, confidence, and authenticity. It's a two-way process: while the employer evaluates you, you also gain insights into the workplace and the industry.

If an interview doesn't go as planned, don't be discouraged. Each experience teaches you something valuable. Use it to grow, improve, and come back stronger than before.

Ask The Expert

Driving Growth:

A conversation with **Leezandra Dkhar**

Learning & Development Manager
for a leading Luxury Resort in Maldives

Q: Your vision for 2025?

- As we move on from Gen Z to Gen Alpha, we need to evolve our self also accordingly, Learning is no longer a checkbox- it's a dynamic journey tailored to the strengths, aspirations, and

hospitality during family travels or lending a hand at community events, I found joy in creating meaningful experiences for others. That curiosity led me to the Front Office, where every guest interaction taught me the power of empathy, communication,

A PASSIONATE HOTELIER WITH 17 YEARS OF DIVERSE EXPERIENCE, LEEZANDRA DKHAR HAS BUILT AN INSPIRING JOURNEY THROUGH THE WORLD OF HOSPITALITY. FROM THE DYNAMIC PACE OF THE FRONT OFFICE TO THE STRATEGIC REALM OF HUMAN RESOURCES, AND NOW THRIVING IN LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT, SHE HAS EMBRACED EVERY ROLE WITH DEDICATION. WITH A DEEP UNDERSTANDING OF GUEST SERVICE, PEOPLE ENGAGEMENT, AND TALENT DEVELOPMENT, LEEZANDRA IS COMMITTED TO NURTURING THE NEXT GENERATION OF HOSPITALITY PROFESSIONALS—BLENDING OPERATIONAL INSIGHT WITH A LIFELONG PASSION FOR LEARNING. A TRUE BELIEVER IN GROWTH, CULTURE, AND THE SPIRIT OF SERVICE.

potential of everyone. Having said that I personally feel on top priority Sustainability & Inclusivity remains my prime focus. We need to empower our teams to embrace sustainable practices and celebrating diversity in thought, background and learning styles. Adding with Personalized Learning Journeys by offering curated development paths aligned with both individual goals and organizational strategy.

Q: What experiences in your early life influenced your career path?

- From an early age, I was drawn to the energy of service environments. Whether it was observing the art of



Ask The Expert

Driving Growth:

A conversation with **Leezandra Dkhar**

and attention to detail. As I progressed, I realized my passion wasn't just in providing service—it was in empowering others to excel. This realization guided me towards Learning & Development where I found my true calling: nurturing talent, shaping careers, and championing growth from within.

Q: How do you stay inspired and motivated in your work?

- What keeps me motivated is the dynamic nature of hospitality. No two days are the same, and there's always something new to learn or improve. The smiles, the stories, the connections—those are constant reminders of why I love what I do. And ultimately, knowing that I play a part in shaping not just careers but experiences that guests will remember.

Q: What do you enjoy doing outside of work?

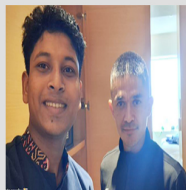
- I love exploring different cultures through food and travel, because they offer rich lessons in empathy, perspective-taking, and communication—core ingredients for meaningful learning experiences. And sometimes, I simply enjoy unplugging with a long walk or a quiet moment by the ocean to reflect

and rejuvenate.

Q: Is there anything else you'd like to share with our readers?

- Learning is not a phase—it's a mindset. Whether you're new to the industry or decades into your journey, there's always room to evolve, reflect, and inspire. The heart of hospitality lies not just in service, but in the growth of the people who deliver it. Every experience—big or small—is a classroom, and every team member has the potential to be both a student and a teacher. So stay curious, stay kind, and never underestimate the ripple effect of you Being Human.

Our Alumni : Red Carpet Ready

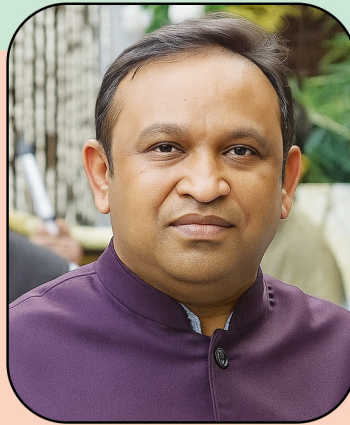


MEET KISHORE TALUKDAR:

GUIDING THE NEXT GENERATION OF HOSPITALITY LEADERS

OVERCOMING BARRIERS: THE REALITY OF PLACING SKILL-BASED HOSPITALITY STUDENTS

Kishore Talukdar isn't your true powerhouse in the sector. Imagine a mentor years of experience under years in top-tier hotels like Renaissance by Marriott just theory for Kishore; it's expertise, backed by a Management and Sector Skill Council certification.



average educator; he's a Hospitality and Tourism with a remarkable 24 his belt, including 7 the prestigious Hotel International. This isn't a deep well of hands-on Master's in Tourism

As a dedicated trainer, Kishore passionately teaches Hospitality and Tourism Management, transforming the classroom into a vibrant space where students gain real-world insights and industry best practices. But his commitment extends far beyond lectures. As the driving force behind the placement cell, Kishore personally connects students with premier industry opportunities, ensuring they gain invaluable exposure and a strong launchpad for their careers.

With Kishore's expert guidance, students don't just learn—they transform into confident professionals, ready to excel in the best hotels and tourism establishments worldwide. His vision and leadership make him an indispensable mentor for anyone aspiring to thrive in the exciting hospitality sector.

I have been coordinating placements in hotels and resorts for over 15 years. In the early days, one of the biggest challenges I faced was dealing with hotel HR departments, as they often prioritized candidates based on the duration and level of their academic qualifications. Many preferred to recruit students who had completed a one-year diploma or a three-year degree program in hotel management.

In contrast, the majority of my students came from government sponsored skill development programs and held three-months certification courses. Convincing HR teams to consider these candidates for positions in reputed hotels was an uphill battle.

Fortunately, there were exceptions. Some prestigious hotel brands, like The Oberoi Group, did not focus heavily on degrees or diplomas. Their selection criteria centered around age, basic educational qualification (12th pass), and most importantly, a positive attitude. Their approach gave hope and opportunity to many skilled but less formally qualified candidates.

Over time, the industry's perspective has evolved. Many hotels today are less concerned with academic credentials and more focused on practical skills and willingness to learn. It is now common for properties to consider candidates who have passed 10th standard, provided they have basic communication skills and a professional attitude.

On the student side, I have encountered a different set of challenges. Some students clear interviews but later decline the offer, often citing family objections—especially reluctance to move outside Assam, this is why I always encourage students to discuss such possibilities with their families before appearing for interviews.

Another common issue arises when students are placed far from home. They often face initial difficulties adjusting to new food, climate, and work environment. While many adapt with time, a few struggle. In some unfortunate cases, certain individuals negatively influence others, encouraging them to leave their jobs prematurely. Ironically, these same students often contact me after two months at home, asking for another opportunity and promising they will be more committed the next time.

Despite these challenges, I've learned to strike a balance between the expectations of HR teams and the readiness of students. My goal has always been to build a strong bridge between talent and opportunity, and I take great pride in every successful placement that begins a young person's career journey.

THE PERFECT GUEST EXPERIENCE



BUILDING CONNECTIONS, ONE SMILE AT A TIME



Steve Hmar
Royal Orchid, Pune

One moment that stands out to me during my time as a Guest Service Associate was when a couple checked in to celebrate their anniversary. While chatting during the check-in process, I learned they had gotten engaged at our hotel years ago. I discreetly shared this with our team, and we arranged a surprise: a room upgrade, a handwritten note, and a small cake waiting in their room.

When they returned later that evening, they were genuinely touched. The guest even said it felt like coming home. What made this experience so memorable—for both of them and me—was the emotional connection created through personalized and thoughtful service. It reminded me that in the hotel industry, the little details can leave a lasting impression and turn a good stay into an unforgettable memory.



LIFE IN QATAR

Digboloy Tamuly
Sheraton Grand, Doha

New Chapter, New City

Relocating to Qatar has been such an eye-opening experience for me. I came here for work, but it quickly became much more than that. Life here is a mix of modern energy and deep-rooted culture - and I'm loving the balance. Things I've been loving so far-the dynamic, fast-growing economy, meeting people from all over the world, the jaw-dropping skyline and city design, The hospitality - people here are truly warm and welcoming and yes, the food is next-level good. Whether I'm walking the Corniche at sunrise or wandering through Souq Waqif on a weekend, there's always something new to take in. Every day feels like a mini adventure, and I'm here for it.



SANJEEV SAIKIA

House Keeping Manager
Premier Inn Doha, Qatar

What aspects of your hospitality program at Pragati Edutech do you find most valuable in your current role?

The most valuable aspects of my hospitality program at Pragati Edutech were the strong focus on practical training and guest service fundamentals. The hands-on experience in housekeeping, front office operations, and customer service gave me the confidence to handle real-world scenarios in my current role as a Housekeeping Manager at Premier Inn, Doha. The discipline and professionalism emphasized during the program are also things which I carry with me every day at work.

How well did your experience at Pragati prepare you for the realities of the hospitality industry? What were the biggest surprises or adjustments you had to make?

Pragati prepared me quite well for the basics and structure of the hospitality industry. I was already aware of the standards and expectations, which helped ease my transition. However, the biggest adjustment which I had to make was dealing with



Meet Sanjeev Saikia: A Global Hospitality Leader from Jorhat

We are delighted to spotlight Sanjeev Saikia, a distinguished member of Pragati Edutech's inaugural batch. Hailing from Jorhat, Sanjeev launched his hospitality career at Ramada Alleppey, where he first honed his skills in the Front Office department.

Today, Sanjeev is making waves on the international stage, serving as Manager in the Housekeeping department at Premier Inn Doha. His remarkable journey is a shining example of the solid foundation provided by Pragati Edutech and the boundless opportunities available to our graduates worldwide.

Congratulations, Sanjeev—your success inspires us all!

high-pressure situations and unpredictable guest behaviors in real-time. Learning to stay calm and think on my feet was a skill which I had to develop quickly once I was on the job.

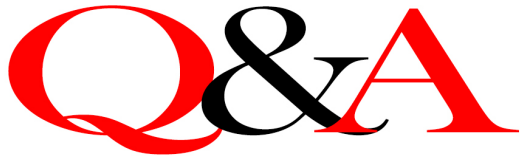
What are some of the most rewarding and challenging aspects of working in the hospitality industry?

The most rewarding part is seeing a guest leave satisfied and

knowing you played a role in creating that positive experience. Hospitality allows you to connect with people from all walks of life, which is both enriching and fulfilling. On the challenging side, managing guest expectations and maintaining service quality during peak hours or staffing shortages can be demanding. But those are also the moments where you grow the most.

What are some of the biggest lessons you've learned throughout your career in hospitality?

Patience and adaptability are keys. Not everything will go according to plan, and learning to adjust quickly is crucial. I've also learned the value of clear communication—both with guests and within the team. Lastly, small details matter. It's often the little touches that make a big impression on guests.



SANJEEV SAIKIA

House Keeping Manager
Premier Inn Doha, Qatar

How important do you believe networking is in the hospitality industry? Can you share any successful networking strategies you've used?

Networking is extremely important in this industry. It helps you to stay updated on trends, learn from others' experiences, and opens doors for growth. One strategy I have used is staying in touch with former colleagues and mentors through LinkedIn or WhatsApp groups. Also, attending hospitality events and participating in hotel initiatives gives you visibility and helps build relationships across departments.

What advice would you give to current hospitality students who are about to enter the workforce?

Be ready to learn continuously and don't shy away from hard work. This industry can be demanding, but it is also full of opportunities for those who are passionate and committed. Show initiative, be professional, and always prioritize guest satisfaction. And remember—no task is too small when it comes to delivering quality service.

What is one piece of unconventional advice you would offer to aspiring hospitality professionals?

Treat every guest interaction as a chance to create a story they'll remember. It's not just about routine service—it's about emotional connection. Sometimes, thinking creatively or adding a personal touch can make all the difference. Don't be afraid to go a little beyond the script.

Time Management and Organization for Efficiency: Tips and tricks for staying on track during busy periods.

Prioritize your tasks and break them down into smaller, manageable steps. I use checklists and team briefings at the start of each shift to align priorities. Delegation is also key—trust your team and assign tasks based on strengths. During peak times, staying calm and communicating clearly helps in handling situations in a better way.





Our Alumni : Recognised and Respected



MY TIME AT PRAGATI EDUTECH SHAPED MY PERSONAL VALUES



Bolin Gogoi
The Oberoi Cecil, Shimla



My six months at Pragati Edutech were about much more than just completing a diploma course—it marked a turning point in my life. Even though I could not join the course on the scheduled date, yet I quickly felt at home. I met amazing classmates from different parts of the Northeast.

We went for swimming lessons together, took evening walks, and gradually built a strong bond that grew even deeper during our one-month internship at Novotel. Working and learning as a team taught me the value of friendship, cooperation, and mutual support. Even though it was a short period, it will always be one of the favorite chapters of my life. I will always cherish the memories I made in Pragati.

One of the most important part of my journey was the guidance I received from our teachers. Their dedication, patience, and encouragement helped us to gain not just knowledge, but confidence too. Because of their efforts, we are now capable of being professionals and earning a living. They not only introduced us to the hospitality industry but also showed us a broader career path we can grow into.

Although we are now working in different places, I often think back to those days with gratitude—imagining what we were just a few months ago and what we are now, and what we might become of us in the future. Pragati Edutech didn't just prepare me for a career—it helped me in shaping who I am today.



MEMORABLE EXPERIENCE DURING MY TRAINING



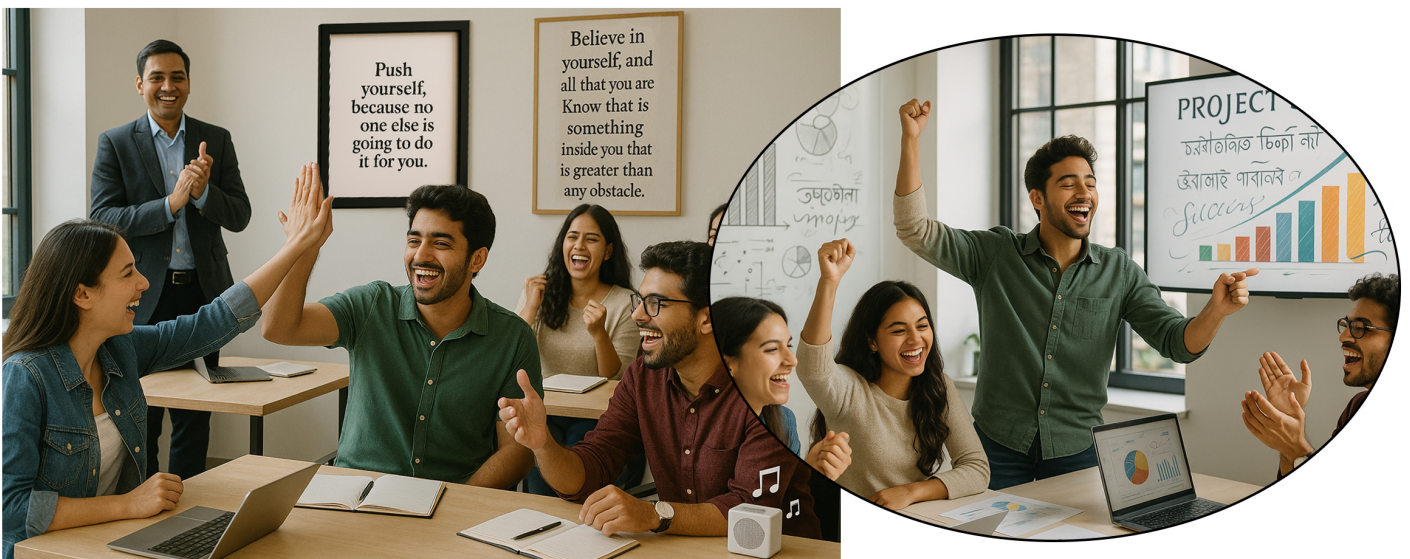
Bibek Chetry
The Leela Palace, Chennai

"I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to Pragati Edutech and its dedicated faculties for providing life-changing opportunities to me and many peers who dreamt of giving their families a comfortable life. This institute has truly transformed my life. From being jobless to being financially stable, I'm now earning a good income, enabling me to provide for my family's happiness without financial constraints.

Pragati Edutech has also helped me to overcome my limitations, particularly in communication skills. Coming from an Assamese medium school, speaking English fluently was a challenge, but the institute's guidance has been instrumental in building my confidence.

Moreover, the institute's emphasis on personality development had a profound impact on me. From learning how to walk and sit with confidence to mastering the art of greeting and dressing well, all these small yet significant changes have elevated my self-esteem and positively influenced my family.

Thank you, Pragati Edutech, for changing my life's trajectory and helping me achieve my goals."



THE BIRTHDAY SURPRISE



Denish Chutia
Speciality Restaurant, Mumbai

It was a quiet Tuesday evening when I, a waiter at the cozy Pan Asian Restaurant "Asia Kitchen by Mainland China", noticed a couple seated by the window. The woman looked a little down, glancing out at the painting of a dragon on the wall while her partner scanned the menu. As I approached to take their order, the man discreetly signaled for me to lean in.

"It's her birthday," he whispered. "But it's been a

rough year. Could you help make it a little special?"

I nodded with a smile and quickly got to work. I asked the chef to prepare a custom dessert platter with "Happy Birthday, Emma" written in chocolate drizzle. Meanwhile, I gathered a few candles, dimmed the lights a bit, and asked my colleague to play a surprise song once we were ready with the dessert.

After their meal, we brought out the dessert with the soft song "She is the one." The woman's eyes widened in surprise. The entire restaurant joined in clapping and wishing her well.

As they left, she took my hand and said, "Thank you. This was the first time I've truly smiled in months."

"That night reminded me why I love being a steward—not just to serve food, but to serve moments that matter".



MY FIRST SALARY: A DREAM REALIZED

Raj Dowrah
The Oberoi, Mumbai

The day I received my first salary was more than just a financial milestone—it was a moment of personal triumph. I vividly remember the rush of emotions as I opened my bank account and saw that first deposit. It wasn't just about the money; it was the culmination of late nights, learning curves, and the unwavering belief that I could make it.

CELEBRATING THE MOMENT

To commemorate this special milestone, I chose to do something that resonated with my inner joy and aspirations. Rather than opting for something material, I invested in a meaningful experience, like exploring a new places.

LESSONS LEARNED

This experience taught me invaluable lessons:

Self-Worth: Recognizing that my efforts and time are valuable. Financial

Responsibility: Understanding the importance of budgeting and saving.

Personal Growth: Embracing opportunities for self-improvement and learning.

LOOKING AHEAD

As I continue on this journey, I aim to build on this foundation—setting financial goals, exploring new avenues for growth, and, most importantly, celebrating the small victories along the way. After all, it's not just about the destination but the experiences and lessons we gather along the path.



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