

# Japan school exchange prog inspires classroom clean-up

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**Kolkata:** After seeing Japanese students clean their school at the end of the day, students of Birla High School, who visited the country on an exchange programme, introduced the concept of cleaning up the classroom after school hours.

"Students of classes VI to XII now clear the litter and also organise the desks and chairs before leaving. It is now mandatory for them to clean their classrooms from 2 pm to 2.05 pm," said Renuka Chatrani, the teacher who went to Japan along with four students.

Sushila Birla Girls' School, whose students also participated in the exchange tour, introduced the classroom clean-up programme last year when the management visited Japan to do a recce prior to the trips. "We were struck by the pride that students take in cleaning up the school. They dust and sweep the floors and even the restrooms. After an Udon noodles making workshop there, I found even the principal cleaning utensils along with the rest of us," said tour coordinator Nabanita Sen.

The eight students — four from each school — visited Oga-  
wa High School, Omiya Kita



Students of Birla High School during the school exchange programme

High School, and Matsuyama Boys High School. They were hosted by families of Japanese students who visited Kolkata last July-Aug. The group visited Tokyo, Mt Fuji, Ogawa, and Odaiba during the trip from March 15 to 25.

"We learnt Ikebana, the art of arranging flowers, as well as calligraphy in which we learnt to write our names in Kanji script. What impressed us most was courteousness of the people," said class X Birla High student Eashan Ajitsaria, who went with Raman Manohar Singh, Aarav Juthani, and Vashisth Kedia.

"We often hear that we spend too much time on our cellphones. But it is nothing compared



to the average Japanese. At least, when we children hang around, we chat and pull each other's legs. In Japan, students do not speak to each other even during commute. They are all glued to their cellphones!" said class X Sushila Birla student Dishita Chatterjee, who visited Japan along with Saisha Agarwal, Aadyashakti Dalmia, Harsihila Nahar, and Nabanita Sen.

"The exchange programme is a great way for children to learn about the two countries and appreciate each other's cultures. We hope to expand this initiative in Kolkata," said deputy consul general at the Consulate-General of Japan in Kolkata, Ashida Katsunori, who loves to speak in Hindi.