

COVER SHEET

TO: Catherine Clark
Royal Commonwealth Society

FROM: Cheryl Moses
National Secretariat for the Commonwealth Heads
of Government Meeting 2009

DATE: Tuesday October 20, 2009

SUBJECT: RCS Essay

FAX: 011-44-20-7930-9705

Name : Avind Ramnattan.
Age : 12 years
School : Open Bible High School.
Form : One Group 2
Contact: Home 644-6006
Mobile 390-9911
Address: #1929 Naparima Mayaro Road,
Peale,
Rio Claro.

OPEN BIBLE HIGH SCHOOL
Box 82, 20-24 Ruth Ave.,
San Fernando

Arind Ramrattan
#1929 Naparima Mayaro Road,
Poole,
Rio Claro,

09th October 2009.

The Honourable Manmohan Singh,
The Prime Minister,
The Republic of India.

Dear Sir

Welcome to our beautiful twin island Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. My name is Arind Ramrattan and I am twelve years old. I am a first form student of Open Bible High School. I am also proud to be a citizen of the cosmopolitan island. Sir, in a world of increasing racial disparity and intolerance of one another's religious beliefs I believe that my twin-island home has a valuable lesson to teach the world - One of "UNITY".

Our islands comprise of many different races and religions. Descendants of the East Indians, Chinese, Middle Easterners, African and Spanish have all lent a rich and

wonderful diversity to our heritage and culture. Despite our differences we have managed to live in harmony with each other.

We can boast of religious tolerance. Everyone is free to practice his or her religion without persecution and many facets of the major religions are embraced by all, notwithstanding religious persuasion. Everyone looks forward to Christmas, non Hindus can be found observing and participating in the Hindu religious festival of Diwali and we all prepare "sarehe" one of the defining Muslim dishes, for Eid. Even the Shenton Baptist, a minority religious group was also given their own religious holiday. There is respect for the fasting periods of many religion and many fast-food outlets including Kentucky Fried Chicken, offer vegetarian meals for those who are abstain from meat. Schools are denominational and children of every religious organisation attend Christian, Hindu and Muslim schools. Certain schools syllabuses include information on our different religions holidays in which students participate.

We all prepare the foods of each other's culture. In fact certain holidays are defined by certain foods. Christmas is not the same

without the Spanish influenced "Pastelle" and the lavish East Indian weddings and the sumptuous meals prepared and are enjoyed by all. Two East Indian foods, "Roti" and "Doubles" are household staples. We are all so much a part of each other that many of these things are taken for granted.

Our Carnival season which commences soon aft. Christmas of the freedom of the African slaves and now all races in Trinidad and Tobago. This spirit of independence is characterized by calypso and steelpan which is mainly African influenced but now non-African persons play major roles in the production and enjoyment of these. One of our greatest steelband arrangers is of East Indian descent. Chinese, Syrians, Lebanese, East Indians, Africans and many persons of mixed races sing calypsos. We not only listen to English/American music but also to our own music and our radio stations reflect our different backgrounds.

Inter-racial marriages and unions are common and are no longer looked upon as taboo. By no means a perfect society, but because of the respect for others and the tolerance needed we can boast of a unity.

admired by others. Trinidad and Tobago has always been a choice tourist destination and a major part of our charm has been the warmth and the open-mindedness of our people and our ability to live in relative peace and harmony despite our obvious differences. East Indian children grow up alongside African, Caucasian, Spanish and Chinese children and the bond we form is as enduring as it is admirable. Sir, it is this that fascinates and attracts others to us. This is a lesson that could well be learnt by all from us "where every creed and race find an equal place".

Respectfully yours
Avinand Ramrattan,
student