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***LIFE IS BETTER WHEN YOU
MAKE SPACE FOR WHAT YOU LOVE***

Varsha Paul, Ms Asia United States Regency International

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Varsha Paul

- Ms Asia United States Regency International
- Program Manager, Digital Creator
- New York Fashion Week Model
- Budding Mental Health Activist
Washington, USA

COVER STORY
by Gurbeer Singh Chawla



“Feminism isn’t about making women stronger, women are already strong; it’s about changing the way the world perceives the strength.” Varsha has always been a firm believer of this. Be it breaking stereotypes or competing in an international platform or teaching robotics and coding to kids at summer camp, Varsha has done it all very successfully. A silver medal at the National Mathematics Olympiad did motivate her to pursue Science & Mathematics for a future specialization and helped her bag a job as a former Engineer & current Program Manager for a leading multinational company. In conversation with Varsha Paul.

You are highly educated and have number of educational degrees, our readers would like to know about your educational achievements?

I grew up in India in a super conservative household, studying in a missionary convent school where I completed my secondary education. I pursued B.Tech in Electronics and Communication Engineering after that. I was always interested in mathematics and after getting a silver medal for the National Mathematics Olympiad, my confidence got boosted and I started working harder.

I started working with a leading multinational company back in India as a System Engineer for 2.5 years. I realized I wanted to pursue higher studies, so I started applying for US universities and opting for various entrance exams like GRE & TOEFL. I always targeted and finally got into the University of Texas at



Dallas with a master's in electrical engineering. I was very excited when I moved to US to start my grad school journey; the road to graduation wasn't very smooth with lots of obstacles while carrying on with assignments, thesis, midterms, internships and part time jobs, I got so busy, occupied and overwhelmed that I would just sleep for five hours a day but later, with time I realized that health is also important because without being fully available and fully healthy we cannot do hundred percent justice with our life so I started putting focus in work-life balance.

Did Varsha always want to be a Program Manager?

Growing up I was always interested in playing with numbers, machines; on the other hand I was also interested in things like event planning so I try to always imagine that what if there is a scenario where I get to do some event planning and management in the world of machines so that's when the idea of being an IT professional kicked in and after years of struggle and trials while experimenting with my dreams and ambition now I actually got to do the dream job which I always thought of doing that is the program management in the IT / Gaming sector. Since I had specialization in

electrical & electronics and not any managerial subject, I had to do various certifications to gain more knowledge on Program Management. Currently I'm pursuing my second master's in project management to validate the same.

What were the challenges and experience for winning the prestigious title of Ms Asia United States Regency International?

The last few weeks before the pageant were very unpredictable, tragic and eventful for me. I had to build a lot of patience while at crossroads in life. While I knew I couldn't visit my mother due to unavoidable circumstances, I also knew how eagerly she was involved in my pageant preparation, to the extent of helping me decide accessories till the day before she was admitted to ICU. And as they say, hard times always reveal true friends, I am fortunate to detect my bunch of people who always made sure how I was doing and supported me in many ways to make me feel better and finally make it to the International Finale.

It was exciting as well as overwhelming, competing with various countries around the globe and finally winning the People's

Choice Award 2022 and the title of your official MS Asia United States Regency International. Regency International being a wonderful platform to help us portray various skills on-stage as well as off-stage. A Bronze Medal as Academics & Achievement Award was indeed a cherry on the cake. I'm thankful to so many people right now and glad to have them in my life. This includes my parents, well-wishers and coach Meenal Drockz.



How do you accept hard times in your life and how do you overcome tough situations?

Modifying responses like “Why is this happening with me” To “What is it trying to teach me” is a game changer. Preparing for a pageant while giving my 100% to the full-time job was extremely challenging. I had to make some crazy schedule changes and manage both the work with full dedication. That required a good amount of energy and proactiveness. I tried to bring some positive changes to my lifestyle in the form of dietary modifications, exercises and meditation so that I can be more present and manage better. I have always tried to recognize pain as a portal for learning.

What are your priorities for mental health awareness as crown holder?

Mental health awareness is an extremely important platform and there should be more voices spreading it. Irrespective of the kind of work, everyone experiences a time when they feel like giving up, as if it's the end of the world due to various unavoidable circumstances. We can't avoid what's happening or about to happen to us, but we can surely change our response to it. And that response should be something very positive so that you can learn and grow from it, the best thing would be to tell about your journey, struggles and ways you overcame that, so that one fine day it can be someone else's survival guide. I am just a beginner in this platform but I am trying my best

to find ways of helping more people like me.

How women can achieve success in fashion and lifestyle along with their main career, mainly when they do not get support from the family?

Life is better when you make space for what you love. I was going through a phase in life where I needed to rebuild the realization of self-worth and put my objectives to purpose. That being said, my purpose was not only to put the idealized version of femininity on a competitive stage but also use it to represent other important issues along with breaking boundaries and stereotypes.

What were the reactions of your family when you decided to make your presence in international beauty contests?

While my family always wanted me to focus on my full-time work, they have supported and respected me having a passion or a hobby which helps me rejuvenate and recharge.

In the field of fashion and modeling there is very much criticism also, what is your experience. How do you accept this?

You can always remove yourself instead of returning negative energy, that's growth. Receiving criticism at any stage of life is very challenging as well as a tricky situation. Criticism usually comes from people who are either jealous of you or who doesn't want to see where you are today but then there is fair or positive criticism which is actually meant to be for your good but might not be taken in a very positive way all the time; it is always coming from the sidelines so the best response would be to ignore it or face it. After putting myself out there in the world for quite some time now, I have actually grown very comfortable with criticism. It doesn't sting nearly as bad as it used to. It's a muscle that must be built, and it can only grow if you're willing to experience it. So, welcome the criticism; don't back down from it. It's a sign you're doing something in the world and people



are taking notice. To sum up, there will always be someone who doesn't see your worth. Don't let it be "You" yourself.

What is your message to upcoming beauty talents from India who want to make their career in this field?

Believe in magic because it always happens when our values, thoughts and actions align. It's okay to be anxious, it's okay to be confident, it's okay to be both. It's okay to start small and think big.

Who is your favorite costume designer and why?

My favorite costume as well as jewelry designer for sure is DDC & CEO Anjali Phougat because she is so talented, beautiful inside out and such a down to earth person. I loved walking for her brand at New York Fashion Week. Her designs are very unique and classy.

In your professional and fashion career, who supported you the most men or women?

I was fortunate enough to meet and get support from some really great people in my life irrespective of gender.

Varsha is introvert or extrovert by nature?

Ambivert. There is peaceful, there is wild. I'm both at the same time.



Which is your favorite costume, Indian traditional or western and why?

Favorite attire surely depends on the occasion, so I'd choose that depending on what kind of event or what part of the day I am attending that event. Personally, my all-time favorite is a saree, so I'd say yes to an Indian traditional wear.

What is your favorite color and why?

Black: because it signifies mystery, power, elegance, and sophistication. Also, because, I think I look good in it.

Mostly Professional from various fields are shifting their career in different companies for more money. How do you relate money for satisfaction and actual happiness in life?

According to me, the best-known theory on this particular topic is that money can actually buy happiness, but only up to a certain point. Once our income reaches a desired level and our basic needs are met, the positive effects of money are often offset by its negative effects—such as working longer hours, or in more

stressful jobs, to maintain that income. Most people, including me assume that "things" will lead to more happiness than actual "experiences." Physical objects tend to last longer than real life experiences. Buying things does make us happy, at least in the short term. In the long-term, however, we get used to new things and even though they may have made us excited and happy at first, eventually the item becomes the new normal and fades into the background. The happiness that comes from purchasing experiences, however, tends to increase over time. One reason is that we often share experiential purchases with other people. To sum up, if I win a lottery, I wouldn't stop working as I love my job and yeah, money is a part of it.

What is the secret behind your fitness and energy?

Staying hydrated, getting a good amount of sleep, trying to stay happy and positive, following my personal growth trend/learning curve rather than what others are doing/trending and last but not the least smiling from within.