

STUDYING AT NIGHT

Youthika Chauhan is 22 years old and is studying in Hochschule für Wirtschaft und Recht (Berlin School of Economics and Law) in Masters in International Business and Consulting. Born in India, she is now in Winter Semester 2012/13. In her interview for Werkblatt, she describes the course work and student-life in India and Germany.

What brings you to Germany?

"My Indian university collaborates with the HWR Berlin. I'm studying for my master degree here in Germany for a year, and will return to India in the second year. At the end I get a master's degree from both universities. I opted for Germany because the country is highly regarded for technology and is known to be very progressive. I also thought this experience abroad would help me as a future business manager. Fortunately, the courses are offered in English, because I think it is very difficult for foreigners to learn high-level German (as a medium of instruction) so fast. "

Is English the language of education in schools in India?

"Yes, at least in schools at higher secondary level and beyond, English is more common. In the lower and middle levels of education are often in the language of the region. I guess in India, there are over 20 different languages, almost every state has its own language. Hindi is spoken in many parts. The local languages differ strongly. They are not only dialects but in fact, many languages have their own script. This is why English is commonly used as the official language."

Have you previously been related to Germany?

"My father has visited Germany about four times. He works in the pharmaceutical industry and his company has partners in Germany. So I knew a bit about the country. But I had no relatives or friends here when I came."

How is the student life different in India and Germany?

"Studying in India can often be hectic and stressful, because we have a very tight schedule. To begin with, we have the whole week of events. Including Saturdays and Sundays, there are no days off (in demanding courses like MBA). Most of the classes will start at nine in the morning and ends at seven clock in the evening. In between we get one to two hours of break. Then we sit at the computer to prepare presentations or projects to finish. Also learning for exams is done at night. Often I sleep only 4-5 hours per day. We are always told: You have to learn as future managers to deal with stress. Here in Berlin, we are only four days a week at the university. However, the proportion of project work is much higher. It is expected that the students will work independently and then present. Most projects run over one to two weeks. In India, the proportion of courses with classroom instruction is higher. I would say the Germans put more emphasis on the practical application, but spend less time at university "

If you have noticed behavior that you think is typically German?

"In India, we laugh a lot during the project work and joke while working together. Here the students are more serious and more focused on problem-solving even with a group of classmates. If a person in

India has less or no time another group member does his part. That happens in Germany, too, but here, everyone is first focused on its part of the task. Everyone does what he is told that and finished on time. Also in the schedule, there are differences. In India, we get tasks even when it is clear that we are busy. In Germany, there is more time for projects given to us. "

What is the daily life of students in your home?

"We have little free time and it is mostly after exams. Then you can spend time at the cinema or with friends. On regular days, it is difficult to have so much time. Here in Berlin, students party every weekend. In India we have a lot many cultural or technical exhibitions and events on campus. These activities are usually organized by the students. Here, such events are less. In the business and engineering courses, virtually all students live in the student dorms on campus. Residential courses are common. The University or the family take care of all daily chores like food and washing clothes, which otherwise would not be long school hours. Here in Berlin, I have to look after all these everyday things myself "

Do you miss something from your current home?

"Yes, the feeling of living on campus and always being surrounded by friends. Because we see them for almost 24 hours a day and that's nice.

Do you meet your friends often in Berlin? Where are your classmates from?

"Yes, while doing team projects, in class and sometimes even on holidays. About half of my fellow students are from Germany, the rest come from countries such as China, the U.S.A, Turkey. So we are a very international group. "

Facts about India:

There are perhaps 16 top business schools in India and every year more than 220,000 young people to make their final exams. The top universities offer just more than 3,500 seats. The same goes for engineers. So you have to be included in the top 1.5% of the best to get a place there. The education system is very selective.

While about 45,000 Indians live in Germany, it attracted far only some 3,000 Germans to work in India. Both countries trade with each other - the trading volume in 2012 amounted to EUR 20 billion. India mainly exports Consumer Goods such as textiles, chemicals, and metal goods and electronics. India wants to expand its strong university sector. There are about 613 universities (including 140 private colleges) about 14 million seats. The Indian government is planning to expand its offering to over 26 million seats.