

Raipur to Russia... Jaipur to Japan...

Guiding Indian youth to navigate the international job market

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In recent times, significant shifts have emerged, not only in the demand for workers in different countries but also in the size and shape of India's diverse talent reservoir.

Youth from India's Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities and towns are speedily and surely getting trained in niche, globally 'in-demand' job skills. These include specialised training on digital technologies and platforms, electronics, finance and banking, construction, nursing, hospitality, logistics, jewellery, textiles, design and tourism to name a few.

This segment, aged between 19 and 39 – i.e. the most productive years of their lives, are eager to travel abroad and build a career and fortune there.

Waiting for them on the other side are countries like Japan, Germany, Canada, France, the Scandinavian nations, Singapore, the UK, Portugal, Australia, New Zealand, Vietnam, Thailand, Russia and others.

These countries are facing a shortage of young, skilled, domestic workers and they need to fill large vacancies in sectors such as healthcare, hospitality, construction, IT, logistics, manufacturing, agriculture and financial services. They are looking at India's vast talent pool to fill some of these gaps.

While the opportunities are exciting, it is important to keep a few guideposts in view, before stepping into the international job arena:

Err on the side of caution

The demand is obvious and supply is abundant, yet candidates must understand that international job markets have witnessed much tumult in the past half-decade or more. For example, the fallout from the UK's decision to exit the EU, policy changes regarding employment visas in the US, COVID-19, the Russia and Ukraine war, and the geo-political instability created by China's policies...all of these have created uncertainty in the international job market

Stay clear of fraudsters

In every country, candidates will find fraudulent recruiters who disappear with the money paid to them or smuggle workers into foreign countries through illegal means. The consequences of both these are always dire. Beware of such fraudsters and interact with legitimate, certified job consultants only.

Networking and job search websites

Another challenge for job seekers is to find suitable jobs in their field of expertise and get insights into the working conditions offered by employers. Candidates may have to use multiple sources and strategies to find jobs abroad, such as attending job fairs, webinars, walk-ins, using professional job consultants, networking with people who work or have worked in the desired destinations, and using international job search websites.

Resume and cover letter

Crafting the perfect resume and cover letter that will stand out and get noticed by recruiters can be challenging. Particularly since different countries may have different formats and preferences for these documents. Therefore, Indian job seekers may have to tailor these documents according to the specific requirements of each job or country they are applying to. They must highlight their achievements, skills and competencies that are relevant to the international market.

Learn about the work environment and culture of the country

Candidates must familiarise themselves with the working climate and norms of the countries they are applying to and be adaptable to different work environments. Since different countries have different understandings of acceptable behaviour, candidates must acquaint themselves with the cultural nuances of the land they aspire to work in. This includes expressions, gestures, customs, values and etiquette that may affect everyday interactions. Beyond language barriers, understanding these nonverbal communication and cultural values is essential for building successful relationships with colleagues, clients, and customers abroad.

Working knowledge of English and willingness to learn

India has the unique advantage of having a population that is fairly conversant in English. However, polishing one's English language skills would be a good idea. Ideally, the candidate must also try to learn the local language, history, geography, politics and economy of the country to which she/ he is moving.

Navigating foreign laws and income-tax regulations

Indian candidates must be aware of income tax laws and other fundamental foreign regulations. Firstly, it helps individuals ensure compliance with the host country's tax requirements, preventing any legal complications or tax liabilities. Secondly, a grasp of foreign laws empowers job seekers to make informed financial decisions and optimise their income. This also allows candidates to safeguard their rights and entitlements, ensuring they receive fair treatment in terms of wages, benefits, and workplace conditions.

Ensuring pay parity

Ensuring equitable pay for Indian job seekers is critical to fostering fair and inclusive employment migration. It is crucial to receive compensation commensurate with a candidate's skills and contributions, thereby promoting financial well-being and a balanced and just international labour landscape.

Visa and work permit

One of the most important aspects of applying for a job abroad is to understand the visa and work permit process of the host country. Different countries have different rules and criteria for granting visas and work permits to foreign workers. Therefore, Indian job seekers must know the visa options, eligibility requirements, application procedures, fees, processing time and validity period of the country they are interested in. They will also have to prepare the necessary documents to support their visa application.

In addition to being aware of all these points, it would be prudent to stay clear of fraudulent recruiters who trick youngsters. The fraudsters often disappear with the money or smuggle workers into foreign countries through illegal means. The consequences of both these are always dire. Beware of such fraudsters and interact with legitimate, certified job consultants only.

To help Indian workers realise their dream of working abroad, the Government of India has signed Mobility Agreements that are tailored to accommodate the requirements of destination economies as well as the interests of Indian emigrant workers.

Working alongside the government, we now have a few legally recognised, certified Employment Management Consultants who conduct assessments, secure authentic job opportunities, arrange interviews and assist with skill development. In addition, these organisations arrange financial aid when necessary, support the candidate's visa documentation and submission, and offer support upon arrival in the destination country.

Some of these organisations have successfully placed several Indians in jobs abroad and made the saying, "The world is your oyster", come true for these youngsters.

