

Bridging the gap: Championing Support for Skilled Migrants

Hey there! My name is Siya Shinde, and I am an intern here at Hamburg Representation Mumbai. In this section - 'From the Intern's Desk', I'll be sharing insights, reflections, and discoveries about the industry during my time here at Hamburg Representation Mumbai. I'm excited to dive into topics that matter, starting with a discussion on skilled labour migration and the challenges involved in it. Let's jump right in!

On the very first day of my internship, I came across the term 'Skilled Labour Migration' in almost every conversation. As someone who is new to the field of trade and commerce, and the corporate world in general, I didn't fully understand the term, apart from its basic definition: relocating to another country for work. It wasn't until I started working more closely with the topic, that I realised the nuances and intricacies that define Skilled Labour Migration.

One of the initial assignments I worked on, involved structuring a visit from Hamburg Representation Mumbai to a German company. This company, known for employing a significant number of skilled workers from India, presented a unique opportunity for us to engage with the Indian community working there. Our objective was twofold: to gain insights into the challenges they encountered during the integration process in a new country and to collaboratively explore strategies to address these challenges. This assignment helped me delve deeper into the topic of Skilled Labor Migration, and I was able to understand it from a completely new perspective.

Skilled labor migration essentially encompasses the movement of qualified individuals from one country to another in search of employment opportunities. According to my previous understanding of the subject, this process is promising new beginnings and professional growth, but a major aspect of this topic is the myriad of challenges it brings for these migrant workers as well as their families. For Indian immigrants in Germany, navigating the complexities of cultural adaptation and language barriers can prove to be significant hurdles. Indian migrants may struggle to understand and navigate German customs, social norms, and etiquette. Given that the Indian society is largely community-based, while the German society is more or less individualistic, many Indians find themselves grappling with feelings of isolation and alienation, which are especially exacerbated if the individual is moving away from their family back in India. Moreover, the language barrier presents a formidable challenge as well.

Beyond the challenges faced by migrants, their families also contend with their own set of obstacles, which sometimes tend to get overlooked. In most cases, the companies in the host country provide certain integration courses for their migrant employees or at the very least, assistance with integrating into the country. Moreover, these working individuals have opportunities in the workplace to socialize and form connections with people around them. For spouses and children, however, adjusting to a new environment and educational system can be difficult. Sometimes, spouses must leave behind their jobs to relocate to Germany, where they could fail to get new employment. This is known as the Dual Career Issue. With limited

opportunities to socialize, it is possible for them to experience feelings of foreignness and isolation.

Skilled labor migration offers exciting possibilities for professional growth, but it's not all smooth sailing. According to my previous understanding of the subject, this process promises new beginnings and professional growth, but a major aspect of this topic is the myriad of challenges it brings for these migrant workers as well as their families. Indian immigrants in Germany, for example, face cultural and linguistic hurdles. Adapting to a more individualistic society from a community-based one can lead to isolation, especially for those leaving family behind. The language barrier adds another layer of difficulty.

While companies often offer integration support to migrant workers, their families struggle too. Spouses may have to give up their careers facing limited job prospects and social circles, leading to feelings of alienation. This "Dual Career Issue" can lead to feelings of isolation and hinder their sense of belonging in the new country. Despite the challenges, skilled migration offers a chance for growth. With proper support systems, both workers and their families can thrive in their new environment.

As a way to alleviate these problems faced by migrants, we came up with the initiative of organizing a Community Meet and Greet event for the Indian diaspora in Hamburg, especially the family members of migrant workers, where they would be presented with the opportunity to have informal interactions with each other and build connections (Stay tuned with the upcoming HRM newsletters for more updates on this!) In addition to such community outreach initiatives, integration programs by companies for their migrant workers, as well as their families would play an important role in addressing these challenges.

To create a truly welcoming environment and foster successful integration, intercultural training for German citizens who will be working and interacting with migrant workers can be highly beneficial. This training equips Germans with the knowledge and skills to understand and appreciate different cultural backgrounds, fostering a more inclusive and productive work environment for everyone involved.

Delving into the complexities of skilled labour migration has not only broadened my understanding of the global labour market but has also deepened my appreciation for the resilience and determination of migrant communities. As I continue my internship journey, I'm committed to learning more about the challenges of skilled labour migration and what we can do to address them. By working together – governments, employers, and individuals – we can create a more inclusive and supportive environment for migrating workers and their families. Germany and India partnership and collective efforts to make this possible truly showcases the power of international collaboration in developing effective solutions and support systems for skilled migrants.