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(http://images.indianexpress.com/2015/08/lazinger.jpg) Stephan Lanzinger, counsellor of German Embassy, at Panjab University on Friday. (Source: Express Photo by Sahil Walia)

Representatives of leading German universities and research funding organisations interacted with the students and faculty members of Panjab University and PGIMER in Chandigarh Friday. The German delegation was led by Stephan Lanzinger, counsellor and head of Science & Technology section of the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany.



Director of the German House for Research and Innovation, Dr Alexander P Hansen, was also present, as representatives of various German universities apprised the students of research opportunities. The delegation will be interacting with the students of Indian Institute of Science, Education & Research (IISER), Mohali, on Saturday.

In conversation with Stephan Lanzinger:

Of late, Germany has been focusing on encouraging more international students to pursue careers in research in the country. What is the major reason for this?

Germany is called the 'Land of Ideas', and it thrives on the innovative research options that it offers to students and faculty members from across the world. Over the years, Germany has seen an increase in the number of international students. And with the German population crisis, immigration is a major source of getting more skilled personnel in the country.

What is the percentage of Indian students that apply to Germany and vice versa?

As per the data for the academic year 2013-2014, about 10,000 students from India had taken admissions to various courses in Germany for pursuing higher studies and exploring research opportunities. The number has only increased since then; in fact in the last five years, the intake of Indian students in German universities has doubled. In turn, an increased number of German students have also been applying to summer schools in India to pursue courses in South Asian Studies and Sociology.

Which country has the maximum representation of international students in Germany?

The maximum number of international students come from China. In the last academic year, about 30,000 students from China took admission in Germany. Being

a close neighbour of China, India has a huge potential for international admissions in Germany.



What are the most preferred courses of international students in Germany?

Germany is slowly advancing towards becoming a hub for scientific research, which is why a majority of international students apply for post-graduate courses or pursue research fellowships there in the field of science and technology.

Germany still offers a majority of its under-graduate courses in German. Does that prove to be a hindrance for international students?

Although a majority of universities offer under-graduate courses in German, a very high number of post-graduate courses are being offered in English as well. So, the number of students applying for under-graduate courses for now is low, but even for under-graduate students, funding organisations such as Deutsch Forshungsgemeinschaft (DFG) India, and German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) provide assistance and language training.

After the completion of a post-graduate course, what are the employability options that Germany offers to its international students?

After the completion of their research/post-graduate courses, students have an option to apply for a visa for 18 months, during which they can explore the job opportunities that Germany has to offer. And having pursued their research in Germany, the students/faculty members receive a great deal of practical training which helps them in increasing their employability skills.

Another aspect that has been bringing more international students is the fact that knowing German is no longer a prerequisite for obtaining a visa.

There was a controversy in India last year about replacing German as the third language in Kendriya Vidyalayas across the country. Have the two countries reached an understanding on the issue yet?

Hopefully, we will look into this issue during bilateral talks with India, and newer MoUs will be signed accordingly.

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