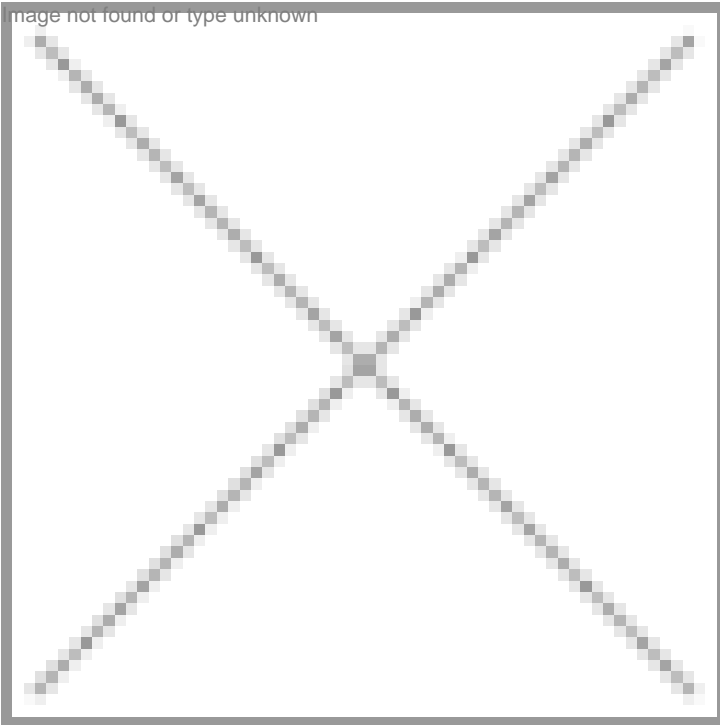


"Finance professionals, process engineers and marketing experts are in demand"

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~~Syngenta Crop Protection AG is a large global agribusiness which markets seeds and crop protection products. Involved in biotechnology and genomic research, the company is a leader in crop protection, and ranks third in total sales in the commercial agricultural seeds market. During his recent visit to Switzerland, E Abraham Mathew, Chief Editor of BioSpectrum, had a chat with Dr Sasank S Mohanty, head of GISS Process Improvement-/Program Management Office, Syngenta Crop Protection AG. Some excerpts:~~

~~What prompted you to pursue your college education in Switzerland (University of Zurich)?~~

~~It was my aim to study medicine in Switzerland. Swiss universities hold a good reputation in the field of medicine apart from which education is more affordable. Ample funding for research and state-of-the-art infrastructure were other criteria which attracted me to come to Zurich.~~

~~Was it difficult to adjust to the culture, language, climate etc.?~~

For me personally, it was not so difficult to adjust as I was young and quite flexible to change besides being open to different ways of thinking. However, I picked up the German language in three months and I prefer cold weather to extremely hot temperatures. Last but not least, I instantly fell in love with the Swiss mountains.

After college, what made you decide to work in Switzerland?

I had decided to study medicine in Switzerland and return to my home country. As I didn't get a chance to study medicine (due to a change in the university policy which barred foreign students from entering medicine), I studied chemistry. After doing my doctorate, I did not see much possibility of doing research in India. Simultaneously, I got good offers in the Swiss pharmaceutical industry and decided to take up one of those.

In which areas within the life sciences industry, are the chances of employment the brightest for an Indian professional or student?

Switzerland is known for its pharmaceutical research and industries. Currently, the main hot areas are nanotechnology, bioinformatics and system biology. Besides finance professionals, process engineers and marketing experts are also in demand.

What are the pre-requisites for an Indian to gain employment in the life sciences sector in Switzerland?

Solid theoretical and technical education; ability to adjust to a new culture; and language skills (English and German or French).

The Indian community in Switzerland is relatively small (over 7,000). Is there ample opportunity to socialize with other Indians and celebrate festivals etc.?

There are several Indian associations like in Zurich, Basel, Bern, Geneva etc. and one should look for opportunities of networking with other Indians. Recently a few Hindu temples have been established around big cities by Sri Lankan Tamil communities.

What would be your advice for young aspiring Indians who want to move to Switzerland or places in Europe?

There are a lot of opportunities here. Qualified people are always sought after. Learning German or French would be advisable in order to assimilate into the society.

Here are some important links for the readers:

<http://www.swissbiotech.org> and <https://www.eurobiojobs.org>

E Abraham Mathew