

Marching ahead

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Nanyang University is a growing favourite amongst tech students

In 2002, a Singaporean economic review panel suggested that the country pay particular attention to its education sector so as to take advantage of the growing demand for international education in Asia. The panel decided to aim for attracting 1,50,000 foreign students by 2015, as well as increasing the sector's GDP contribution from 1.9 per cent (\$1.8 billion) to a total of 5 per cent.

The government has certainly played its part in furthering these goals. Over \$80 million annual education investments were made in 2010. And the results are clearly visible today. INSEAD business school in Singapore has been ranked as the number one Bschool in the Asia-Pacific region by QS in 2011, overtaking IIM-Ahmedabad, which was placed at number two.

Students from as far as Nigeria, seek admission in the universities of Singapore today. What attracts them is not just the high standards of living and growing employment opportunities in the country, but the overall quality of education itself, especially in the field of management, tourism and technology.

National University of Singapore, Nanyang Technological University and Singapore Management University have made significant investments to improve their infrastructure, research facilities, quality of staff and living standards. As a result of which these universities are fast gaining popularity amongst Indian students.

The reason for many is that unlike Indian management and engineering colleges,

Singaporean schools facilitate more global exposure. While most would equate global exposure to the US or UK, students are gradually becoming aware of equal opportunities in Asia, especially in Singapore.

"Whereas in India your exposure to foreign players and nationals would be limited at even the best universities, in Singapore it is an every day occurrence. Meeting people from different walks of life widens your perspective and gives you an added advantage in today's globalised world," says Akriti Srivastav, 26, MBA student at SMU. In the long run building international networks in college does pay off, especially for those looking to enter the corporate field.

The global nature of Singapore can not be solely attributed to multinationals but also to the growing number of MOUs signed between Singapore and foreign universities. Over 400 MOUs and student exchanges are presently in place. Looking to further increase the diversity of their student community, the country's present visa rules are far more relaxed than its western counterparts.

Despite a rise in unemployment, Singaporean graduates still enjoy some of the highest graduate employment rates in the world. Nanyang Business School has a 97.5 per cent graduate employment rate and the National Institute of Education boasts of 100 per cent graduate employment.

When British education minister, Michael Gove, recommended Singapore as one of the world's leading education hubs in 2010, he looked beyond the dazzling airport and landscape and saw the many well-planned investments that are enhancing the country's education offerings by leaps and bounds.