

## **Indians in Denmark: Living and problems.**

**By Aleksandra Machura**

### ***I. Introduction***

My name is Aleksandra Machura and I am a third year student at University studying International Relations in Poland. I was trainee in Contemporary India Study Centre Aarhus for 3 months. My job included researching about Indians living in Denmark, their everyday activities, problems and relations to Danish people. A research was based on a questionnaire (which I created with cooperation of Indians in Aarhus), and also performed formal and informal interviews.

Emigration to a different country always gives new opportunities for example: to start a new life, to develop yourself or experience another culture. But also, after moving abroad every emigrant has to feel how it is to be a stranger and struggle with everyday problems in an unfamiliar country. That is why I created this research in order to get to know the reasons of Indians coming to Denmark, their everyday problems and plans for future.

### ***II. Reasons for Indians to come to Denmark***

One of the things which I noticed first after summing up my research is a reason for Indians to come to Denmark. Most of the people (almost 50 %) said it is career based. Second reason is to study e.g. Masters, Ph.D. This shows that Denmark gives opportunities mostly to young people developing a career or taking an education and gaining knowledge.

Another interesting question is: Why do Indian people choose Denmark over any other European country? 56 % of the interviewees said: no specific reason. The other two reasons are based on economy. Company orientation and standard of living got 17% and 27%. What does 'no specific reason' exactly mean? To get an answer for this question I asked other Indians about their opinion: What could be included in 'no specific reason'? According to them one of the answers was: opportunity e.g. job or doing PhD. If Indians have a chance they want to take it. Also Denmark is perceived as being the happiest and having the best welfare in the world with a small population. Important is also the good level of English in Danish society.

### ***III. Relations between Danes and Indians***

According to my research most of the interviewees has more than 3 Danish friends. Most often they visit their friends at their friend' s homes once a month or once every 6 months. But at the same time 23 persons out 41 thinks that it is difficult to make friends with Danes. One of the reason is that Danish people are seen as shy, not easy- going and not open people, which can also be perceived as a cultural difference. Danish people often have a small group of friends they hold on to and don't easily let new people into this group of very good friends. They have special 'safe zone'. They don't mix 'work life' with private one very much. Also the different drinking habits between the Danes and Indians is a problem when socializing between them. Another barrier is a language. Danes even with very a good level of English prefer to speak in Danish.

### ***IV. Living in Denmark. Basic problems.***

37 out of 41 interviewees said that they are happy with the city which they are living in. On the other hand they are planning to go back to India in the future. The reason for this plan could job or study related, a desire to going back to their family and own culture and use their experience and an education which they got in Denmark to do something for India. But we should also maybe take into consideration problems of living in Denmark.

First of all the main problems that Indians face in Denmark is the difficulty of finding a job. Even with experience it is very important to know the Danish language. It also creates problems with interviews. Employers prefer to hire Danes. What is also an issue is renting/ finding an apartment or house. Prices are to high and if someone wants to find an apartment in nice a area, which is big and for a good price you have to sacrifice one of these requirements. Also it is difficult to rent something without knowledge of Danish. A lack of knowledge of the language creates problems with everyday life, especially when shopping or at work. Another difficulty for Indians is medical care. Because of the cultural differences appointments are too short and they have to wait too long for appointments, for example after the weekend.

### ***V. Conclusion***

Indians are coming to Denmark in order to take the opportunity of a good education or job. They choose Denmark because it is one of happiest and richest countries of the

European Union which has a high standard of living. But with all these pluses which living in Denmark has it is still difficult for Indians to be part of the social structure due to cultural and language differences. It is difficult for Indians to make friends with Danes. However, research shows that after some time most of the cultural differences disappear and most of Indians have good relations with Danes.