

Visas are often denied to students when either documentation or proof of funds are insufficient, finds Anushya Rajagopalan

STUDYING abroad continues to be a dream for students. After a year-long preparation for study abroad, what with language proficiency tests, GRE/ GMAT, financial preparations, it is galling for scores of students to be told at the final moment that their visa application has been rejected.

Despondent students often find the reasons cited for their visa rejection as irrational and confusing. However, experienced consultants caution students that there are largely two reasons for visa rejection- one is improper documentation and the other, insufficient funds.

Quite often money is a major criterion that decides whether this dream can be realised. Many Indian stu-

dents yearn for higher education abroad, but are restrained by their only handicap - money!

Nevertheless the picture isn't all gloomy. Some agencies offer students study loans, helping them to achieve their goals. Yet there is little awareness about resources available for this purpose.

For instance, loans can be obtained at rates lower than those offered by Indian nationalised banks? Some international bodies do offer loans at what is known as the Wall Street Finance rates, which turns out to be astonishing low- 3.75-4.25 per cent. Valmiki Ganesh of Valmiki Consultants Pvt Ltd says,

"There is no hanky-panky involved in this. Some organisations dedicated to education abroad are offering this to students with a repayment period of 20 years. Thus, loans can be obtained at 3.75 to 4.25 per cent interest and can be repaid within 20 years. There

no money, no

problem

is no physical collateral

required to acquire this loan!"

This offer is granted for students going to 50 countries that include USA, UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Switzerland.

What's good about these loans is that students do not



have to worry about repaying from the day the loan has been taken. Repayment can start after course completion or after commencing work. This certainly relieves the students of the burden of shuffling between studies and work in a desperate bid to repay the loan.

Yet another issue that causes concern is one of high incidence of visa rejections. Most visas are rejected because documentation was improper or presentation of the case to the consulate officials was unconvincing.

It is therefore advisable for students to take professional help of consultants with regard to foreign exchange, insurance, travel ticket, courier service, international student ID card, visa guidance, financial counselling to obtain solvency certificate, scholarships, pre-departure orientation and counselling, accommodation arrangement and even securing part-time jobs.

At a recent seminar, experts provided a comprehensive view of the whole pursuit of studying abroad with the stated objective to 'help students gain admission in the right university, in the right programme and in the right country.' Hetav Sanghvi, an ex-student of Indiana University spoke of how important it was to retain one's cultural identity by associating with Indian communities. Other education experts spoke of the importance of various qualifying examinations like GRE, TOEFL and the GMAT and stressed the need to seek guidance from experts.

So cheer up guys, there's help at hand!