

Indian students ready to take off: Pre-departure briefings 2015

SIEM India delivered pre-departure sessions across nine cities in India addressed over 430 students who had received offers from UK institutions. During the pre-departure sessions we provided guidance to these students on how to prepare for an exciting, enlightening and culturally diverse student life in the UK.

These sessions were delivered in Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Chennai, Bangalore, Pune, Ahmedabad, Kolkata and Chandigarh throughout the month of July. When compared to last year, there was 15% increase in the number of students that attended the pre-departure sessions.

Qatar Airways were our associate sponsors and they made a presentation highlighting the various travel discounts and offers for students at these sessions.

We welcomed parents as well and addressed their concerns, queries and anxieties of sending their kids to study abroad that would typically run through their minds.

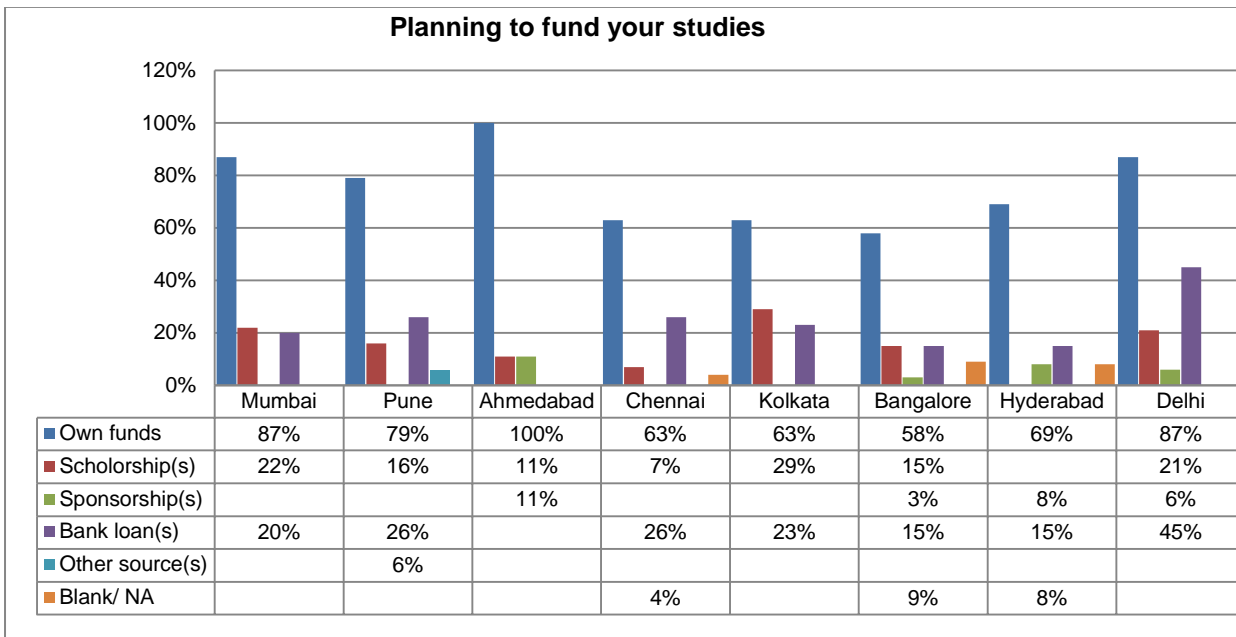
The session at each city started with a welcome address and followed by a series of presentations that covered the following themes- preparing for the journey, travel, dealing with immigration, securing finances, sorting out accommodation and meals as well as completing medical formalities. Some of these sessions included advice from experts through multimedia presentations and videos. During each session we played GREAT videos which covered experiential talks from current students present in the UK.

The main highlight of pre-departure sessions were the presentation on 'do and don'ts' to be considered by students when they applying for a 'student visa' delivered by the UK Visas and Immigration colleagues. In some cities these sessions were delivered in face to face sessions while in others these were delivered through Skype.

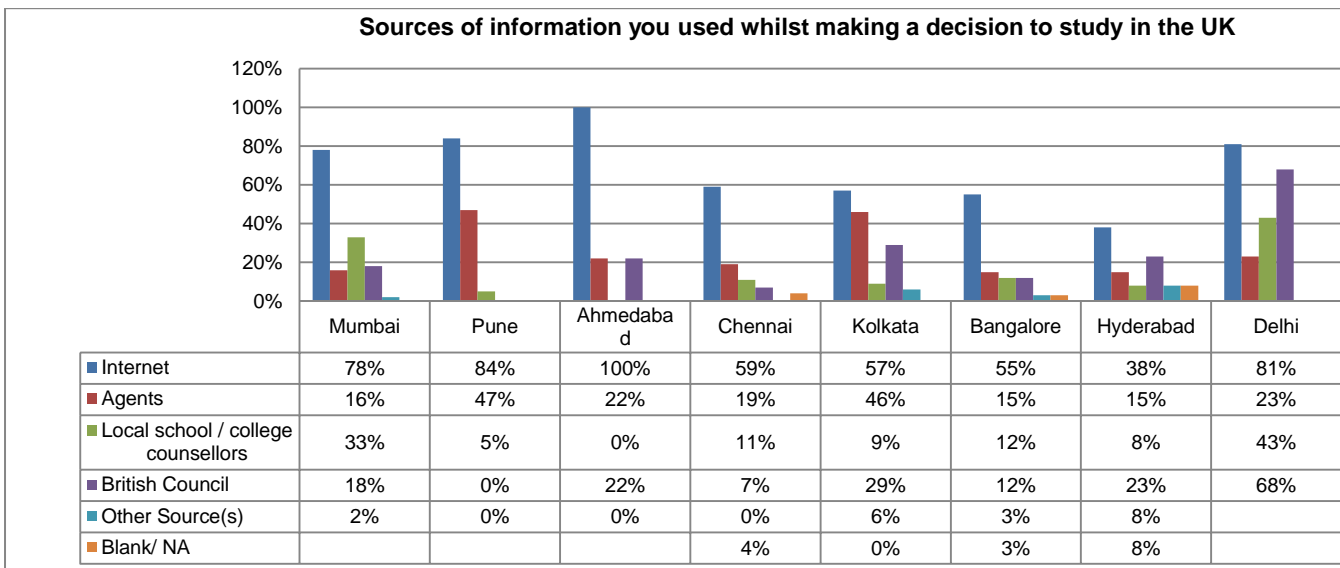
Interactive and fun sessions with alumni in each city put students at ease as they discussed concerns around safety, accommodation, eating out, cultural shifts, amongst other things. This went on to be the most enjoyable session for the students.

In the cities of Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, Kolkata and Chandigarh respective British Deputy High Commissioners were present to grace the occasion and gave an inspirational talk to students. The sessions in each city concluded with hi-tea and networking.

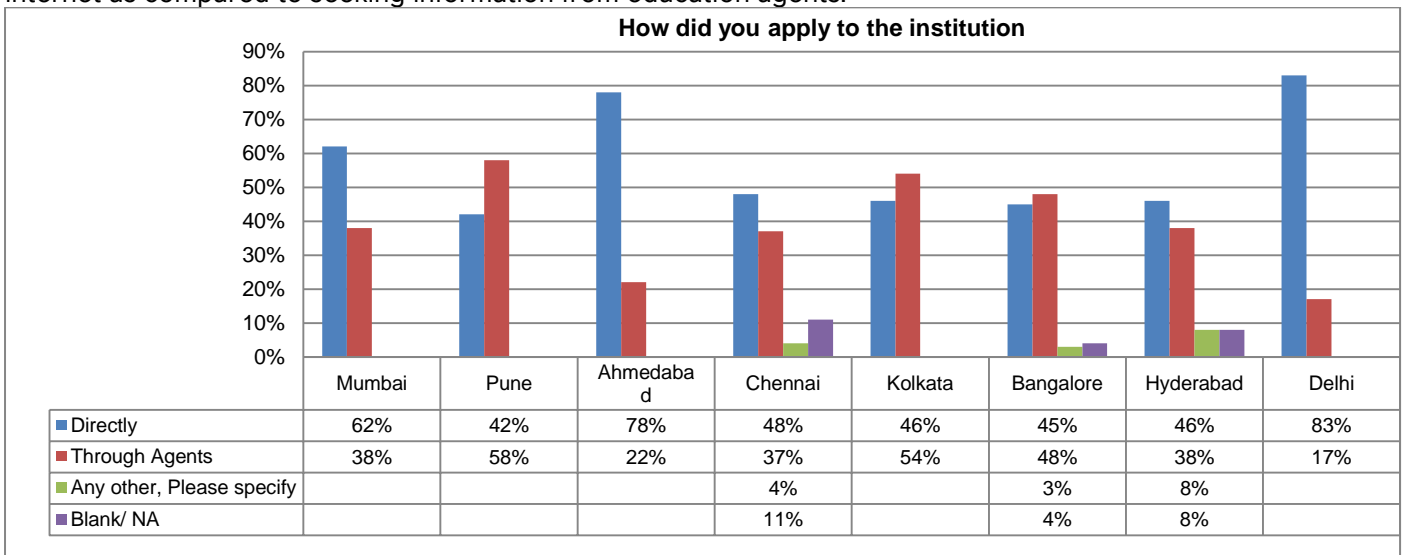
Some interesting facts: from analysis of feedback forms from students who attended the pre-departure sessions:



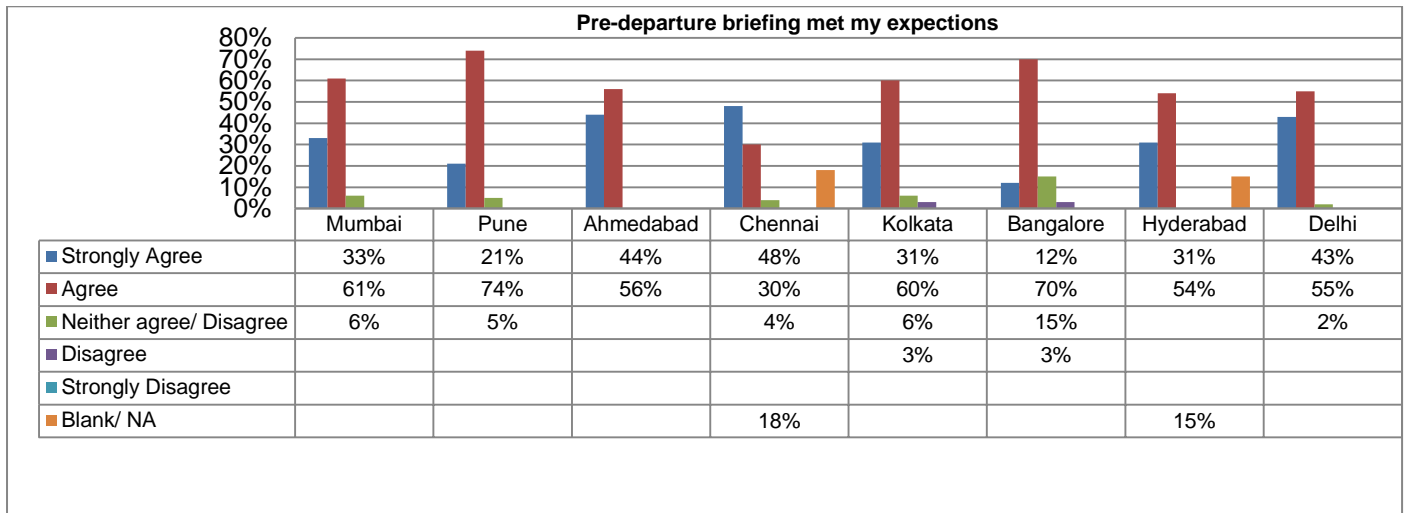
87% attendees at the Mumbai and Delhi respectively mentioned that they would be funding their own studies.



Interestingly, 'Internet' was the main source of information for student vis-à-vis 'education agents' across all cities. This clearly shows that students are depending more on the self-search and information available on the internet as compared to seeking information from education agents.



Similar trend was revealed when we asked students about how they applied to institutions. 83% students in Delhi, 78% in Ahmedabad and 62% students in Mumbai mentioned they applied 'directly' to a UK institution.



74% students in Pune, 70% in Bangalore, 61% in Mumbai were happy with the sessions and mentioned that the same met their expectations.

Some snapshots from the pre-departure sessions:



(Alumni Session in progress at the Delhi briefing)



(Session by the SIEM team at the Chennai session)



(Visa session in progress with Entry Clearance Officer through Office Communicator at the Kolkata session)



(Mr Kumar Iyer, British Deputy High Commissioner, Mumbai and Director General UK Trade and Investment, India addressing the Mumbai audience)



(Audience at the Mumbai pre-departure session)

Press coverage: in The Telegraph, Kolkata

Students on top of the world

**CHANDREYEE GHOSE AND
TANISHA BAGCHI**

A bunch of city students pursuing their academic dreams in foreign shores attended pre-departure ceremonies hosted by their destination countries to prep for a new beginning.

American dream

From undergraduates to PhD scholars and even a few who have quit their jobs to go back to books — a group of 130 students gathered at the American Center for a pre-departure orientation recently.

Mallika, 32, worked as a fashion designer for 12 years. An executive MBA in behavioural science spurred her ambition to study psychology and now she is at Avila University in Kansas for a master's programme.

"It's like a dream come true. I am nervous as I am changing my profession, but it will be worth it. I would like to follow up my master's with a

Phd," said the former student of Presidency College at the pre-departure programme.

Suchismita Datta gave up a teaching job in the city to head for University of Miami on 100 per cent scholarship and a teaching assistantship. "I plan to come back and use the teaching methods in India," said the 25-year-old.

A panel discussion on the Academic Life in USA enlightened those present on a host of topics such as on-campus networking, jobs and internship, classroom culture and ethics, among others. Travel and health insurance, foreign exchange and social and cultural life in the US were also discussed. The final session with US consular officers focussed on work options among other things.

"Take it easy in the first semester. Your chances of getting a job so soon are slim," advised former student Aniket Dey.

UK calling

Students headed for the UK were offered tips of visa application and other paperwork, accommodation and campus life at a pre-departure orientation programme hosted by the British Council.

The programme began with Stephen Brice, the deputy head of mission, British Deputy High Commission, Calcutta, welcoming the students. "You have won a lottery here. You will be meeting students from 200 countries there. The UK provides high quality education, also valued by employers," he said. "We eat the same food. We play the same game. We have the same passion."

Skype sessions, audio-visual presentation and interactive sessions followed to acquaint the 40-odd students with what's in store for them and dispel doubts.

"I am both excited and

nervous. I have a lot of queries, too, related to the visa procedure," said Devina Sikdar of Salt Lake who has got through the coveted King's College for a master's programme in forensic science.

French connection

The Embassy of France and Campus France briefed city students on courses on offer, visa applications, accommodation and fee structure at a programme recently.

The programme was attended by around 250 students who have enrolled themselves for master's and PhD programmes in French universities.

Proud students walked up the stage to collect the French Scholarship Awards. "I chose France for higher education because it is a very student-friendly country. Also, studying in an alien country will give me global exposure and the scholarship has been an added advantage," said Kavayalier, who's headed for Sciences Po University.

young metro