

{ STUDENT SPEAK }

'FACULTY GAVE US SPACE'

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I am a medical graduate and my interest in public health developed in medical school. I found public health to be a potential tool by which diseases

prevalent in the developing world can be tackled. Also, I was well aware of the fact that the developing world needs trained public health professionals. After completing my MBBS, I was looking for programmes related to public health but nothing seemed promising. During this time, I got married and moved to the United States with my husband and family. I started preparing for licensing exams to practise medicine in America and wrote research papers on diabetes type II for a multinational group in India.

I later came to know about the Master of public health degree offered by Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in collaboration with IIHMR in Jaipur. I was keen to join this programme.

The full-time MPH is a two-year programme. The first year is didactic while the second involves a practicum. This 80-credit programme consists of coursework and practical training which are meant to give us a combination of public health and management skills. Its distinctive feature is that students visit Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore for two weeks to get a

perspective of the US public health system. Two faculty members from IIHMR accompanied us for the two-week stay.

In Baltimore, I found the faculty supportive and professional. This was a learning experience for me. The faculty gave us space and confidence. They would listen to what one had to say. I was close to the teachers at an academic level and developed the ability to work in a team. Students were divided into groups. All the nine of us who went to the Baltimore campus were assigned to different groups of students. My group included an orthopaedic spinal cord surgeon, a nurse, an emergency doctor and, much to my bemusement, an IIT-engineer-turned-project-manager (not sure what she was doing there).

I was the only student from India (the project manager was a US citizen from California). A teaching assistant would allot each member a different task every day, so everyone participated in the work. I enjoyed my stay not only on campus but also elsewhere.

In India, I found that students depend a lot on their teachers and are more laidback in terms of submitting reports whereas in the US, students are taught to be responsible. I admired the level of professionalism they have adopted in this programme.

As MPH students are physicians, lawyers, nurses, educators, social workers, policymakers and others, their diverse educational backgrounds form the base for prospective careers on completion of the course. The degree opens the door to working with the world's leading scientists who conduct research across the globe to tackle urgent public health problems.

– Rahat Bano

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