

30 STORIES OF SERVICE

JOINT JAPAN WORLD BANK Graduate Scholarship Program

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What motivated you to pursue a career in a development-related field?

I joined my career in public sector with a capital engineering goods manufacturer. During my initial years, I was gradually involved in various technology transfer agreements, and I realized how important is for a company (in particular a public sector company) and the country acquiring and assimilating the right technology from our partners. The scope and scale of a technology transfer arrangement determines the local technology content addition, and plays a critical part in the growth of GDP for a developing country and otherwise. It was the first motivation for me to gain knowledge, skills and expertise in technology management from a premier institute. I contacted Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) Thailand and simultaneously applied for a JJWBGSP scholarship in 1995. Thanks to JJWBGSP support, I started my masters in Technology Management in AIT from September 1995 and accomplished in April 1997.

How has the JJWBGSP help you contribute to your country once you have completed your program?

It was the JJWBGSP support which helped me to study in my desired field and in one of the most renowned institutes. Without the JJWBGSP support, I do not think it would have happened.

What was the most rewarding and challenging part of your study abroad experience?

When I was leaving for my masters in 1995, it was my first ever travel to any foreign country. The rewarding part of course was the JJWBGSP I was awarded and with this sense of pride, I started my graduate study in the field of my choice. The feelings were augmented after landing in AIT and I started studying in a totally new environment, system of education, program fellows, staff and faculty. JJWBGSP provided me this noble and life-time opportunity of not only extending my academics but also to broaden my exposure to a wealth of new knowledge and learning.

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It was however, very challenging. Having a JJWBGSP scholarship puts a lot of burden on your shoulders to perform, survive and thrive. I remember our, then, president spoke on the inauguration (opening ceremony) on 4 September 1995 that “we are going to start our first term, and at the term end looking at our right and left, we might not find some faces”. He meant that study hard and maintain a minimum GPA of 2.75, which is the minimum essential requirement of continuing your study in AIT. It was quite challenging for me to perform and as a JJWBGSP awardee to stay ahead of my fellows. I remember sleeping for only 3-4 hours a day during some weeks of first three terms.

What did you learn about yourself during your experience?

The first thing I learned during my abroad higher studies experience is that I knew nothing. I completed my sixteen years of formal education from one of the country's premier universities and gained initial experience in one of the leading public sector enterprises. But soon realized, during my study at AIT, how big the wealth of education and knowledge, which I have to acquire and master is compared to what I have. It is like I am only allowed once in a lifetime the opportunity to stay on a mountain of knowledge for twenty months and be provided tools to acquire as much as possible. The awesome part was that this opportunity is never going to come again in our life. I always found time as a constraint or limitation in getting that job done.

Why do you think you were awarded a JJWBGSP scholarship?

I was told by my professor of Technology Policy and Planning that “answering right is not the right answer”. But here I have to answer right or be close to the right answer. There could be many reasons for JJWBGSP to award scholarship to me. I think some of the possible factors are: first I am from a developing country, which JJWBGSP supports for higher education;

second my program of study was directly related to the development of my country, which is also a stringent criteria of JJWBGSP; third my academics, and probably my essays as to how my proposed program of study will contribute to the socio-economic prosperity of my country.

As an alumnus, what advice would you offer to others who are considering applying for the JJWBGSP?

I will advise to all those young would-be graduates applying for JJWBGSP scholarship that they should take it serious as an once in a lifetime opportunity to excel in their profession. First, make up your mind in terms of career goals and set your professional objective, as in what do you want to achieve in your professional life. Look beyond 3 to 5 years from now. Select a field of study meeting your career objectives as well as corresponding to the JJWBGSP priorities and start the process of apply. The process is a bit longer and keep in mind meeting the time schedule of JJWBGSP and the university of your choice. Usually the JJWBGSP and the leading universities requires essays or written expressions for two questions. First why the particular program of study is selected and second how it is going to benefit you and your country towards sustainable development. The candidates to JJWBGSP should start writing their essays well in advance in the context of their own current country political, social and economic landscape.

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