

By: Prema Shah

Apurva Maru shut the door of his home (of the past nine years) for the last time. The words, “Goodbye, Silicon Valley, Hello India!”, echoed in his mind. He looked around his backyard, knowing he would never see it again. He then walked the last few steps to the car, to his wife and child, waiting to go to the airport, to catch the long flight to India.

He looked forward to going back. He had heard India had changed over the last few years.

Why was he going back to India? Here are his reasons.

Apurva’s parents were alone. They would make a trip once a year to see the family but they were tiring with age. When their

son, Arjun, was born, his wife, Shefali, and he evaluated the pros and cons of kids growing up in the USA versus India. The result: India may be a better option given the reasonably good schooling system, and the social support system that the Indian environment could provide to Arjun, and most importantly, the advantage in having close proximity to and being able to grow up around both sets of grandparents.

Apurva’s wife, Shefali is a doctor. To practice as a doctor in the US, she needed to get certification, first via licensing exams and then a 5 year residency program. She cleared her licensing exams but wondered whether it would be better to move back to India and start practicing.

Lastly, Apurva had worked as a telecom professional for the past seven years. The telecom market in India was on a high growth path and generating lots of visibility via the media in the US. It was hard to miss the boom in India.

When they came down to India for his brother’s marriage, Apurva decided to stay back a bit longer to explore job opportunities, talk with a few companies as well as professionals, seeking their advice on the career front. It was his career prospects in India which was the most decisive factor in moving back to India.

Nihaal Jaani boarded his flight to India. He had been in beautiful Singapore for a few years. He loved living there as did his wife. His children were born in Singapore. Yet he had to come home.

Singapore was wonderful. It was a safe and secure haven. He never worried about his wife and children even when they were out on their own. His wife traveled by the MRT or the public buses with



the two kids alone, people always helped and supported her.

As the boys grew, they had to think about their schooling. He and his wife believed schooling in India was definitely a better option. They could not think of sending their children to a government school while private schools in Singapore were absolutely unaffordable!

Anjali, his wife, had come to know of a friend who had settled in Australia but had recently moved back to India. When she came to know why, Anjali was very disturbed.

Her friend’s 10 year old daughter was asked to write a poem as a part of a school project. The child poured her heart out in her verse.

She spoke of how she was treated differently due to the color of her skin. When the child’s parents realized the trauma she had gone through, they took the decision to come home to India.

Anjali was certain she did not want her children to grow up in a foreign environment. She was sure India was a better option.

The family missed them too. Nihaal was the only son to his parents. The children too longed for their grandparents. Nearness to their grandparents would be a great boon for the children.

Most importantly, career opportunities were far

brighter in India than abroad. India’s economy was growing by leaps and bounds. When Nihaal found the right opportunity, he decided to make his move back home.

Jigar Pandya studied in the US. He had gone abroad to understand and expand knowledge of corporate culture and education systems, as well as to interact with multinational students and workforce. He always wanted to go back home.

After completing his Master’s in Civil engineering and Master’s in Information Technology (at MIT, Cambridge!), he worked as general manager with Carter Constructions. After achieving some work experience, he decided to head back home. He resolved to use these experiences for the benefit of his country, India.

He missed his parents and brother. He longed for good old ‘masaledar’ Indian food, the delicious dals and curries, the chutneys and ginger tea, that his mother made.

Jigar enjoyed all the festivals, Holi, Diwali and Uttarayan. He reminisced about his friends and relatives back in India and the fun times he had had with them.

(Continued on page 12)

(Continued from page 10)

He too had been following the India success story. The Indian economy was growing; opportunities were aplenty, especially for someone with his of background. The American economy was slowing down and the markets were melting. Definitely, it was time to go home!

Jigar had not scouted the Indian market for jobs but was confident of carving his own niche. He soon packed his bags and took the flight to India.

Two years later (well, almost) ...

Apurva looks down at the serene Powai lake from his spacious new apartment. Life looks good. Apurva is a Senior Manager of Business Development, leading Aircom's services business. Aircom, is a blue-chip MNC in the telecom industry.

Things were not very rosy to begin with. Initially, he had worked with a reputed telecom giant, but things did not turn out as well as expected. He left the 'slowly chugging along' machinery for better career growth prospects to join a smaller telecom software company. This company looked very promising in the initial 6-9 months but later turned out to be highly unprofessionally managed. He left this company in July '08. This is when he decided to pursue opportunities with MNCs with their reputation of relatively better work environment. He joined Aircom in Sep '08. Things have looked much better since reinforcing his decision. The salary now is much better than what he started with, thus, adding to his overall satisfaction.

Shefali, too, started looking for work. This was exciting but she soon realized that she was practically a "freshie" and was competing with many recently graduated students. Today, Shefali works with a private radiology clinic. Her work hours are suitable and with a fairly good support system and family around, she manages to find time to spend quality time with her children and look after her home.

Apurva and Shefali have a chauffeur to drive them around and a couple of housemaids ensure there's no more vacuuming and washing of dishes everyday.

On the personal front, Apurva is delighted to be close to his parents and relatives. The ability to call them up and be with them so frequently is awesome.

He is delighted to see Arjun interact with his grandparents. Arjun is overjoyed to have kids his age around him. He plays with them every evening, runs around in the building compound, and the friends even go over to each other's house sharing their books, toys and whatnot. There is a great sense of security in seeing his son grow up confident and joyful. He is also well settled in his school. Apurva is able to spend quality time with Shefali and Arjun in the evenings and on weekends.

Apurva is very pleased with his move back to India and could not ask for more!

Nihaal is General Manager to the Chairman of a large multinational company. He sits in his plush office, content with life.

Settling in India, however, was not that easy. The first few months were quite traumatic.

Finding the right home was tough. Rents in Mumbai were atro-

ciously high and those apartments which fit into his budget had no amenities for the kids. Finally, they found a home which the family was comfortable in.

The pollution affected their health. His children were continuously sick. His wife had a bad infection of the Mumps! The traffic was unbearable and these factors made him think of going back several times.

The positives soon outnumbered the negatives.

Domestic help and drivers were easily available! Shopping was extremely convenient with almost everything being available on the phone. Home delivery seemed to be the norm!

Beautiful, spacious shopping malls dotted the city. The family soon found that every brand under the sun was available here. That too at a fairly reasonable price! It was a pleasure to spend time at the malls.

Nihaal was worried about admissions in schools but found that Mumbai (and many other cities) had very good private international schools offering IB, IGCSE and ICSE courses. The schools offered excellent opportunities for extracurricular activities too. The children were happy as they found it extremely easy to make friends at school and at home.

Professionally, Nihaal found the quality of work was excellent and his colleagues at work were very bright. The atmosphere at work was very stimulating.

Moreover, he found Mumbai provides a huge number of options to keep one busy at play. There are many hotels, restaurants and pubs of international repute. Cinemas and theatre provide quality entertainment too.

Money, he found, goes farther in India. If one is earning well and spends well, one can live like a king in India.

Having lived for a while in his motherland, Nihaal is content. He has made good friends and has family nearby, the warmth and never-say-die attitude of the people ensures a permanent stay in his own country.

Jigar is pleased with his decision of returning to India. He has married his childhood sweetheart and the stork will soon visit them.

On his return, people were surprised and questioned his decision. Why did he return? Were there no jobs in USA? Why India? What does India have to offer someone as qualified as him?

Jigar has belied these assertions.

He is heading a professionally run Real Estate Academy (RESMA) in Ahmedabad and also teaches the subjects of Real estate Economics, Planning and Marketing. He works as an independent consultant with several Real Estate developers. Apart from this, he runs an Advertising and Marketing firm which he admits is a lot of fun as well. He also has a couple of web (internet) businesses lined up for the coming year. All in all, he is extremely busy doing things that excite him.

Jigar dreams of joining politics some day to make a meaningful contribution to the community. Till then as an ordinary Indian citizen, he hopes to make the community a better place to live in. He declares he is more than happy to be back in India, loves his hometown, his country and its people.

