

A chapter was being taught in school related to drugs and their effect on the body, I could not help but wonder how different drugs have different structures and properties that lead to changes in our body functions. I therefore thought of pursuing a specific programme to acquire knowledge about functioning and impact of chemicals administered in our body as medicines. Thus, I chose to pursue my Bachelor's in Pharmaceutical Sciences.

During my Bachelor of Pharmacy, subjects like pharmacognosy and phytochemistry sparked my passion for botany. I was fascinated by the medicinal properties of plants and how they contribute to drug development. Learning about plant-based compounds and their therapeutic uses ignited a desire to delve deeper into the botanical world. This curiosity, combined with hands-on experience in identifying and analyzing medicinal plants, fueled my ambition to pursue a Master's in Botany. I am eager to explore the intricate relationships between plants and human health, furthering my understanding of the natural world and its potential for medical advancements.

I did not confine myself to just academics in my college days as I was one of the most active volunteers of **National Service Scheme** in my college term of four years. I dedicated most of my college life to NSS and took part in many activities such as Village Camps, Blood Donation Camps, Cleanliness Drives, Environmental Awareness Campaigns and Street Plays which created awareness about various social issues such as Voting rights, Cleanliness, Women Empowerment, Climate Change and many more. Also, I lead the management team in the **ninth University Youth Festival** and successfully executed every activity in the event.

In the Eighth semester of my undergraduate studies, I completed a group project on **Spike Glycoprotein and Introduction to Protein Databases**. As we delved into protein structures and their functions, I became curious about how these molecular mechanisms operate in plants. I started exploring plant-specific proteins and their roles in growth, defense, and reproduction. This exploration opened my eyes to the intricate biochemistry of plants and their remarkable adaptability. The interdisciplinary nature of the project, combining biotechnology and botany, inspired me to further investigate how plant science can contribute to advancements in agriculture, medicine, and environmental sustainability. This newfound passion drives me to explore the botanical world with a scientific lens.

Post my undergraduate studies, I started working as a Pharmacist at a prestigious **Dr. Baldev Memorial Hospital**. There, I learnt about numerous plant-based medications and I became curious about the plants they were derived from. I found myself fascinated by the natural origins of many drugs and their active compounds. This curiosity led me to explore medicinal plants and their therapeutic properties. Studying botany will allow me to understand the intricate relationships between plants and medicine, deepening my appreciation for both fields. My experience in pharmacy provided a solid foundation, but it was the connection to botany that truly ignited my passion for discovering and utilizing the healing powers of plants.

Afterwards, I got a golden opportunity to work at a biotechnology company known as **Akem Biotech Pvt. Ltd.**, being involved in cutting-edge research, I saw firsthand how plant-based compounds could revolutionize medicine and healthcare. The experience of working with various plant extracts and their potential applications fascinated me. I became intrigued by the complexity and diversity of plant life, and how understanding their biology could lead to breakthroughs in pharmaceuticals. This exposure opened my eyes to the immense possibilities within botany, inspiring me to explore this field further and appreciate the intricate connections between plants and human health.

My decision for pursuing a master's degree was rooted to the curiosity and zeal within me to upskill my knowledge and gain a tremendous amount of exposure within the botanical field. Moreover, higher

education based on specific domain knowledge will help me to connect with peers, professors, and industry professionals, expanding my professional network in the particular field. Out of every other destination for study abroad, I decided upon Austrian education because, for starters, the quality of education in the country is top-tier and focuses on both industry and research-based knowledge, which is a perfect blend. On top of that, the affordable tuition fees in the universities makes higher education in Austria financially accessible for me. These things, adding up to the multicultural and diverse environment makes this country to be paramount for pursuing a degree.

I chose **University of Vienna** because of several reasons. The primary reason is I found the modules of this program intriguing and aligning with my interests and skillset with courses such as Structural botany, Molecular biology, Evolutionary biology, Ecology, Biodiversity patterns and many more methods to perform botanical research. The university is ranked at **137 in QS Rankings** which provides surity for a quality education and increases credibility in the job market. Moreover, I have been intrigued by the publications by university faculty such as Structure and Development of the Flowers in Mendoncia, Pseudocalyx, and Thunbergia (Acanthaceae) and Their Systematic Implications by **Prof. Jürg Schönenberger** and Comprehensive Cell-specific Protein Analysis in Early and Late Pollen Development from Diploid Microsporocytes to Pollen Tube Growth by **Prof. Wolfram Weckwerth**. These articles helped me in a better understanding of many aspects of Botany.

After completing my master's program from University of Vienna, I can pursue various fulfilling career paths. I can work as a plant biotechnologist, focusing on genetic modification and breeding of plants to improve crop yields and resistance. I can become an environmental consultant, advising on the impact of projects on plant ecosystems. There is also the role of a conservation scientist, working to protect natural habitats and biodiversity. I could be a botanical researcher, conducting studies on plant physiology and ecology, or an educator, teaching the next generation of botanists. Additionally, I might find opportunities in botanical gardens, arboretums, and government agencies dedicated to environmental preservation.