

Students Migration and Diaspora relations in India

Shanoji (Ph.d Research Scholar)

*School of Education and Behavioral Sciences,
University of Kashmir Srinagar,(India)*

ABSTRACT

In the current study the researcher intended to study students migration and Diaspora relations in India and the secondary data was employed to reach conclusions. In the contemporary times it becomes especially important to understand students' preferences regarding migration behaviour. This paper looks at the determinants of international mobility intentions in the specific situation of Indian students. People who place high importance on work-related factors are more mobile, while people who place higher importance on family-friendly environment and public safety prefer staying in India. International student mobility is obviously a family decision. Parents' support is crucial for moving abroad, in moral as well as in financial terms. Normally, obligations towards family are put in the first place ahead of potential individual initiatives. Studying in foreign countries is definitely a passion to all the Indian students. There are thousands of people applying for several foreign universities every year. The shocking number of Indians studying in foreign countries that could easily make up to the population of a small country. According to the data released by the government for 2015-16, 206708 Indian students are studying in the USA out of 553440 Indian students studying abroad, the highest for any country. An estimated number of 5.53 lakh Indian students are studying worldwide in across 86 countries in 2016-2017 data released from ministry of external affairs. The reason behind the students moving out for education can't totally be blamed on their fancy for studying in foreign countries. They can also be because of our reducing standards in education somewhere. This should be taken a little seriously and necessary improvements should be done hopefully.

Keywords: abroad, diaspora, education, Indian students and migration

I.INTRODUCTION

India is the world's second largest student sending country after China with the number of Indian students abroad having increased four times in the last 14 years. Students' migration of such magnitude has become a major source of capital and brain drain for India while hugely benefitting the economies of the advanced countries. Ninety percent of student movement from India is concentrated in five countries of which the United States is by far the largest recipient, receiving more than half of the expatriate Indian students, followed by Australia and the United Kingdom. Several factors appear to be at work propelling the massive flow of students beyond the Indian borders. These can be largely divided into two broad groups:

International Developments: include factors such as the technological revolution; globalization of education; global demographic trend; and most importantly policy changes to aggressively recruit foreign students who are preferred over the immigration of already skilled labor force because the additional revenue

earned in terms of fees that significantly contributes to the cross-subsidization of education of domestic students in the developed countries.

Domestic Conditions: include factors such as widening gap in the demand for and supply of higher education; regulatory framework of the country; rising income levels; availability of education loans, the desire of the Indian middle class to migrate to developed countries; the desperation to gain access to quality education to climb up the socio-ladder.

The Government of India, although a bit late, has awakened to the problem of massive exodus of students. It has been highlighted in the Eleventh Five-Year Plan (2007–2012) and the Twelfth Five-Year Plan (2012–17) which states that: ‘Higher education in India is passing through a phase of unprecedented expansion, marked by an explosion in the volume of students, a substantial expansion in the number of institutions and a quantum jump in the level of public funding’(Government of India, 2012).Of late, some state governments such as Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, and Haryana have also got into fray of edu-business. These states are putting efforts toward setting up of ‘Educational Cities’ and ‘Special Education Zones.’ The government has also encouraged Private participation in the education sector in India in a big way.

The private sector, now accounts for over one-third of the overall enrolment in general and about four-fifths of the enrolments in professional education. In the case of engineering colleges and business schools the private sector accounts for about 90 per cent of the seats. In medical education, the proportion of private sector seats has risen to about 55 per cent in 2013. Private deemed universities have grown more than 100 per cent since 2002, though now the government has ceased to accord any institution the status of a deemed university. In addition, private universities established under state (provinces) legislation have witnessed a phenomenal growth from nil to 200 in 2014. During the past decade it appears Indian states have permitted the establishing of some 20 universities per year on an average (See UGC 2015).The Indian universities are also being encouraged by the government to solicit entry of foreign students. The universities have responded by tailoring their courses to international requirements and appointing agents abroad and publicizing the offers widely in the media (Kaul, 2006). It has resulted in a slow but steady rise in the trickle of foreign students in India with receiving only about 7000 foreign students in 2002 to about 12,000 in 2008.However, India still has to go a long way in terms of net earnings from the foreign students to be able to cross-subsidize the domestic students. None of the Indian Universities find a place in the top 200 Universities of the world (QS 2012–13), and unless adequate attention is paid on the improvement of the quality of education and infrastructure, it will be difficult to exploit the opportunities that internalization of higher education brings. India has multiple challenges of improving literacy, universalizing access to quality basic and secondary education and at the same time to meet the rising demands for education through appropriate reforms, quality control, and creating opportunities for research, innovation, and entrepreneurship at home. As Pawan Agarwal (2009) argues, ‘the country would not be able to sustain its growth momentum and maintain competitiveness unless problems of higher education are fixed’. In this regard, the role of India diaspora (which is already active in the education sector) can prove to be extremely significant There appears to be a complex interplay of factors at the international and domestic levels which have opened the floodgates of the student migration from India. However, a right mix of policies and initiatives can not only

curtail the flow of students but also transform India into an education hub attracting foreign students. Opening up of the education sector and thereby making it more competitive had encouraging trends across the world. The new approach towards education has led to a regular review of education policies and revamping of the curricula providing choices and innovative subject combinations. Even if the idea of profit making is contested, cost recovery, without doubt, seems to be a pragmatic approach to improve the quality and keep pace with the growing demands. Higher fees extracted from the foreign students and also making at least better-off domestic students to pay at the market rate has resulted in substantial surplus to cross-subsidize the education of domestic students to a large extent. Entry of foreign institutes, faculty, and students also sets high benchmarks improving the overall quality of education. However, this has to come with strict regulation especially on 'for profit' institutions to ensure that the incoming institutions reinvest all surpluses in the institution and do not repatriate profits, maintain quality and offer adequate facilities. As Nick Clark (2010) states 'The government has to find the right balance between regulating the sector to ensure unscrupulous providers do not dominate, and deregulation so that foreign universities will actually be interested in the opportunities in India. India has immense potential to tap the trillion dollar industry worldwide given its history, demographic advantage, growing knowledge economy, and rich heritage. It will not be surprising if India emerges as a success story in higher education as it has done in some other sectors such as IT and health. All it calls for is the adoption of an outward-looking approach to expand the education sector.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Students are increasingly interested in spending at least part of higher education abroad. 4.5 million tertiary students were enrolled in a higher education institution outside their country of origin in 2012. The numbers of internationally mobile students are increasing at a fast pace, with more than a threefold increase from 1990 (1.3 million) to 2012 (4.5 million) (OECD 2015). The main benefits attached to studying abroad for the student are education at a higher level of quality or in the field of specialization which is not available in their home country (Waters et al. 2011). International educational experience is also considered an important attribute of intercultural competence, useful for future job-market chances (Shaftel et al. 2007; Cubilo et al. 2006; Cant 2004). Often, studying abroad is considered a stepping stone towards migration in the future (Vincent-Lancrin 2008). Foreign students, especially those from developing countries, demonstrate high stay rates in a host country after the graduation (Rosenzweig 2006; Finn 2003; Hein and Plesch 2008). UK and Australia both witnessed a recent decrease in student enrolments, explained mainly by tightening of post-study work options and increased costs of studying (World Education Service 2013).

III. INDIAN STUDENTS MIGRATION

The absolute number of Indian students abroad tripled from about 51,000 in 1999 to over 153,000 in 2007, according to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics. Thus, India ranks second among the world's largest sending countries for tertiary students, after China. Five countries accounted for 90 percent of all Indian tertiary students abroad. The United States is by far the most important destination country, receiving more than half of the worldwide expatriate Indian student force in 2006-2007, followed by Australia (16 percent) and the United

Kingdom (15 percent). The Institute of International Education reports that India has been the leading source of foreign students in the United States since 2000-2001. In the 2007-2008 academic year, 15 percent of all foreign students admitted were from India, corresponding to almost 95,000 people. The majority of these Indian students pursue graduate studies, as did three out of four Indian students in 2006-2007. However, the number of Indians submitting applications to U.S. graduate schools shrunk 12 percent for the 2008-2009 school year compared with 2007-2008, according to a report from the Council of Graduate Schools. Studying in the United Kingdom has been a tradition for many Indian middle-class families. After a temporary slowdown, this movement gained momentum again in the last decade when British universities started to hold student fairs in India and recruit students directly. For this purpose, at least 14 British universities have opened full-time offices in India. In 2007, Indians made up 6.4 percent of the country's 374,000 foreign student enrollments, as reported by the Atlas Project — up from 4 percent in 2003. The UK Higher Education Statistics Agency reports that the majority of them are enrolled in graduate programs, the biggest number in business studies, followed by engineering and technology, and computer science. Student migration is often the gateway for permanent stay in the country. This is eased by policies in many destination countries that allow students to convert their student status into a residence permit if they find a job within a certain time after graduation. There has been a visible rise in the number of Indian students seeking higher education outside the country. This has been the result as much of the weight of a young aspiring generation as it is of the supply side constraints in India. The best and the brightest continue to seek out the best schools overseas, especially in America in search of better opportunities. As a result Indian students rank amongst the biggest groups in the major destination countries. Student mobility has seen a steady rise in the last few years. The growth in the number of students in the major destinations during the period 2006-2010 is depicted below: Stock of Students in Major Destinations 2006-2010 Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2012). Student mobility thus represents an important migration pathway for high skilled workers from India and one that needs greater policy support. Student mobility is sensitive to the international labour market conditions. At a macro level, students aspiring for tertiary education overseas do make a cost-benefit analysis that determines their decision on whether, where and when to go. The number of internationally mobile students from India almost tripled from 62,342 to 181,872 (UNESCO-UIS 2015). More than 55% of students study in USA and Canada. More than 90,000 Indian students study in Asia as well as Australia. Though Indian students are in 32 different countries of Europe, they only make up 52,116. According to the data released by the government for 2015-16, 2,06,708 Indian students are studying in the USA out of 5,53,440 Indian students studying abroad, the highest for any country. Canada comes second in the list with an estimated 1,00,000 students while Australia is in the third position with 63,283 students. These three countries make up for 2/3rd of the Indian students studying abroad. An estimated number of 5.53 lakh Indian students are studying worldwide in across 86 countries in 2016-2017 data released from ministry of external affairs.

IV. MAIN REASONS FOR STUDENTS MIGRATION

Ease of Admission: Admission in India's top ranked institutes is highly competitive given that lakhs of students pass out high school every year and seats available for admission are quite limited. IIMs (Indian

Institute of Management), IITs(Indian Institute of Technology), and AIIMS(All India Institute of Medical Sciences) are amongst India's dream schools that lakhs of students contest to get admission in. The rat race to secure admission gets much more intense depending on the level of study and discipline. On top of it students have to deal with the stress of acing entrance exams for certain disciplines for e.g. Joint Entrance Exams (JEE mains) for engineering colleges and National Eligibility and Entrance Test(NEET) for medical colleges. A study reveals that on an average a student has lower than one in a 50% chance at securing admission in a highly reputed Indian Institute of Technology. High cut-offs cause even the brightest students to give up on their hope to secure admission in course of their choice at a college of their preference. And as a result students with no guaranteed admission have to think through the final option of studying abroad. Eventually students with a strong academic standing and enough budget choose to further their higher education abroad at a university of high repute. Since undergraduate admission at a highly-ranked foreign school is perceived to be comparatively easier, an increasing number of students from India are choosing to take the big leap. According to a research, growth rate of 17.8% was recorded last year in the number of Indian students travelling to foreign destinations for studies. And this growth is only expected to increase over the years.

More Options of Study: An often raised concern about the Indian education system is that its academic institutes focus only on delivering popular STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) courses. It is evident from the lack of professional institutes since a niche segment of students who wish to take the road less-traveled still look to advance their higher studies abroad. Just because their desired programme is not widely available in the country! Even if the course is available, they fall short of expertise and accreditation to shape talented students for a better career path. On the other hand, there is a rich variety of courses available to international students in countries like the US, UK, and Canada. Schools in these countries offer courses in some of the most contemporary and unconventional fields like entertainment, sports, psychology and many more in greater scope and structure. For e.g. a student who wants to study filmmaking in India have fewer film academies or schools to choose from and may end up with just a diploma. Whereas the same student can pursue a fully accredited bachelor's degree and study filmmaking in greater depth if the course is pursued abroad

Quality of Education: Even though the standard of courses available across colleges in India is developing, there still seems to be lack in practical application of skills learnt from conceptual understanding. And because of this lakhs of students in India struggle to get job placements after graduation. The Root cause of this problem circles back to the education systems emphasis on rote learning to remember concepts rather than understanding them. Classroom experience is only limited to lecture-driven classes with little to no active class participation. And over time remaining present to maintain a good attendance record becomes top concern with little or no interest in learning that eventually results in poor grades. In contrast, schools abroad engage students in active learning through class participation, dialogue exchange, case studies, and practical off and on campus experiences that makes learning fun and meaningful. In addition, flexibility to tailor course as per students interest and freedom to work on part-time basis while studying adds to the overall appeal of earning a degree abroad. US universities allow international students to work on campus, and off-campus as well provided the

student has completed at least one year of the entire programme duration. There's no doubt why more and more students are making an informed decision of studying abroad because the benefits are too tempting to resist!

V.DISCUSSION

This paper looks at the determinants to plan a move abroad in the specific situation of Indian students. The role of students' personal and family background, university-related factors, their social network and preferences for living location in their motivations for moving abroad. Going abroad for work straight out of the university is very uncommon. More common paths are either going abroad for advanced studies or joining a company in India at a campus placement, after which people are often sent abroad for specific assignments. Studying abroad still represents an insurmountable financial burden for most Indian students. In case family or networks cannot afford the move, for students making plans to go abroad is only feasible in the situation of offered scholarship or paid positions. As very few Bachelor and Master programmes offer any scholarships, it is unlikely that students will plan the move abroad at this stage. An important reason for many Indians choosing to study abroad is the lack of good institutions in India and growing competition for limited seats amongst the existing institutes. Very few universities in India provide good quality education and thus the challenge of securing admission in them becomes more daunting each year. PhD students are most likely to plan their future career outside of India, expecting to get accepted to paid positions. This difference obviously also occurs because people who are currently in PhD programmes mostly envisage their future in academic careers. Students at universities focused on applied work, like in our case IIT Delhi and BHU-IT, are more likely to get hired by companies in India straight after their finished studies. As a result, the type of university and field of studies work as strong predictors for students' desired move abroad which is in line with other research indicating enormous differences in mobility between disciplines and scientific specialties. Whether a student plans a career in academia or wants to work in a company has a decisive influence on where they see themselves in the near future. Moreover, the reservation policy reduces the availability of seats to 'general' category students, thereby weakening the prospects of a majority of students. Such stringent and often unrealistic requirements put students through extreme levels of pressure and lower their chances of attaining quality education. An estimated number of 5.53 lakh Indian students are studying worldwide in across 86 countries. 36 countries from Asia, 32 from Europe, 8 from Africa, 6 from South America and 2 countries from North America and Australia. More than 55% of students study in USA and Canada. More than 90000 Indian students study in Asia as well as Australia. Though Indian students are in 32 different countries of Europe, they only make up 52116. According to the data released by the government for 2015-16, 206708 Indian students are studying in the USA out of 553440 Indian students studying abroad, the highest for any country. Canada comes second in the list with an estimated 100000 students while Australia is in the third position with 63283 students. These three countries make up for 2/3rd of the Indian students studying abroad. Though, the data released by Ministry of External Affairs does not match with the data released by the specific countries. Yet, even those figures range in humongous numbers. These figures can be eye openers for the Indian educational system too.

REFERENCES

- [1.] Agarwal, P. (2009), Indian Higher Education: Envisioning the Future. New Delhi, India: Sage.
- [2.] OECD. (2015). Education at a glance 2014: OECD indicators. Paris: OECD Publishing.
- [3.] Waters, J. L., Brooks, R., & Pimlott-Wilson, H. (2011). Youthful escapes? British students, overseas education and the pursuit of happiness. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 12(5), 455–469. Shaftel, J., Shaftel, T., & Ahluwalia, R. (2007). International educational experience and intercultural competence. *International Journal of Business and Economics*, 6(1), 25–34
- [4.] British Council (2014). *Postgraduate student mobility trends to 2024*. Education Intelligence. <https://ei.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files>, Accessed 20 Feb 2016.
- [5.] Cant, A. G. (2004). Internationalizing the business curriculum: developing intercultural competence. *Journal of American Academy of Business*, 5(1/2), 177–182.
- [6.] Cubilo, J. M., Sanchez, J., & Cervino, J. (2006). International students' decision-making process. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 20(2), 101–115.
- [7.] Rosenzweig, M. (2006). Higher education and international migration in Asia: Brain circulation. Paper presented at the Regional Bank Conference on Development Economics: Higher Education and Development, Beijing, January 2007.
- [8.] Finn, M. (2003). *Stay rates of foreign doctorate recipients from U.S. Universities*. Oak Ridge: Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education.
- [9.] Hein, M., & Plesch, J. (2008). How can scholarship institutions foster the return of foreign students? *Diskussionspapier der Forschergruppe (Nr.: 3468269275) "Heterogene Arbeit: Positive und Normative Aspekte der Qualifikationsstruktur der Arbeit"*, 8(2).
- [10.] Deveshkopoor Migration and india(2010) Center for the Advanced Study of India and the Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania.
- [11.] Kumar, P., Sarkar, S., & Sharma, R. (2009). Migration and diaspora formation: mobility of Indian students to developed countries. *IMDS Working Paper Series*, 8(May 2009), 29–45.
- [12.] OECD. (2010). *International migration outlook: annual report 2010*. Paris: OECD.
- [13.] UNESCO – UIS (2015). *Education: Outbound internationally mobile students by host region*. UNESCO Institute for Statistics Database. <http://data.uis.unesco.org/>. Data extracted on 21 Feb 2016.
- [14.] Vincent-Lancrin, S. (2008). Student mobility, internationalization of higher education and skilled migration. In G. Appave & R. Cholewinski (Eds.), *World migration 2008* (pp. 105–123). Geneva: IOM.
- [15.] World Education Service (2013). *Indian study abroad trends: Past, present and future*. World Education News & Reviews. <http://wenr.wes.org/2013/12/indian-study-abroad-trends-past-present-and-future>