



The migration of Indian students to foreign countries, particularly USA & UK for higher education

R Raghavan¹, Dr. M Venkatramanan²

^{1,2} Post Graduate and Research Department of Economics and Business Economics, University of Madras, Arumbakkam, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India

Abstract

This article deals with the reasons for migration of Indian students for higher studies abroad in spite of the fact that there are well known higher educational institutions in India. The reasons for such migration are analysed in the main article. These include the notion of better education, enhanced career opportunities, making friends for life, lack of required and proper infrastructure and modern equipment in India for scientific research, and limited no of seats in the desired courses in Indian intuitions due to increasing no of students aspiring higher education. Other reasons include pressure from parents as well as their peers to get admissions in Foreign higher Education Institutions not only for getting higher emoluments and get or retain a special status in the society, attractive offers from Foreign Higher Education Institutions through their representatives or counselors in India for joining their institutions with a view to getting Foreign exchange through tuition fees etc. They also offer scholarships to bright students of other countries to study in their institutions so that they can be utilized in their own countries if necessary. It has been observed that in addition to USA, UK, Canada, etc. CHINA, SINGAPORE, RUSSIA, MALAYASIA, UAE, also attract Indian students especially due to less expenditure as well as being neighboring countries. At the same time the strength of India' seducation system cannot be under-estimated since products of Indian Education Systems include great names like Satya Nadelle, CEO Microsoft, alumni of Manipal Academy of Higher Education, Sunder Pichai, CEO Google, alumni of IIT, Kharagpur and such other eminent persons. The Article concludes that Indian Govt. have been taking various measures for improving the higher education systems by making higher financial allocation in order to upgrade the existing institutions, start new institutions of excellence, attract Foreign Students by grant of increased no of scholarships as well as putting extra inputs for research work.

Keywords: migration, education, foreign countries

1. Introduction

This article attempts to present major factors of International Students Mobility in Higher Education particularly from & to India. It has been noticed that Indian Students seek higher education from International Universities to get quality education, exposure to different cultures, find job opportunities abroad with a view to getting higher salary than in India, Reputation of Foreign Higher Educational Institutions and in some cases to join their

families or close relatives already settled abroad - among other reasons. Some of these factors also influence International Students coming to India.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Indian Students Studying in Foreign Countries

As per the figures culled out from different sources, the No. of Indian Students studying in Foreign Countries in the year 2017/18 is given in the statement below:-

Table 1

Sr. No.	No. of Students	Name of the Country
1.	2,06,708	Usa
2.	1,00,000	Canada
3.	63,283	Australia
4.	30,000	New Zeland
5.	27,000	Bahrain
6.	1,239	Bangladesh
7.	18,171	China
8.	1,200	Iran
9.	2,333	Ireland
10.	2,400	Kazakhstan
11.	3,000	Nepal
12.	2,500	Netherlands
13.	14,830	Uk
14.	8,000	Ukraine
15.	13,740	Germany
16.	8,500	Phillippines
17.	8,000	Russia
18.	5,000	France

As per Government data, approximately 5.53 Lakhs Indian Students are studying in 86 Foreign Countries. Almost 55% of such students are studying in USA & Canada alone. In contrast only about 46,000 International Students are studying in Indian Higher Educational Institutions.

2.2 Reasons for Indian Students Seeking Admission for Higher Studies in Foreign Countries

Studying abroad is not only for adding academic skills to one's profile, even the Indian Companies give preference to a degree from a reputed International University in comparison to an Indian degree. Some of the reasons include:-

- Better Infrastructure, Quality Education and focus on Research provided by Foreign Institutions
- With numerous World Class Universities and Research oriented learning, US is considered a well established Higher Education System – Preference to Innovation, High Standard of Living, etc. attract the largest No. of International Students to the USA.
- Next to US, UK has the most reputed Global Institutions followed by Canada, Germany, Australia
- Attraction of post study work opportunities

The following benefits are also cited by Indian Students going abroad for Studies

- Travel to a new place
- Enhanced Career Opportunities
- Absorb new culture, tradition, customs, new food variety & social atmosphere
- Discover new interest or activity which is not found in our Country
- Sharpen the languages skills
- Make friends for life
- Learn self reliance
- Enhanced Personal Development
- Lack of Quality Higher Education in India
- Lack of proper Infrastructure and Equipment in India for Scientific Research
- Over population and limited No. of Seats in the desired courses for example courses like Gemmology, Canine Nutrition, Renewable Energy, Artificial Intelligence, Cloud Computing, etc.

2.3 Assistance to students getting entry into foreign educational institutions

- Parents pressurize their words to get admission in Foreign Higher Educational Institutions with a view to getting higher emoluments and get or retain a special status in the society.
- Counselors of Foreign Institutions guide the students in the selection of courses and institutions. They in turn help their Countries in getting Foreign exchange.
- Agents assist the students in various administrative formalities like visa, passport assistance etc.
- Social Media – Facebook, YouTube, Linked in, Instagram, Whatsapp, Twitter, Slide share, Google etc. provide a lot of attraction to students for opting Foreign Education.
- Peer Group also enthruse students for such option.
- Increase in the disposable income in the hands of middle class families to complete with rich people in sending their children to foreign countries for studies.

3. Recent trends in international mobility of students

The following Countries, in addition to USA, UK, Canada, etc. are emerging destination for Indian students to go abroad keeping in view the fact that they would like to be nearer home. The same reasons will also apply to students coming from Neighboring Countries to India.

Table 2

Sr. No.	Name of the Country
1.	China
2.	Singapore
3.	UAE
4.	Hong Kong
5.	Malaysia
6.	Russia

Of late, USA & UK Governments are taking measures to curtail the trend of more & more Foreign Students taking admission in Higher Educational Institutions in these Countries. This will affect the attractiveness of these leading destinations for study in other Countries. Such action will help the other Countries like Australia, New Zealand, Canada etc. to attract such students to their Higher Educational Institutions, which will give impetus to increase their foreign exchange income also. Similarly, Asian Countries i.e. Korea & Japan will also be able to attract and retain International Students. Other Asian Countries like China & India can also increase their influence in the region and beyond in attracting International Students. India has taken various measures to provide Higher Education through Distance Education mode like MOOC, SWAYAM though these schemes are resisted by teachers, who are accustomed to teaching in conventional class rooms.

3.1 Representation of foreign students in Indian higher educational institutions

As per the All India Survey of Higher Education 2017-18 published by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of Higher Education, Govt. of India, 2018, the total No. of Foreign National Students enrolled in India was 46,144. The Foreign Students come from 166 different Countries from all across the Globe. The highest No. of Students come from the Neighboring Countries –Nepal, Afghanistan, Sudan, Bhutan Nigeria, Bangladesh, Iran, Yemen, USA & Sri Lanka. A maximum No. of Foreign Students are enrolled in B. Tech (7610 Students) followed by BBA (3589 Students), B.A. (2659 Students), B.Sc. (3002 Students). A lesser number opt for D. Pharma, BCA, BE, MBBS, B.Sc.(Nursing). Karnataka State has the highest number of Students coming from Foreign Countries. At present, India is hosting around 46,000 international students, which accounts for 1% of the global student mobility. The “Study in India” Scheme launched by the Ministry of Human Resource Development and aided by the Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of Commerce will initially target 30 “friendly countries”. The countries include primarily from Asia and Africa, including Nepal, Vietnam, Kazakhstan, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, Thailand, Malaysia, Egypt, Kuwait, Iran, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Rwanda, among others. India has been a major seat of learning for thousands of years. Nalanda & Takshsila Universities were oldest

Universities where foreign students were also studying. India has the second largest education network in the World. A welcoming atmosphere, non-discriminative approach and an assured educational and career growth are other attractions. Education in India has many benefits:-

- Low cost of education
- Quality education – Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs), National Institutes of Technology (NITs), All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Birla Institutes of Technology (BITs) have obtained high ranking in the rankings of Higher Education Institutions by various international agencies.
- Indian Institutions provide unique courses like Ayurveda, Sanskrit, Yoga, Hindi Language which enthruse international students.
- Subjects like Medicine, Arts, Language, Journalism, Social work, Business, Commerce, Planning, Architecture and other specialized studies are all provided with English Medium Teaching.
- Various scholarship, education loans and other financial aids are available for studying in India.
- Accommodation for international students is provided by every University.
- Part time jobs are also enabled for such students.

The strength of India’s Education system may be gauged from the fact that the world’s leading companies are being helmed by products of Indian Education System, for example:

1. Satya Nadella, CEO, Microsoft, alumni of Manipal Academy of Higher Education
2. Sunder Pichai, CEO, Google, alumni of IIT, Khargpur
3. Ajay Pal Singh, CEO, Master Card, alumni of St. Stephens College, Delhi/NCT
4. Rajiv Suri, CEO, Nokia, alumni of Manipal Academy of Higher Education
5. Indira Nooyi, Ex-CEO, Pepsico alumnus of IIM, Kolkata

3.2 Student Mobility & Demographic Changes

Extracts from the article published in Re-imagine Education brought out by the Wharton University of Pennsylvania⁽¹⁾ which discusses the factors affecting student mobility among different countries for Higher Education:-

“International student mobility is rapidly expanding and continuously fluctuating, forging new migration patterns, economic prosperity and globalization. The OECD predicts that by 2025, eight million students will study abroad. However, student mobility and the demographic distribution of those seeking an international experience, is constantly being reshaped. The number of students studying abroad almost quadrupled between 1990 and 2014, rising from 1.3 million to 5 million”.

“The British Council predicts China will produce the highest number of outbound students in 2024, hitting 338,000; this contrasts with India’s 209, 00010 “According to the British Council, economic drivers such as national growth, wealth distribution and household income all have a significant influence on student mobility”.

“Several Asian Countries are attempting to market themselves as prime international student destinations.

Countries seeking to substantially increase their international recruitment by 2025 include China, Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, and Malaysia. If successful, over the next decade, 1.4 million international students will be studying regionally as opposed to globally”.

“One reason that developing countries have greater outbound mobility is a limited domestic capacity, alongside rapidly-expanding populations which outnumber the number of appropriate and available tertiary education places. However, regions which students have traditionally left for the West are now developing local capacity and building international partnerships to increase the visibility of their Higher Education (HE) sectors”.

“The British Council predicts that the US will continue to overshadow every other host market over the next decade, and will continue to be the fastest-growing study destination. Conversely, the UK, now especially Post-Brexit, is expected to experience a downtrend in this area, becoming the second-slowest growing host destination, with predicted annual average growth of just 3.5 per cent between 2012 and 2024”.

“The 2018 QS World University Rankings report ‘Who rules? The Top 500 Universities in the World 2018’ emphasized that, if Asian students begin to perceive Western countries as hostile, UK and USA could suffer disproportionately”.

3.3 Market share of students in leading study destinations

An extract from the article entitled Measuring up: Global Market Share and National Targets in International Education published in ICEF Monitor in Bonn, Germany 2017(2) is given below:-

“The market share of study destinations during the years 2001, 2016 & 2018 is listed below to enable us to see how different countries have lost or increased their market share of student population:

Table 3

Sr. No.	Name of Country	Student Share (%)		
		2001	2016	2018
1.	USA	28	22	22
2.	UK	11	11	10
3.	Germany	09	07	10
4.	France	07	06	07
5.	Australia	04	11	07
6.	Japan	03	04	-
7.	Russia	-	06	07
8.	Canada	-	08	08
9.	China	-	09	10

The American Colleges now have more than 1 million students today. As for as UK is concerned, there is no different % of foreign admissions, the Government has set a goal to admit an additional 55,000 International Students by 2020. Canada is aiming to get 4,50,000 Students by 2022. China which had a very minimal number of Foreign Students in 2001 had attracted 4,40,000 Foreign Students in 2016 and has a target of 5,00,000 students by 2020. The share of Germany & France has slipped in the recent years. Russia & Japan have registered important gains during last 2 years. The main reason for variation seems to be that a number of students wish to stay within their home regions i.e. nearby countries. In addition online / distance education

programmes have also come in the way of students going abroad for higher studies”.

3.4 Acceptance of Foreign Students (Including Indian Students) by Other Countries

The USA which may be called the land of immigrants is considered friendly for Foreigners. This is also a land of opportunities – after completing their studies the students get plenty of job opportunities, whether in USA or in their own Country. Australia, UK, Canada & New Zealand, though they also offer similar opportunities but due to incidents of racism in Australia, Brexit & Anti Immigrant Sentiment in UK and France which is not an English speaking Country are not preferred by Indian Students. Germany is considered a preferred Country due to lesser budget requirements, but competition is high.

4. Education system in usa

USA has no National System of Education but relies on a regional accreditation process to ensure the quality and acceptability of each individual Institution. Approximately 1.86 Lakhs Indian Students were studying in the USA during 2017-18. Preference of subjects is Business Management, Computer Science, Finance & Accounting, Economics, Communications/Media and Physical & Life Sciences. The USA is a safe country and there is no fear of racism. In 2016 Indians were the top recipients of high skilled H1B Visas and the second largest community of International Students in USA. Some of the features for study in USA include the following:-

- Accommodation is either University managed or through a private landlord, also helped by the University.
- Orientation – Introduction to the University and its resources, sports & other extracurricular activities i.e. music, drama, scientific & literary societies in Colleges.
- Application for admission is through Online through the website of the College.
- Requirement for admission is passing in International English Language Testing System (IELTS), Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), Pearson Test of English (PTE), Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT), Graduate Record Examination (GRE) and Law School Admission Test (LSAT) for different courses as may be required by the College concerned.
- Cost of living includes cost of accommodation, groceries & food, electricity, water, gas, internet connection, phone bills, text & reference books, travelling expenses. The average expenditure may range from \$12,000 to \$15,000 per year, which may also vary according to the place of stay, whether metropolitan or suburb.
- Health insurance is mandatory
- Scholarships

5. Education system in uk

Higher Education is provided by 03 main types of Institutions namely Universities, Colleges & Institutions of Higher Education and Art & Music Colleges. The Universities in UK have long tradition of excellence in Higher Education. Indian Students opt for UK Higher Education Institutions next to thought of USA.

6. Scholarships available to indian students opting for study abroad

Different Countries offers scholarships to bright Indian Students for studying in their Higher Educational Institutions. The prestigious scholarships are explained below:

- Full bright – Nehru Fellowship – The United States – India Educational Foundation (USIEF) provides Fellowships for Master course or research in any US Institution in the field of Arts & Culture, Environmental Science, International Legal Studies, Public Health, Gender Studies, Urban & Regional Planning and Public Administrative.
- TATA Scholarships – are offered for study at Cornell University to Indian Students who require a need based financial aid.
- Commonwealth Scholarships and Fellowship – Offered to Students for doing Post Graduation – Master Degree & Ph.D. Programmes in UK.
- Vice-Chancellor’s International Scholarships – Offered by New Castle University to International applicants for UG & PG Studies.
- Chevening Scholarships – Offered by the UK Government to encourage students and professionals in India to undergo one year Master’s programme.
- Great Britain Campaign and British Council has announced GREAT Education Scholarships India 2019 under which about 35 Indian Students will be awarded scholarships pursue UG & PG Courses in 36 Universities across UK starting in Sept./Oct. 2019.
- Scholarships for study in China – Under India China Cultural Exchange Programme, the Chinese Government offer these scholarships for undertaking UG, PG & Doctoral Programmes.
- Scholarships for study in Europe, US & UK – Intaks - Shivdasani Scholarship awarded to exceptionally talented Indian Students for doing PG Courses.
- Erasmus Mundus Scholarships for International Students, funded by European Union to Study (Master’s or Doctoral Programme) in European Universities.
- UBC International Leader of Tomorrow Award offered by University of British Columbia, Canada for International Students for PG Course.

7. Suggestions for improving the system of higher education in India

The article entitled Higher Education in India: Challenges and Opportunities published in Journal of Education and Practice ISSN 2222-1735 (Paper) ISSN 2222-288X (Online), Vol.8, No.1, 2017 – Younis Ahmad Sheikh, Ph.D. Research Scholar, MPISR, Ujjain⁽³⁾ highlights the following for improving the system of Higher Education in India:-

- “There is a need to implement innovative and transformational approach from primary to higher education level to make Indian educational system globally more relevant and competitive.
- Higher educational institutes need to improve quality and reputation.
- There should be a good infrastructure of colleges and universities which may attract the students.
- Government must promote collaboration between Indian higher education institutes and top International institutes and also generate linkage between national

- research laboratories and research centers of top institutions for better quality and collaborative research.
- There is a need to focus on the graduate students by providing them such courses in which they can achieve excellence, gain deeper knowledge of subjects so that they will get jobs in the Companies directly thus reducing unnecessary rush for still further higher education.
- Universities and Colleges in both public private must be away from the political affiliations.
- Favoritism, money making process, etc. should be out of education system.
- There should be a multidisciplinary approach in higher education so that students' knowledge may not be restricted only up to his own subjects".
Though India has been ranked low in World Ranking Reports, there are certain reasons for not including Indian Institutions in the Higher Rank like:-

1. Some Courses certainly make a Higher Ranking but are over-shadowed as all the courses run by the Institution are considered as a whole in a Ranking system inspite of fact that some Institution show excellence in certain specified subjects.
2. Global Rankings place a lot of weight on Research capability and very little on the Quality of Teaching. While research and innovation are obviously important to a society, the need of individual students is for knowledge and skills that will help them to secure high quality jobs.

8. Highlights of Indian central government budget for higher education in 2018-19

As per the demand for grants for 2018-19 in respect of Ministry of Human Resources Development, Department of Higher Education, allocation for Centrally funded Higher Education Institutions and related programmes is as follows:-(Rs. in Crore)

Table 5

Sr. No.	Major Heads	2016-17 Actual	2017-18 Revised Estimates	2018-19 Budget Estimates
1.	Grants to Central Universities	6,356	7,261	6,445
2.	IITs	5,380	8,245	6,326
3.	UGC and AICTE	4,952	5,408	5,208
4.	NITs	2,860	3,668	3,203
5.	Higher Education Financing Agency (HEFA)	-	250	2,750
6.	Student Financial Aid	2,090	2,244	2,600
7.	RUSA	1,416	1,300	1,400
8.	IIMs	723	1,068	1,036
9.	IISERs	1,199	715	689
10.	Digital India-e-learning	452	518	456
11.	IIITs	176	369	364
12.	Research and Innovation	215	319	350
13.	Others	3,208	3,496	4,182
	Grand Total	29,026	34,862	35,010

From the actual allocation of Rs. 15,472 Crores for Higher Education in the year 2010-11, the allocation now stands at Rs. 35,010 Crores, i.e. about 105% increase. About 51% of the total expenditure on Higher Education goes to Central Universities, IITs, UGC & AICTE only. Expenditure on Education as a proportion of GDP has been around 3% during the period 2008-09 to 2014-15; out of this about 1% is spent on Higher Education in a India.

9. Enrolment in higher education

Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in Higher Education has increased to 24.5% in 2015-16 against the ratio of 9% in 2002-03. This ratio is fairly low compared to other Countries such as the UK & USA. In spite of increase in the percentage of admissions in Higher Educational Institutions within India, there is increasing tendency to opt for admissions in Foreign Educational Institutions particularly in UK & USA.

Some of the reasons for poor performance in attracting Students for Higher Studies in Indian Educational Institutions is less financial allocation for:-

- Attracting Faculty by Higher Emoluments according to their Qualifications & Experience.
- Improving the Infrastructure of Higher Educational Institutions to World Class Level.

- Incentives to Students to take up their desired specialties and provide better quality of life during their study period. It is reported in some studies that major destinations, like London or New York, have an ecosystem of Institutions, employers and a diaspora which will continue to be a magnet for globally mobile talent.
- Genuine publicity campaign must be started for hiring better teachers to get rid of the short fall and crisis of good teachers at undergraduate and postgraduate level.
- Teachers should be encouraged to pursue research work because it is the right mode of developing the knowledge about local and world class practices
- Colleges and Universities should take initiative to develop rapo with industry on timely basis to increase the employability ratio of trained and professional human resources for society

The number of students who have passed Higher Secondary Examination from Indian Schools during the last 03 years, the number of students who had applied for admission to Higher Education Institutions for various Under Graduate courses in India, No. of students who had got admission to Higher Education Institutions for various UG courses in India and the number of students who had migrated to foreign countries for Higher Studies (beyond Higher Secondary Level) are given in the statement below:-

Table 6

Sr. No.	Particulars	Year 2017-18	Year 2018-19
1.	No. of Students who have passed Higher Secondary Examination	3,74,33,107	2,84,45,538
2.	No. of Students who had applied for admissions to Higher Education Institutions for various UG Courses in India	3,66,42,378	-
3.	No. of Students who had got admissions to Higher Education Institutions for various UG Courses in India	3,66,00,000	-
4.	No. of Students who had Migrated to Foreign Countries for Higher Studies	1,36,887	1,86,000

10. Conclusion and suggestions for improvement

While it is a fact that the Indian Students aspire to get admission into Foreign Higher Education Institutions particularly USA, UK, Australia & Canada, because of entry restrictions and non availability of vacant seats in such Institutions, they also join Institutions in other Countries like China, Russia, Japan & even other South East Asian & African Countries, though in lesser number. It is also a fact that Indian Government have been taking steps to curtail the number of students going abroad by adopting the following measures:-

- Increasing the Infrastructural facilities in the existing Institutions.
- Increasing the number of Higher Educational Institutions.
- Improving the potentials of teachers – by higher salary, provision for exchange of information & teaching techniques between other countries, continuing education for updating their knowledge etc. Digital initiative including Online & Distance Education.

From the statement at the previous paragraphs it may be observed at the Higher Education Institutions in India have fewer seats in UG Courses than the number of Students aspiring to get admission in various courses. The gap in admissions in Indian HEIs as well as the aspirations of Secondary School pass out students for getting admission into Foreign Education Institutions have led to Indian Students going abroad for Higher Studies, leaving apart such number of Higher Secondary qualified students who opt for suitable jobs within the Country. As per various Committees Reports there is need to establish 1500 Universities so that the Gross Enrollment Ratio is increased in HEIs. Our suggestions are as follows:-

- Increase the number of Colleges & Universities keeping in view the regional requirement as well by spreading out such number as per needs.
- Improve the knowledge, language and skills of backward students by giving special trainings to enable them to compete with other students in all Higher Educational courses whether in India or in Foreign Countries.
- Involve the Teachers of Colleges and Universities in exchange programmes with other Institutions of excellence in our own Country.
- Improve the infrastructure of Colleges & Universities to bring them at par with prestigious Institutions of other Countries.
- Provide more scholarships and educational loan to retain the students to make them study in our own Institutions.

- To start such courses which are not available in our Country and for which Students go to other Countries for acquiring knowledge & skills in such subjects.
- To start University Campuses near the larger cluster of Villages so that students need not go to longer distances away from home to undertake Higher Education.
- Encourage more tie-ups with Foreign HEIs so as to enable exchange of Teachers as frequently as possible and on a large scale for updating their knowledge in the subject & acquiring modern techniques as well as research aspects.
- Encourage International Students to come to India by grant of more scholarships especially by way of free travel within the Country, cheaper accommodation, concessions in tuition fees etc. so as to enable them to mingle with their Indian counter parts.
- The Quality Assurance of Colleges & Universities should be done frequently instead of only at the time of Inspection by Accrediting bodies like NAAC/NBA etc.

11. Methodology of study

The study was conducted using the data available from the internet from Government documents as well as articles quoted in the References given at the end of this paper. On the basis of information available, I have tried to give suggestions for improving the Higher Education System to later Indian Students Migration abroad for Higher Studies, to attract Foreign Student to study in India, etc.

12. References

1. Student Mobility & Demographic Changes article by Intelligence Unit published in STARS Awards 2017 – Reimagine Education – Wharton University of Pennsylvania
2. Measuring up: Global market share and national targets in international education Article (05th April 2017) published in ICEF Monitor in Bonn, Germany
3. Higher Education in India: Challenges and Opportunities published in Journal of Education and Practice ISSN 2222-1735 (Paper) ISSN 2222-288X (Online), Vol.8, No.1, 2017 – Younis Ahmad Sheikh, Ph.D. Research Scholar, MPISR, Ujjain