

**EXAMINING THE EXODUS: UNDERSTANDING THE FACTORS BEHIND INDIAN STUDENTS'
MIGRATION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION AND PROPOSING STRATEGIES FOR DOMESTIC
EDUCATIONAL ENHANCEMENT**

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Abstract

This research paper is trying to find out reasons behind the increasing trend of Indian students opting for higher education abroad and aims to propose actionable strategies to align the Indian education system and universities with international standards. The primary objectives include identifying the key drivers behind Indian students' choice to study abroad and formulating strategies to elevate the domestic education system to international standards. Initial findings reveal that perceptions of superior programs, advanced facilities, and increased career opportunities contribute to the attractiveness of foreign universities. Moreover, the reputation of prestigious institutions abroad, coupled with the possession of valuable skills by their graduates, is a significant factor influencing the decision-making process. The proposed actionable strategies for domestic educational enhancement encompass curriculum reformation, teacher training, infrastructure development, quality assurance mechanisms, promotion of research and innovation, international collaboration, inclusive education practices, entrepreneurship, community engagement, and supportive government policies.

Through these strategies, the research aims to address the root causes of student migration and foster excellence within the Indian education system. The study contributes valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and stakeholders to collectively work towards a comprehensive and sustainable approach to enhance the quality of education domestically, reducing the reliance on foreign institutions.

Keyword: *Migration drivers, International Collaboration, Quality Assurance Mechanisms*

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Objectives:

- To Identify and Analyze Migration Drivers
- To Propose Actionable Strategies for Enhancement
- To Curb Migration and Foster Domestic Excellence

Scope of the study:

This study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of migration drivers, propose realistic and actionable strategies, and create a roadmap for enhancing the Indian education system to reduce the trend of students pursuing higher education abroad.

Introduction: Indians now study in 240 countries

around the world, the Ministry of External Affairs informed in Rajya Sabha last year. Canada, Australia, the UK, and the US remain the top choices. The numbers have only risen after the pandemic, the data suggest. Indians going abroad for higher education touched a six-year high in 2022 at over 7.5 lakh, the Education Ministry told Parliament last year. India surpassed China to become the country with the most international students in the US in 2022. In fact, the number of Indians choosing to study abroad rose from 4.5 lakh in 2017 to 5.2 lakh in 2018 to around 5.86 lakh

in 2019, as per government data. The pandemic resulted in this number crashing to 2.6 lakh in 2020. (Source: The Indian Express)

The issue of brain drain has long plagued India as the best minds tend to move abroad for higher education and stay there, attracted by the better quality of life and pay packages that are difficult to be achieved in India. This is a cause for concern as we are unable to retain the best in the country, which reduces the quality of the professionals in our system. Students believe that institutions abroad provide superior programs, cutting-edge facilities, and abundant resources. This perception stems from the opportunity to leverage the latest technology, engage in research, and learn from top-notch faculty. Candidates educated at prestigious institutions abroad are often viewed favorably by employers. Foreign universities are renowned for delivering high-quality education, and their graduates possess a diverse skill set that aligns with the demands of the job market. Many countries actively welcome international students and are diligently addressing visa backlogs. The US and Canada, for instance, are adopting innovative measures, hiring new staff, and modernizing services to expedite visa application processing. The availability of scholarships and financial aid has made studying abroad more feasible for Indian students. Many universities offer assistance, significantly reducing the financial burden of tuition and living expenses, and, in some cases, providing full scholarships. The surge in students pursuing higher education abroad is facilitated by the ease of travel and access to information. Technological advancements and improved communication make it more convenient for students to explore educational opportunities globally. Most Indian students prefer studying in English-speaking countries like the US, UK, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and Ireland. The popularity of the US and UK, evident in record-breaking visa issuances in 2022, is driven by the demand for top-tier

universities, specialized courses, and favorable post-study work rights. (Source- India Today News)

Proposing actionable strategies for enhancing the education level in India to meet international standards involves addressing various aspects of the education system. Here are some broad strategies:

Curriculum Reformation:

- Introduce a dynamic and updated curriculum that aligns with global study.
- skill-oriented learning to enhance real-world applicability.
- Incorporate emerging fields and technologies in the curriculum.

Teacher Training and Professional Development:

- Implement comprehensive training programs for teachers to enhance their teaching methodologies.
- Encourage continuous professional development to keep educators updated on international best practices.
- Foster a culture of innovation and research among educators.

Quality Assurance Mechanisms:

- Establish stringent quality assurance mechanisms for educational institutions.
- Implement standardized testing and accreditation processes to maintain and improve quality.
- Encourage self-assessment and peer reviews for continuous improvement.

Promotion of Research and Innovation:

- Promote a culture of research and innovation in educational institutions.
- Provide funding and resources for research projects.
- Collaboration between academia and industries.

International Collaboration and Exchange Programs:

- Foster partnerships with renowned international educational institutions.
- Encourage student and faculty exchange programs to promote cross-cultural learning.
- Implement joint research initiatives with global institutions.

Inclusive Education Practices:

- Develop inclusive education policies to cater to diverse learning needs.
- Provide support for students with special needs and create an inclusive learning environment.
- Promote diversity and multicultural awareness in the curriculum.

Entrepreneurship and Skill Development:

- Integrate entrepreneurship and skill development programs into the education system.
- Collaborate with industries to design courses that address the evolving needs of the job market.
- Encourage a mindset of innovation and creativity among students.

Community Engagement and Awareness:

- Involve parents, communities, and local leaders in the education process.
- Raise awareness about the importance of education and its impact on national development.
- Promote community-driven initiatives to support education.

Government Policies and Funding:

- Formulate and implement policies that prioritize and enhance the education sector.
- Allocate sufficient funds for education, ensuring equitable distribution and efficient utilization.

- Regularly review and update policies to adapt to changing global standards.

Implementing these strategies collectively and collaboratively can contribute to elevating the education system in India to international standards. It requires a holistic approach involving educators, policymakers, communities, and other stakeholders.

To curb migration and foster domestic excellence, it's essential to address the factors that attract Indian students to pursue higher education abroad. Here are some strategies that could help in achieving this goal

- Investing in improving the quality of education at all levels, from primary to higher education.
- Update and modernize the curriculum to meet global standards and industry requirements.
- Focus on skill development and practical application of knowledge.
- Establish research and innovation centers in collaboration with industries.
- Provide incentives for universities and research institutions to engage in cutting-edge research.
- Investing in faculty training and development programs to ensure high-quality teaching.
- Attract and retain experienced and internationally recognized professors.
- Facilitate international collaborations for faculty exchange and joint research
- Develop curriculum in consultation with industry experts to ensure relevance and applicability.
- Facilitate internships, industry visits, and practical exposure for students.
- Formulate policies that incentivize students to pursue education within the country.
- Provide scholarships, grants, and financial aid to deserving students.

- Offer tax benefits and incentives for industries supporting educational initiatives.
- Celebrate and promote the rich cultural diversity within the country.
- Work towards global recognition of Indian degrees and certifications.
- Establish equivalency standards to ensure that Indian qualifications are valued internationally.
- Promote collaborations between Indian and foreign universities to enhance recognition.
- Establish connections between educational institutions and industries to facilitate seamless transition into the workforce.
- Promote entrepreneurship by providing support and resources for startups.
- Launch campaigns to raise awareness about the quality of education available domestically.
- Highlight success stories of individuals who have excelled in their careers after pursuing education in India.
- Address misconceptions and promote the benefits of staying and studying within the country.

Implementing these strategies collectively, with the collaboration of educational institutions, industries, and the government, can help create an environment where students are motivated to pursue higher education within India, leading to the development of domestic excellence.

Research Methodology:

Secondary data is collected from reputable sources such as academic journals, industry reports, government publications, and newspaper.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the increasing trend of Indian students pursuing higher education abroad has been a significant phenomenon, with notable preferences for countries

such as Canada, Australia, the UK, and the US. Despite challenges posed by the global pandemic, the numbers have continued to rise, reaching a six-year high in 2022. The motivations behind this migration include perceived better programs, facilities, resources, and the allure of post-study work rights. Employers often favor candidates with international education experience, contributing to the attractiveness of studying abroad. However, this trend raises concerns about brain drain and the potential loss of skilled individuals. To address this, actionable strategies for enhancing the education level in India have been proposed. These strategies encompass curriculum reformation, teacher training, infrastructure development, quality assurance, research promotion, international collaboration, inclusive practices, entrepreneurship, community engagement, and supportive government policies. Collectively, these strategies aim to align the Indian education system with international standards, providing students with comparable opportunities and reducing the appeal of studying abroad. The success of these strategies depends on collaborative efforts among educators, policymakers, communities, and other stakeholders. By implementing these measures, India can foster domestic excellence, retain its intellectual capital, and create a vibrant educational landscape that meets global standards. Additionally, the proposed strategies can contribute to making Indian degrees internationally recognized and promote the country as a hub for quality education and innovation.

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