INDIA MIGRATION REPORT 2023

STUDENT MIGRATION

Edited by S Irudaya Rajan

The *India Migration Report*, an annual series, under the expert stewardship of Professor Rajan, has just witnessed the publication of its 14th edition. Researchers and policy-makers on all aspects of Indian migration eagerly await its appearance each year, as it commentates upon, and analyses, highly contemporary, cutting-edge issues and debates. 2023 is no exception, with the focus this time upon Indian student migration. Focussing largely upon international student migration, all aspects of this phenomenon are covered – from the role of families and agents in the migration process to the health and financial impacts of student migration. The geographical reach of the volume is impressive, with studies on Indian student migration to Canada, the United States and Eastern and Western Europe. The impact of COVID-19 and its aftermath is also analysed. As we have come to expect with the IMR, the research upon which the chapters are based is highly rigorous and up-to-date, the analysis presented is crisp and insightful and the conclusions and recommendations presented will have direct social, political and policy impact. It should be essential reading for scholars, practitioners and policy-makers concerned with migration in India and beyond.

Professor Steve Taylor, Centre for Global Development, Department of Geography and Environmental Sciences, Northumbria University, United Kingdom

The annual India migration reports edited by Professor Rajan have made a significant contribution of our knowledge about the complex changing dynamics of Indian international migration. Now moving into the 14th edition, the collection is a testament to the intellectual labour of Professor Rajan, and his ability to attract a wide range of early career to senior scholars in the field of migration studies. The collections are organised by specific themes, and the contributions are always novel, timely and provide unique insights into emerging issues in student migration. The effort taken to collate these collections on a regular basis has contributed immensely to researchers' awareness of changes taking place in Indian migration dynamics.

Professor Margaret Walton-Roberts, Balsillie School of International Affairs, Wilfrid Laurier University, Canada

For more than a decade the *India Migration Reports* have served as an outstanding source of information and inspiration for researchers and policy makers on various facets of migration. With contributions from well-established and leading academics as well as emerging scholars, IMR 2023 is no exception and is an excellent addition to this long-standing series. Among other issues, the volume deals with an exhaustive set of concerns faced by Indian students accessing international education. The volume is topical, stimulating and deals with several under researched areas.

Professor Arjun Bedi, Deputy Rector for Research, International Institute of Social Studies, The Netherlands

India Migration Report 2023

The India Migration Report 2023: Student Migration is one of the first books that attempts to comprehensively explore the various nuances of Indian international student migration factoring in multiple factors that influence the migration journey of Indian students. It also looks into other migration stories including internal and international returnees, various impacts of remittances, and migration in the context of the pandemic.

This volume:

- Inspect the factors driving the student migration from India, accounting for both the historical and current happenings influencing these factors. Following the pandemic, the book highlights the challenges faced by Indian international students in accessing healthcare and other related services which goes on to push them into vulnerable situations.
- Outlines the reasoning behind Indian students' decision to emigrate and how families play an important role in influencing key migration decisions made by students and the different patterns of student migration observed in India.
- Examines the employment challenges experienced, particularly following the COVID-19 pandemic, by the highly skilled Indian migrants and Indian international students.
- Describes the role that recruitment and consultancy agencies play in international student mobility (ISM) and examines the intricate relationship between migrant agencies and migration facilitation.
- Investigates the psychological, economic, and social challenges faced by Indian international students during their migration journey both during and after the completion of their course abroad.
- Provides a critical overview of the conditions of both internal and international returnees to different parts of India.
- Studies the impact of remittances on migrant households including their consumption patterns and human capital investment.
- Analyses interstate migration networks through the prism of gender and critically assesses how gender migration patterns have altered throughout time.

Scholars, students, researchers, academicians, policymakers, or anyone with an interest in migration, migration politics, economics, social psychology, migration policies, development studies, sociology, social anthropology, and gender studies will find this book on Indian student migration extremely informative. The book is a comprehensive collection of various studies that look into the multiple aspects of student migration but also extend to other pertinent issues of Indian migration that are extremely relevant at this given point in time.

S Irudaya Rajan is Chair of the International Institute of Migration and Development, India, and also Chair of the World Bank KNOMAD working group on internal migration and urbanisation. He is the editor of two Routledge Series – India Migration Report (since 2010) and South Asia Migration Report (since 2017) and Founding Editor in Chief, Migration and Development (Sage). Rajan has published extensively in national and international journals on demographic, social, economic, political, and psychological implications of international migration and coordinated nine large-scale migration surveys in Kerala since 1998 (with K.C. Zachariah), Goa (2008), Punjab (2009), Tamil Nadu (2015), instrumental for Gujarat (2011), Jharkhand (2023), and Odisha (2023). As a principal investigator, Rajan is currently coordinating the Kerala Migration Survey 2023 with the financial support of the Department of Non-Resident Keralite Affairs, Government of Kerala, through the Gulati Institute of Finance and Taxation, Kerala.

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India Migration Report

Editor: **S. Irudaya Rajan**, International Institute of Migration and Development (IIMAD), India

This annual series strives to bring together international networks of migration scholars and policymakers to document and discuss research on various facets of migration. It encourages interdisciplinary commentaries on diverse aspects of the migration experience and continues to focus on the economic, social, cultural, ethical, security, and policy ramifications of international movements of people.

India Migration Report 2014
Diaspora and Development

India Migration Report 2015
Gender and Migration

India Migration Report 2016
Gulf Migration

India Migration Report 2017
Forced Migration

India Migration Report 2018
Migrants in Europe

India Migration Report 2019
Diaspora in Europe

India Migration Report 2020
Kerala Model of Migration Surveys

India Migration Report 2021
Migrants and Health

India Migration Report 2022
Health Professionals' Migration

India Migration Report 2024
Indians in Canada (forthcoming)

For more information about this series, please visit: https://www.routledge.com/India-Migration-Report/book-series/IMR

India Migration Report 2023

Student Migration

Edited by S Irudaya Rajan

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2024
by Routledge
4 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

and by Routledge
605 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10158

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

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British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-032-76972-1 (hbk)
ISBN: 978-1-032-79026-8 (pbk)
ISBN: 978-1-003-49023-4 (ebk)

DOI: 10.4324/9781003490234

Typeset in Sabon
by Deanta Global Publishing Services, Chennai, India

Dedicated to the inspiring memory of Professor K C Zachariah, Founder President, International Institute of Migration and Development

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Preface

I am pleased to introduce the 14th edition of the *India Migration Report (IMR) 2023*. The *IMR 2023* discusses the challenges faced by International Indian students and highly skilled Indian migrants, including the complex policy environment they navigate, encompassing issues such as health access, family dynamics, impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the complicated political landscape they must negotiate. This report also discusses the relationship between international education, student migration, migrant brokers, and the role of agencies in the recruitment process. The economic, social, and psychological difficulties faced by Indian international students including mental health challenges are also a key focus of this volume.

Before we discuss further about the *IMR 2023*, the brief reviews of the past IMRs provide insights into the various aspects of migration that have been taken up by the annual series over the last 13 years.

The debut *India Migration Report 2010* focused on the different aspects that influence policies and governance regarding labour migration. The book examined gender discrepancies in immigration rules and government practices. The first half focused on the varied effects of migration on the nation, while the second half of the report covered the government's engagement in the migration processes. The *India Migration Report 2011* investigated the many facets of internal migration and its consequences on the economy and society in India. To better comprehend the political and sociological effects of migration, the report also looked at the aspects of caste and identity.

The *India Migration Report 2012* focused on the impact of the 2008 global financial crisis and its impact on migration and remittances. The book covered how Indian emigrants were affected in several Gulf countries through fresh field work and visits and recommended policy measures. The *India Migration Report 2013* emphasises on the social, economic and psychological impacts of migration on those left behind, particularly women, children, and elderly members of migrant households. Parental migration, the livelihood patterns of women who are left behind, and the general demographic effects that migration has on society of the home country have also been explored.

The Indian diaspora and its contributions to broad social and economic development India were examined in the *India Migration Report 2014*.

While the first half focused on the basics of the Indian diaspora and how they helped their host and native countries flourish, the second half looked at the traits and makeup of the Indian diaspora as a whole. In addition to focusing on the role of gender in migration, *India Migration Report 2015* reported on the experiences of internal and international migrants in India. The report covered the less studied areas of migration, such as marriage migration, migration governance, and single migration. The relationship between the economy and shifting gender dynamics brought on by migration was further emphasised by *India Migration Report 2015*.

In 2016, the *India Migration Report* probed into Indian emigration to the Middle East. It examined the difficulties faced by the current and potential migrants to the Gulf nations. It also highlighted the migrant workers' experiences and living circumstances in the Middle East. Forced migration, a persistent issue in India, was the theme of the *India Migration Report 2017*. The research went into detail on how numerous development initiatives in the name of industrialisation and urbanisation and the building of urban infrastructure in India had harmed the lives of marginalised people and compelled them to relocate. The report also examined the results of this forced migration and its effects on the displaced individuals.

The *India Migration Report 2018* examines Indian emigration to Europe. The research examined several migration pathways to Europe, including skilled and unskilled labour migration and student migration, and addressed the opportunities and difficulties of doing so. The book also covered the effects of Brexit on the emigrants and the exploitation of Indian migrant workers across Europe. The Indian diaspora in Europe was extensively discussed in *India Migration Report 2019*. The research identified and discussed Indian communities throughout Europe and their contributions to the country's economic growth. This edition has also looked into the subculture of the Indian diaspora in these target European nations and how the social and political systems there affected their way of life.

The *India Migration Report 2020* was a comprehensive report built on the abundance of information the Kerala Migration Surveys gathered over a 20-year period. This report examined a wide range of migration-related subjects, including return migration, gender, cost of migration, and remittance policies. The necessity for an all-India migration survey that can address a variety of topics about migration in India was illustrated by *India Migration Report 2020*.

The health of migrants was the key focus of *India Migration Report 2021* in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The report looked at the accessibility to healthcare, occupational safety risks, gender-based violence, vulnerabilities encountered by internal migrants in India as a result of COVID-19, and the function of decentralisation and local self-governments in resolving migrant health issues. The migration of medical professionals out of India was the theme of the *India Migration Report 2022*. It examines the history of migration among Indian healthcare workers, particularly nurses, and focuses on

the social and economic forces influencing these phenomena. The socio-economic effects of COVID-19 on medical professionals as well as the impact of remittances on the local economy were also covered.

The current edition of the IMR includes a thorough analysis of Indian student migration. The report which is divided into 20 chapters primarily covers the diverse aspects of student migration from India. The book also extends to cover other relevant areas of migration studies such as internal and international return migration, various aspects of remittance-receiving households, and the harsh workplace realities of migrant workers. Following are the briefs of the 20 chapters of the 2023 IMR.

The introductory chapter by Shivajan Sivapalan and Yasir Khan examines the barriers of health access for International Indian students. It elucidates the history and root cause of student migration from India. It also discusses the barriers to healthcare access faced by Indian students, both in India and in Canada. The authors also suggest some strategies to tackle this scenario.

S Irudaya Rajan, Anand P Cherian, and Naurin P Alencherry explain how families affect the migration trends, especially in student migration in Chapter 2. Unlike Western culture, the Indian family system is extensive and wide. This chapter discusses how families impact vital student migration decisions. It also explores the reasons why Indian students opt for migration and the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on student migration from India.

In Chapter 3, Anna Triandafyllidou, Ashika Niraula, and Rica Agnes Castaneda explain about the complications faced by highly skilled Indian migrants and international students in Canada. The authors put forward three objectives, including how highly skilled Indian migrants are transposing and emerging as international middle and lower middle class and how they utilise agencies and explore a complex policy environment and discuss the idea of migration pathways as a framework for developing a structure that offers an evolving perspective of the complexity of contemporary migration.

Lilach Marom and Balraj Kahlon observe that an evident spike in international students enrolling in Canadian Higher Education (CHE), particularly those from Punjab in India, is due to the supposedly easy route to migration after post-graduation. The authors explore how the non-governmental grassroots organisations (NGOs) are addressing Punjabi students (PS) who are encountering obstacles in their educational journey and pushing for modifications of policies and practices in Chapter 4.

In Chapter 5, S Irudaya Rajan and Anand P Cherian explore the connection between international education, student migration, and migrant brokers. This chapter focuses on the diverse qualifications, interests, and motives of Indian students and migrant recruiters. The authors also explore the complex web of migration facilitation and migrants' agency, which creates new migration corridors.

Sutama Ghosh and Raymond Garrison evaluate how the post-secondary institutions (PSIs) allure the international students (ISs) in Canada, after the ongoing budget cuts in the higher education sector. The authors carried out

a study to observe the involvement of other agencies in the various steps and stages of the process of ISs' migration in Chapter 6. They tried to position the role of agencies in IS recruitment, using the 'Agency Theory'.

Marshia Akbar explores the economic and social challenges of the Indian international students in Canada, which is exponentially rising and becoming the future of that country, as discussed in Chapter 7. Through extensive literature reviews and interviews, the author attempts to understand the barriers that students encounter both theoretically and empirically during their coursework and after they graduate.

In Chapter 8, Aparna Eswaran and Chinchu C argue that the COVID-19 pandemic had a profound impact on Kerala students' aspirations for mobility, causing delays, doubt, and a temporary halt to such goals. The authors state that during the admissions process, many pupils were left behind and exposed to health dangers and psycho-social consequences. They also examine the different obstacles faced by the students, negotiated mobility options, and resilience displayed. The study concentrates on the uncertainties that arose during the first wave of the pandemic and explores the survival strategies developed by the respondents at the time.

H Arokkiaraj and S Irudaya Rajan evaluate the migration of Indian students seeking MBBS degrees in Ukraine and Russia in Chapter 9. The authors traced the reasons behind this movement using qualitative interviews and discovered that social networks and family relationships are important factors in students' decisions to study abroad. This understudied aspect of Indian students' migration highlights the importance of understanding their motivations and experiences.

Yasir Khan and Shivajan Sivapalan analyse the mental health status of the Indian international students before their departure and arrival in Canada, in Chapter 10 of this book. The authors look at the obstacles these students have in accessing mental healthcare in Canada. They also talk about possible future plans to enable better access to higher-quality mental healthcare for Indian international students in Canada.

In Chapter 11, S Irudaya Rajan, Varsha Joshi and Rohit Irudayarajan observe that India's rapidly growing economy and enlarging middle class have led to a rise in India's international student mobility (ISM). The chapter looks into the increasing role played by recruitment and consultant agencies in student migration and the lack of regulation and false marketing strategies of such agencies, leading to misinformation and deceit among students wanting to pursue their education abroad.

Cyrus Sundar Singh tries to provide his understanding and perspective on the Sri Lankan Tamil refugees who seek refuge in Canada in Chapter 12. The author examines the challenges and sacrifices experienced by these individuals, providing evidence through documented real-life incidents. And he particularly showcases the documentary titled *Brothers in the Kitchen* to support his viewpoint. The journeys of the migrant diaspora to Canada are shown in this documentary.

Anu Abraham examines the effects of remittances on household spending decisions and investments in human capital using data from the 2018 Kerala Migration Survey in Chapter 13. The findings highlight some very interesting points about remittance-receiving households such as how the socio-economic status of the household receiving the remittance shapes their spending habits.

In Chapter 14, Dhaval Monani, Sharadbala Joshi, Asima Sahu, and Anurita Bhatnagar explain how the nationwide lockdown in 2020 affected the interstate and intrastate migrant workers, particularly those working in the service and construction sectors. The chapter is derived from the research study conducted by the Anant Centre for Sustainability at Anant University, which focused on migrant construction workers in Maharashtra during the period spanning from September to December 2021.

Snigdha Banerjee and T.V. Sekher investigate the socio-economic effects of Gulf migrants who return to their villages in India's Murshidabad region in search of better pay and job prospects in Chapter 15. The authors reveal that most of the returnees are young men with limited education and skills who struggle with peer pressure, unemployment, and a lack of adequate employment opportunities. They also presume that better job prospects and income would enable them to pay for living expenses and raise their standard of living, which were also the primary factors driving their emigration.

Archana K Roy, Sapna Ngangbam, and Manoj Paul examine the impact of remittances on households in migrant-sending regions by comparing households with and without migrants in Chapter 16. They also attempt to analyse labour migration from a perspective that considers a specific age group. The authors also suggest that a commercial breakthrough is needed to generate local employment and skill development for migrant workers.

George D. John, Michael Snowden, and Jamie P. Halsall state that marginalised populations have been severely harmed by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has widened social, religious, physical, and psychological divides, as discussed in Chapter 17. This chapter examines how the pandemic has affected the livelihoods of unskilled migrants and how social enterprise and social entrepreneurship can help to address these issues. The authors developed five themes using a systematic literature review methodology: migrant experience, social entrepreneurship, employment market, government programmes, lived migrant experience, and migration trends.

In Chapter 18, Niveditta, Mayurakshi Chaudhuri, and Chiranjoy Chattopadhyay explore the growing literature on migration in Indian contexts, focusing on migration trajectories like interstate migrations. The chapter consolidates a computational analysis of interstate migration networks using a gender lens and critically examines how gender migration patterns have changed longitudinally.

Poulomi Bhattacharya and K Jafar examine the socio-economic and working conditions of Labour Adda workers in Hyderabad, India, revealing diversity in caste, religion, and education in Chapter 19. The authors observe that

despite higher daily earnings than minimum wage, irregular job opportunities lead to lower monthly incomes and living conditions including poor sanitation, solid waste management, and overcrowding.

In the last chapter, Nandini Ramamurthy discusses the precarious working conditions in textile and garment factories in Tiruppur, Tamil Nadu, of both the local and migrant workers. She highlights how age, gender, social group, education, and marital status are used by employers for labour control and how socio-demographic stratification undermines trade unions.

The next two *India Migration Reports 2024* and *2025* will focus on Indians in Canada and the United States of America.

S Irudaya Rajan
Chair
International Institute of Migration and Development

Acknowledgements

For the past 13 years, the India Migration Report (IMR) series has accumulated substantial support and acknowledgement from a diverse readership, encompassing activists, policymakers, development practitioners, and researchers. It has solidified its position as a prominent reference book on migration, enjoying extensive recognition for its significance in the field. I want to take a moment to convey my appreciation to all the contributors whose valuable insights have made each report in the series indispensable. In particular, I express my gratitude to the contributors of IMR 2023 for their enlightening and thought-stirring articles covering subjects such as Indian student migration, both within the internal and international migration.

I had been envisioning the IMR series since 2006; it was formally conceptualised in 2008 and debuted in 2010. The inception of the first India Migration Report (IMR) was made possible through the guidance and support of the former Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA), Government of India. The MOIA established the initial Research Unit on International Migration (RUIM) at the Centre for Development Studies, where I served as Chair Professor from 2006 to 2016. I would like to express my gratitude to all MOIA secretaries, especially former secretaries S. Krishna Kumar, K. Mohandas, and Dr A. Didar Singh. Their invaluable assistance played a crucial role in the initiation and development of this series into its present state.

The 14th India Migration Report (IMR) marks the third edition organised since my departure from the Centre for Development Studies in April 2020, now under the auspices of the newly established think-tank, the International Institute of Migration and Development (IIMAD) (www.iiimad.org). Since this is the first edition in the series following the demise of Professor K. C. Zachariah (Founder President, IIMAD), I would also like to express my thanks posthumously to him for his tremendous support during the making of this series and the IIMAD. I want to express my gratitude to the board members, particularly its president, Sheela Thomas, Ginu Zacharia Oommen, honorary professor – IIMAD, as well as the dedicated research team at IIMAD, including Sunitha, Sreeja, Migdad, Ajay, Shyam, Kevin, Sisira, Lathika, Athul, Lakshmi, Jessica, Rahul, Rohit, Varsha, and Bincy, for their hard work and exuberant support in curating this series.

I owe a debt of gratitude to my wife, Hema, and our four children, Rahul-Bincy, Rohit, and Mary Catherine. Their understanding, resilience, and emotional support have been indispensable, making all of this possible. Lastly, I extend my thanks to the dedicated editorial and sales teams at Routledge for their unwavering efforts in ensuring the timely release of this report.

S. Irudaya Rajan
Editor

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1 Indian Student Migration

How the Influx of Indian Students in Canada Has Exposed Barriers to Health Access

Shivajan Sivapalan and Yasir Khan

> As a community volunteer, I have seen the result of such perverse marketing where many come to Canada with no understanding of what awaits and hope it will work out. Sadly, many face grave hardships and encounter shameless people aiming to exploit their vulnerability.
>
> Policy analyst Balraj S. Kahlon *(The Toronto Star, June 1, 2022)*

In 2020, international students contributed 68% of total tuition fees in Canada, the vast majority of which are from India (>60%), feeding into Canada's increasing need to grow its depleted labour force to support its ageing, "baby-boomer" population. The vast majority of Indian international students (>90%) end up staying in Canada to work post-graduation. Yet, this active recruitment of international students is not equally matched by having appropriate supports in place but instead laced with multiple barriers and obstacles. This has led to overall poorer physical and mental health, increased incidence of suicide, higher incidence of unintended pregnancies, and increased acts of gender-based violence (GBV) within this population.

In this chapter, we will discuss:

(1) Why Leave India? – The Pre-Departure Crisis
   a. *Migration and brain drain*
   b. *Limited options for educational training*
   c. *Competition*
   d. *Immigration*
   e. *Lack of research opportunities and career growth*
   f. *Gaining a global perspective*
   g. *Learning resiliency and independence*
   h. *Health benefits*

(2) Barriers to Accessing Quality Healthcare in India
   a. *Lack of infrastructure and workforce shortages*
   b. *Increased cost to access private healthcare*
   c. *Limited health literacy*

DOI: 10.4324/9781003490234-1

   d. *Lack of trust in modern medicine*
   e. *Social stigmas and taboos associated with sexual and mental health conditions*
   f. *Socio-economic status and prevalent caste, class, and gender biases*

(3) Barriers to Healthcare Access for International Students in Canada
   a. *Language*
   b. *Financial*
   c. *Geographical*
   d. *Cultural*
   e. *Gaps in knowledge and health literacy*
   f. *Academic priorities*
   g. *Lack of time*
   h. *Fear of diagnosis*
   i. *Unfamiliarity of resources*

(4) Discussion of Incidence/Prevalence of Specific Medical Conditions
   a. *Vitamin B12 deficiency*
   b. *Thyroid disease*
   c. *Anaemia/low iron*
   d. *Diabetes*
   e. *Vaccine-preventable diseases*

(5) Strategies for Better Support
   a. *Improved health literacy through culturally responsive health teachings*
   b. *A safe space with support groups and peer facilitators*
   c. *Regular health and wellness visits with medical doctors*

Students' Arrival to Canada

The United States, Australia, and Canada rank among the top regarding international student recruitment. As of 2021, Canada is the world's third destination for international students, and the growth has been exponential over the past few years (El-Assal, K., 2022).. In 2008, international students constituted 6.4% of the post-secondary student population, just over 100,000 students. However, by 2018–2019, this population had tripled to 318,000 students, accounting for 16.2% of all post-secondary students in Canada and contributing to 57.2% of all growth in post-secondary programme enrolments. In comparison, over this same 10-year period, domestic student enrolment grew by a modest 10.1%, compared to an astounding 210.4% for international students (IRCC, 2021; King and Sondhi, 2017; Sivapalan and Khan, 2021). Students from India and China make up over half of all new international students (IRCC, 2021; Williams et al., 2015). As

of 2022, the most up-to-date data shows that 30% of international students in Canada are from India (Gent, 2022).

In 2018, international students "contributed an estimated $21.6 billion to Canada's GDP and supported almost 170,000 jobs for Canada's middle class" (Global Affairs Canada, 2020, 2019). International students made up for the decline in domestic students in colleges and have allowed for continual growth in student enrolment (El Masri and Khan, 2022; Statistics Canada, 2020). The difference in domestic and international student tuition fees is striking, as international undergraduate rates are up to five times that Canadian students pay (Statistics Canada, 2020). In the most recent data, the highest tuition fees for international undergraduate students are seen in British Columbia and Ontario (Statistics Canada), which coincidentally are the same provinces that attract the highest number of international students. Most institutions now rely heavily on international student tuition fees for their operating budgets, as they generated about 40% of university tuition revenues in 2017–2018 (Trilokekar et al., 2021).

El Masri and Khan (2022) offer a comprehensive discussion of the challenges international students face in Canada. The challenges that international students face are broadly related to racism; the direct impact of financial insecurity; compromised academic performance; a hostile, alienating, and unsafe environment; and poor health and well-being outcomes (Arthur and Flynn, 2011; Bell and Trilokekar, 2022; Bennett et al., 2022; Ricci, 2019; Trilokekar et al., 2021; Zivot et al., 2020). It is essential to understand that these constraints do not occur in isolation.

The reality is that once students arrive in Canada, there are no specific safeguards for this growing population, and their concerns are rarely met. They suffer alone with their needs not being met by existing services due to legalities, service gaps, and bureaucracies. With the hope that completion of their studies and acquisition of a degree will end all these problems, these students rarely engage in collectively advocating for themselves. Instead, they endure these structural problems due to their precarious immigration status. Adapting to new cultural and social norms adds another layer of stress to the pressures of achieving academic success (Hamboyan & Bryan, 1995). .

The challenges faced with acculturation, the loss of social support, and trying to establish comparable relationships have been linked with depressed mood, anxiety, confusion, homesickness, loneliness, stress, and sleeping disturbances (Aljaberi et al., 2021; Skromanis et al., 2018; Houshmand et al., 2014). Considering the intersectionality of race, these challenges are further exacerbated by the experience of racial microaggressions such as social exclusion, derision for their accent and language proficiency, harmful and inaccurate stereotypes, and insensitivity to their cultural perspectives and needs (Houshmand et al., 2014).

Although international students are an indispensable demographic contributing both human capital and revenue to Canada, they are a vulnerable and marginalised group poorly supported, represented, and understood.

Why Leave India? – The Pre-Departure Crisis

Migration and Brain Drain

Indian students continue to migrate from India at an exponential rate as studying abroad is becoming a more attractive and feasible option than studying locally. Between the years 1999 and 2006, there was a 163% increase in growth to a total of 145,539 studying abroad, according to an analysis of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) data (Choudaha, 2017).

The most recent data shows that as of January 2021, more than one million Indian students are studying abroad. These students are scattered over 85 countries, with more than 50% going to Canada or the United States (Kumar, 2021; Dubbudu, 2018).

In a recent UN population analysis, it was noted that India is home to the largest population of young adults (aged 18–23) globally. In 2018, India surpassed China as the number one contributor to the international student population in Canada. This is seen with the Indian student population in Canada, which quadrupled between 2015 and 2019 (Hornstein, 2024). Indian students in Canada increased from 48,765 in 2015 to 219,855 in 2019 (Hornstein, 2024).

A recent "Higher Education Abroad" report done by Redseer Strategy Consulting firm found that Indian students are currently spending $28 billion, or 1% of India's gross domestic product (GDP) annually, abroad. About $6 billion of this value is spent on tuition at international colleges or universities, and it is estimated that this will soar to $80 billion by 2024 (Redseer, 2021). This movement generates many questions: Why are so many students in India travelling abroad for higher education? If this same amount were invested back into India's educational system, would it make a difference? Is it simply due to a lack of job opportunities or is there more complexity to this?

Limited Options for Educational Training

As India continues to grow in terms of higher education, most post-secondary institutions in India still focus on offering more traditional courses, specifically engineering, mathematics, science, and technology. This often alienates students with talents in other areas of education. They are also left with limited choices in education unless they have the financial resources to access some of the more diverse learning hubs in India.

Another source of contention for Indian students wanting to study abroad is the limited access to practical and research-based education. Though the standard of education in India is increasing, most post-secondary institutes in India have a theoretical approach to the curriculum. They need more teaching of the practical application of the syllabus. Due to the lack of practicality, many students who graduate find that they need to gain the real-world skills that are required in a job environment.

In comparison, universities and colleges abroad actively engage their students with a balance between theory and practicality. It is widespread in Canadian post-secondary institutions to offer placement programmes to equip their students with skills to help them engage in the study matter more practically. It encourages students to develop and experiment with different ideas and to sharpen their skill sets while still challenging themselves.

Furthermore, studying abroad provides students with the flexibility of courses and allows them to choose their courses based on their interests. Students can choose from several different programmes and disciplines, ones that are more compatible with their strengths and interests, allowing for their education to become a blend of conventional and contemporary programmes. This contrasts the typical path in Indian schooling, where students choose only one primary or discipline and are often unable to select courses outside their chosen discipline.

Competition

With a population of over 1.393 billion (2021), and growing annually, there is subsequent pressure for the limited spots in schools for students. It creates an environment of fierce competition among millions of students for their dream courses and ideal employment. This competition is amplified when you consider the competition for top-tier institutions with substantially fewer seats. This leaves hundreds of thousands of students struggling to continue their education, with an even higher number in rural India, where the number of schools and teachers is far less.

On the contrary, competition for Indian students abroad is significantly different. They can quickly complete the same courses from a top-ranked foreign university by fulfilling the university or college's prerequisites. They may also avoid the struggles and stressors of the competitive environment in India to access a top-tier university and go abroad.

Immigration

Another reason why Indian students may choose to study abroad is to settle outside their home country. Outside the metropolitan cities of India, there are many small farming villages and communities where there is minimal potential for youth to find jobs and careers that will provide them with a higher quality of life. Canada and the United States are now inviting more immigrants into their countries by providing them with attractive job opportunities. According to a recent survey by INTO University Partnerships, almost eight in ten Indian Gen Z students (76%) looking to study abroad will plan to work and settle overseas after completing their international degree. Of the reasons for choosing to migrate, 33% based the decision on post-study work opportunities and quality of education. It is even more interesting to note that 41% of Indian students would still prefer studying overseas

even if Indian universities offered the same quality of education. From survey responses, only 20% said that they would return after their studies. Also, 11% of students feel that their education abroad will help them gain critical skills and knowledge to apply back home in India to help the country advance and prosper (INTO University Partnerships, 2022).

Lack of Research Opportunities and Career Growth

Research has always been a staple of good education and is now one of the many reasons for students migrating from India to study abroad. Students looking to research see that obtaining a degree from a prestigious international university allows for an easier path to better research prospects. With a more practical approach abroad, students have greater career opportunities, whether abroad or in the event they return to India. Ironically, international qualifications are valued more than domestic degrees in India. Companies prefer applicants with international degrees due to their practical experience, and it is common for employees with international degrees to hold higher positions in companies. For many jobs, having a foreign degree can help launch their careers, and the salaries one would receive abroad are much higher than the salary one would receive for the same job in India.

In 2021, of the 115,000 Indian students approved to study in Canada, there was a greater than 95% approval rating for those same students getting a post-graduate work permit (IRCC, 2021). This suggests that most Indian students who go abroad are more likely to stay abroad for their careers. And for those who look to return to India, their international degrees are valued more, with most leading Indian firms placing them at the top of their applicant pools. These firms feel that pursuing a degree abroad signifies that the student has flexibility, cultural awareness, and global industrial understanding. This "reverse brain drain" allows a student to observe and absorb Western education and lifestyle and bring those same skills back and employ them in India. As India strives to secure its hold as a global leader, the knowledge gained through this process will help the country to replicate many developments.

Gaining a Global Perspective

The idea is that students who study abroad have a better understanding of other cultures and people. They learn not only about the country's culture in their place of study but also about the other international students who study alongside them. Another segment of this is that alumni from foreign universities are a part of solid alumni networks comprising global companies and great scholars. These networks can help students secure employment after graduation. For students who pursue entrepreneurship, these same networks and contacts can guide ventures in India as well as foreign investment.

Learning Resiliency and Independence

Studying abroad provides many Indian students with the ability to become more independent. It allows them to become more reliant on themselves while taking on more responsibility. Navigating an unfamiliar environment can help students learn to adapt and develop skills that can be especially useful in their future careers.

Health Benefits

Although studying abroad has its inherent risks, there are some benefits. The pandemic has shown us the importance of prioritising our safety and well-being. For some students, accessing COVID-19 vaccines that may be more efficacious can be a strong attractor for studying abroad. A recent (2021) survey from QS International Student confirmed that 65% of students see Canada as a more attractive destination because of how it has managed the vaccine rollout, ranking first among top destination markets.

In addition, this temporary relocation removes some barriers to healthcare, such as mental and sexual health. Due to the associated stigma with these topics in India, it can be difficult for students to find support. Superstitions surrounding pharmacological treatments and health and several other factors also come into play, making healthcare access in India a much more complex issue than what appears on the surface.

Barriers to Accessing Quality Healthcare in India

Lack of Infrastructure and Workforce Shortages

There are several barriers to healthcare access in India. According to the World Bank staff estimates, approximately 65% of the country's population resides in rural areas (2018). Despite this, only 37% of the beds in government hospitals are concentrated in rural areas (Naik, 2021). This was seen during the pandemic; rural healthcare centres could not manage the large influx of COVID-19 patients. The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends a doctor-to-patient ratio of 1:1000. India currently lags at 1:1834 (Ghosh, 2022). This is also seen with the nursing shortage. Currently, India has a nurse-to-population ratio of 1:670 against the WHO norm of 1:300 (World Health Organization, n.d).

Increased Cost to Access Private Healthcare

Access to private healthcare in India is becoming increasingly costly each year (see Figure 1.1). This is worse for rural populations as the same quality of healthcare facilities in rural communities is much higher in cost than in urban settings. Many government hospitals are ill-equipped to treat critical illnesses, and many of India's population are referred to private hospitals for serious health issues. The crippling private healthcare costs have led to 24.9% of rural

households reporting requiring loans to pay for hospitalisation expenditures (Yadavar, 2019).

Limited Health Literacy

Lack of adequate health literacy is another concern, particularly in rural areas. With so many diverse cultures and religious beliefs in India, there are various levels of understanding when prioritising one's health. This leads to a limited understanding of the importance of health and preventative medicine. The lack of early intervention for common health issues leads to increased mortality in the population.

Lack of Trust in Modern Medicine

A combination of misinformation, low levels of education, and lack of awareness has led to a significant percentage of the Indian population not trusting modern medicine. In India, there is still a significant population that goes to faith-based healers rather than relying on modern medicine. Their treatments are typically home remedies guided by misinformation or superstitious beliefs. This mistrust is further exacerbated by the myths around modern medicine promoted by these faith-based healers. A 2018 survey by GoQii, a fitness-tracking product company, found that over 92.3% of its literate, middle-class users did not trust the healthcare system in India (Subramanian, 2018). While large-scale survey data is not available from India, evidence from other parts of the world and the few studies on the subject from India suggest that there may be a decline in trust in the medical profession and the healthcare system. However, these studies also report that the levels of trust between patients and individual providers may still be high (Van de Walle and Marien, 2017; Gopichandran and Chetlapalli, 2013; Baidya et al., 2014; Kane et al., 2015).

Social Stigmas and Taboos Associated with Sexual and Mental Health Conditions

A study conducted by the WHO in 2015 shows that one in five Indians may suffer from depression in their lifetime, roughly equivalent to 200 million people. Due to the stigma associated with mental illness, a lack of awareness, and limited access to professional help, only 10–12% of these sufferers will seek help. In 2018, the Live Laugh Love Foundation commissioned a national survey report titled "How India Perceives Mental Health" to help gauge India's mental health landscape. The objective of the survey was to explore the perceptions surrounding mental health and mental illness in India. The study took place across eight cities in India, involving 3,556 respondents, and spanned over five months. They investigated the level of sensitivity, stigma, and attitudes towards mental health. Of the respondents, about

62% participants used derogatory terms like "retard" (47%) or "crazy/mad/stupid" (40%), or "careless/irresponsible" (38%) to describe people with mental illness. The responses reveal significant misconceptions about the aetiology of mental illnesses among the respondents and, more generally, Indian society (How India perceives mental health, 2018).

Embarrassment and shame also act as a determent, preventing those suffering from mental illness from accessing treatment altogether. People tend to avoid being seen attending a mental health institution in India as they do not want others to know that they may be suffering. The worry is that they will be shunned by society if their diagnosis were to be revealed. With Indian society being a collectivistic society at heart, the belief that there is a lack of anonymity when seeking treatment can also work as a significant challenge. This issue becomes even more challenging in rural areas as a doctor may be a neighbour, friend, or relative.

Socio-economic Status and Prevalent Caste, Class, and Gender Biases

There is a significant disparity in India between rural and urban populations regarding access to healthcare. Rural populations comparatively face significant financial constraints, which is a crucial barrier. The inequality between different classes, genders, and communities adds to the challenges. Research has shown that in India, women wait longer than men to seek medical attention. This was even more concerning as many pregnant women would delay seeking medical attention due to financial constraints or longer travel distances to their closest hospital. An observational analysis looking at gender disparity in access to healthcare showed that almost two-thirds of visits to a hospital clinic were from male patients (63%) and 37% of visits were from female patients, which correlated to a sex ratio of 1.69. This was significantly different from the expected sex ratio of 1.09 based on the population census data of the surrounding cities (Kapoor et al., 2019).

The caste system in India is another cause of inequality and barrier to access. Specific populations from lower castes, such as Dalit women, are more vulnerable to diseases, malnutrition, and anaemia and are associated with poorer education, nutrition, and overall health, not to mention less access to human rights. They also have higher maternal mortality (Kumar, 2007). Similar observations were made with the National Family Health Survey-II (1998–1999), which found poorer accessibility and health statistics among the lower castes (International Institute for Population Sciences, 2000).

Another critical social group that faces systemic exclusion from accessing healthcare in India is the LGBTQIA+ community. The most recent estimate in India is that there is an estimated 104 million Indians who belong to the LGBTQIA+ community (Safi, 2018). This community struggles with social stigmas and pathologising of their identities, which dissuades them from accessing mental healthcare. The recent COVID-19 pandemic also revealed another issue, as many within the LGBTQIA+ community faced barriers to

accessing the vaccine due to not having an acceptable photo ID. This is even more the case for transgender persons, where most acceptable documentation only notes the sex assigned to them at birth instead of their gender. The intersection further exacerbates their exclusion from other identities. For example, Dalit transgender and intersex persons face a higher degree of exclusion and discrimination in healthcare than their upper-caste counterparts.

Summary

The reality is that there are many barriers to decent healthcare in India, from stigmas to geographic restrictions to inadequate health insurance accessible to rural areas. This can be one of the factors that motivates students to leave India in search of a better life. Students who live in rural communities or are part of a marginalised group see studying abroad as an escape to move to a society that is more accepting and welcoming of them.

Barriers to Healthcare Access for International Students in Canada

Introduction

Students arrive in Canada believing that all the barriers they faced back home will be alleviated once here. They soon realise that, while some of the barriers that they faced are no longer present, there are several other barriers that they need to overcome.

Language

Although international students are fluent in English, when it comes to healthcare, medical terminology can be overly complex and overwhelming. The lack of support in languages that students feel more comfortable speaking in can lead to misunderstandings, issues with compliance, and difficulty in understanding and acceptance. For example, when a physician asks a student if they have ever been sexually active in Canada, it is implied that they are referring to a student having sexual intercourse with another partner. However, for many Indian students, it can be misinterpreted as sexually active, referring to self-stimulation/masturbation (Sivapalan and Khan, 2021). This can be linked to cultural factors, as it is not common for Indian students to have premarital sex. Thus, simple direct translation can be ineffective as it misses the cultural context behind standard medical terms. Cultural differences in definitions need to be considered when translating.

Financial

To pay for the higher tuition costs, many families must take out loans or mortgage their homes for their children to study abroad. This impacts the

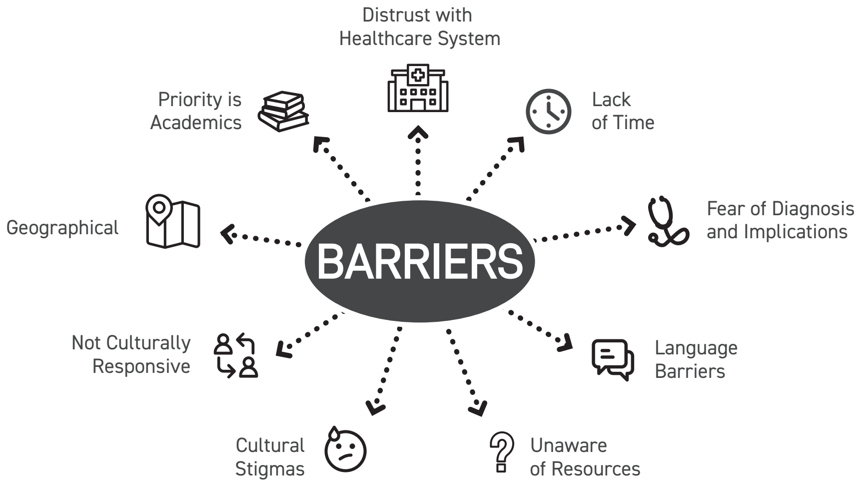

Figure 1.1 Barriers that international students face in accessing healthcare in Canada.

students and their families on many levels. Many students often juggle multiple part-time jobs in addition to their classes, and most of what they earn is sent back home to their families to pay back loans and expenses. Medical insurance is also a challenge as many insurance plans require students to pay upfront for medical care, and reimbursement may be partial or delayed. Consultations with specialists can range from $150 to $200, and this can be a high upfront cost for students, who are already financially strapped. These insurance plans also cap what students can use to pay for services or treatments. For example, students who want to receive the human papilloma virus vaccine to prevent cervical, throat, and penile cancers may find that their plan only partially covers the required doses.

Geographical

As a result of the financial struggles that students face, many Indian students opt for shared housing to save on costs (Calder et al., 2016, Indus Community Services, 2021). These accommodations are also far from campus, which may pose a problem when it comes to healthcare. Thus, students with a medical illness resort to seeing the closest walk-in clinic where their insurance may not be accepted, forcing them to pay out of pocket. On the other hand, there are some colleges and universities that are not equipped with on-campus clinics; in these cases, healthcare supports are outsourced to private clinics that are not always easily accessible due to their locations.

Cultural

Resources in place do not consider the cultural barriers around specific sensitive topics. Topics around sexual health or mental health do not consider the

cultural stigmas that may prevent a student from discussing these topics with their healthcare professional. Furthermore, awareness campaigns targeted at domestic students may deter students from seeking support due to shame or embarrassment (e.g., "Check your balls" awareness campaign for testicular cancer).

Gaps in Knowledge and Health Literacy

Many students lack the knowledge or health literacy in common medical topics or preventative care. This can lead them to be unaware of the benefits of early intervention and screening for various medical issues. They may rely on friends and family who may provide incorrect or misleading information, which often leads to students not accessing healthcare within an adequate time frame. Furthermore, misconceptions about vaccines and their benefits or risks may also prevent access.

Academic Priorities

There is a significant amount of pressure on students to succeed, and as a result, they prioritise this over their health. For them, it is more important to work through symptoms of fatigue or a medical issue than it is to attend a clinic. This is, even more, the case now, with limited time slots at walk-in clinics or hour-long waits in the emergency room. As a result, most students will wait until their symptoms have reached a severe point before seeking medical attention. The fear of pausing or cutting short their time in school can dissuade students from getting help altogether, as academics are one of the main reasons they were sent here. They may worry that a severe medical condition could force them to return home and give up the sacrifices made by their families.

Lack of Time

Most students work part-time jobs, sometimes multiple while attending school so that they have disposable income. They often work overnight or late shifts, which makes it challenging to find time to attend a clinic, especially when most are open during typical business hours and a few offer after-hour or weekend time slots.

Fear of Diagnosis

Some students may fear being diagnosed with something that could be life-altering and worry about how it may impact their VISA status. They may be worried that getting assessed and finding out they have abnormal cells on a pap smear, a testicular lump, or abnormal chest X-ray findings may lead to them being sent back home. This is commonly due to misconceptions about various health conditions.

Unfamiliarity of Resources

Most existing resources were created for domestic students and their needs. The same methods and strategies cannot be assumed to be as effective for Indian international students. There is growing evidence that cultural competency needs to be an essential part of awareness campaigns, especially when targeting marginalised groups/communities. For example, current mental health campaigns in universities may benefit from engaging with cultural liaisons/brokers such as SOCH Mental Health, a Toronto-based organisation whose focus is on mental health and well-being. SOCH Mental Health can support international students directly through culturally specific education based on prevention and resilience. They not only provide translated videos and material but also address the common cultural barriers that play a role in preventing students from accessing support.

Unfortunately, many students are unaware of the few community-based agencies that do exist. The main culprit is the ineffective dissemination of information to international students. The need for more awareness is evident when looking at the small proportion of international students who successfully utilise campus clinic health services.

Higher Prevalence of Specific Medical Conditions

International students come to Canadian colleges and universities with high hopes. Many choose Canada because of the quality of the education system, but they pay much higher tuition fees than their domestic peers. Travelling to a new country, leaving family and friends behind, and adapting to an unfamiliar setting with new cultural norms can be stressful experiences for anyone. The added pressure to succeed academically can lead to students failing to prioritise their health. This can result in students suffering alone with symptoms of fatigue, poor nutrition, and mental health issues. An American study found that international students had a higher level of unmet interpersonal needs, specifically feelings of belongingness or burdensomeness, entrapment, and an increased sense of emotional distress. These are associated with increased suicidal ideation among international students (Lindsay et al., 2020).

Over the past few years, campus physicians have noted recurrent health issues within this population, specifically low cobalamin (vitamin B12), anaemia, and hypothyroidism – observations which have also been supported by research. The prevalence of undiagnosed anaemia, low vitamin B12, and thyroid disease is high in both India and China. In 2016, the prevalence of anaemia among non-pregnant women (ages 15–49) in India was 51.5% (Rai et.al, 2018; Rajesh et al., 2018; World Health Organization (n.d). Furthermore, India has high rates of vitamin B12 deficiency due to poor nutrition. A 2019 study looked at individuals living in an underdeveloped city in Northern India and found that 47% of the total participants were vitamin B12 deficient (Singla et al., 2019).

The prevalence of hypothyroidism in India is 11%, compared to only 2% in the United Kingdom and 4.6% in the United States (Bagcchi, 2014).). The concern is that symptoms of anaemia, low vitamin B12, and hypothyroidism, which include fatigue and weakness, can be subtle enough that students ignore it as an adjustment to a new country (Singla et al., 2019). This can lead to worsening symptoms, increased visits to the hospital emergency room, and poorer academic performance, making it even more difficult for these students to succeed in school.

Campus clinic doctors have also noted significant gaps in health information around specific topics within the international student population, such as vaccine-preventable diseases, sexual health, and mental health. A 2006–2007 subnational youth survey (ages 15–34) from India showed that only 49% had positive knowledge of non-terminal contraception methods and only 28% of young women in this survey had any comprehensive awareness of HIV (Muttreja and Singh, 2018). In addition, the overall acceptance rate for pap smear screening was 8.3%, and the rate was higher in younger women than in postmenopausal women (Srivastava et al., 2018).

Many international students are susceptible to vaccine-preventable diseases because of a lack of effective immunisation programmes in their country of origin. This is often the result of

1. Non-existent immunisation records
2. Inadequate interpretation of records due to language barriers
3. Immunisation schedules and vaccines that differ from those used in Canada
4. Doubt regarding the authenticity of records or vaccines used

Campus clinic doctors also note significant healthcare gaps over the past few years regarding cervical cancer screening and the use of contraception:

1. Cervical cancer screening and the benefits of pap smears
2. Health promotion around birth control use and other forms of contraception
3. Health promotion regarding mental health issues and access to services (Soleimanpour et al., 2010)

The recent COVID-19 pandemic has added another layer of complexity to these issues that international students face. A pandemic is incredibly stressful for individuals and even more stressful for students away from their parents and family. This can cause feelings of isolation and anxiety as they worry about the health of their loved ones. The barriers faced due to restricted travel can also have a compounding effect and worsen any underlying mental health issues.

With this era of "fake news" and limitless access to health information, these students can struggle to access the right resources. This can drastically affect their ability to take the necessary measures to protect themselves and

reduce their risk of contracting COVID-19 while dealing with other physical and mental health issues.

Lack of Culturally Appropriate Care

One of the common concerns of female international students was the lack of access to a female physician or nurse to perform pap smears. This results in lower health-seeking behaviour in female international students. Research has shown that the higher availability of women physicians is associated with higher healthcare utilisation by Indian women. Thus, providing access to a female physician can improve maternal healthcare use within the female international student population (Bhan et al., 2020).

Research has shown differences in accessing preventative care and health screening based on the physician's gender (Mast et al., 2007; Tabenkin H., 2010; Noori & Weseley, 2011). There is also evidence that suggests female patients generally prefer female doctors to discuss sensitive or intimate topics such as reproductive and sexual health conditions. These topics are not only intimate but also associated with shame or stigma in India (Mast et al., 2007; Elstad, J.I., 1994). Research has also revealed that women believe female doctors can better understand and respond to their needs (Elstad, 1994), increasing patient satisfaction. This can be related to the idea that female doctors have a more open style of communication and holistic approach when providing curative solutions (Tabekin H., 2010; Roter et al., 2002; Flocke and Gilchrist, 2005). Research has also disclosed that female doctors show more empathy and provide better care (Tsugawa et al.,, 2017; Howick et al., 2017). These preferences are linked to female doctors being perceived by patients as showing more concern for their emotions, thus making them feel more comfortable and less intimidating (Henderson and Weisman, 2001; Elstad, 1994).

Based on cultural norms, this suggests that there may be a preference for gender-matched providers within the international student population. Unfortunately, this is only sometimes possible and will continue to act as a barrier for the time being.

Limited Access Points to Preventative Medical Care

Multiple factors limit access to healthcare for these students, such as language barriers, cultural stigmas, and limited insurance coverage. This causes them to rely on emergency rooms in hospitals and walk-in clinics to access healthcare. These two points of access for international students can be challenging and do not provide preventative care options for the student. Although walk-in clinics are an option, many ask for payment upfront. Students can have their expenses partially reimbursed, but for students who have very little disposable income, having to pay for the cost of a visit, the cost of medication, and the cost of any diagnostic testing can be a substantial hurdle. Hence, they

rely on points of access that directly bill the insurance companies, leaving them with few options.

Impact on Academic Success

Academic success is something that international students prioritise when arriving in Canada. The concern is that after arriving here, like domestic students, the transition to post-secondary education is often accompanied by an increase in unhealthy behaviours that negatively influence students' academic performance (Ruthig et al., 2011). Research has shown that poorer Bio-Psycho-Social Health can lead to poorer academic performance (Reuter et al., 2021). Several studies have shown that higher Grade Point Averages (GPAs) are associated with students who follow public health-recommended lifestyle choices (Trockel et al., 2000; Wald et al., 2014). These behaviours include the following:

(1) A diet rich in fruits and vegetables
(2) Regular sleep routines
(3) Moderate physical activity
(4) Regular breakfast intake

(Bellar et al., 2014; Wald et al., 2014; Hershner, 2020; Reuter et al., 2021)

In contrast, the use of alcohol and drugs, smoking or vaping, regular consumption of fast food, and working long hours negatively impact academic performance (Tessema et al., 2014; Arria et al., 2015; Meda et al., 2017; Lee et al., 2018; Reuter et al., 2021). While studies have reported that students who worked 10 or fewer hours per week typically achieved higher GPAs than those working more than 10 hours (Tessema et al., 2014; Andemariam et al., 2015), this is far from the typical schedule of most international students who work later hours at multiple part-time jobs to manage expenses.

Not only are their hours long, but it also impacts their sleep. Sleep is essential in helping our brains with memory consolidation, decision-making, and learning (Hershner, 2020). Due to their heavy work schedules, international students, in general, have poor sleep quality and quantity and typically have an infrequent restful sleep.

Diet is another crucial factor affecting academic success, as Florence, Asbridge, and Veugelers noted that inadequate nutrition was associated with poor performance on structured assessments (Florence et al., 2008). Sivapalan and Khan (2021) noted a growing concern about food insecurity within the international student population. This is due to a combination of a lack of access to culturally appropriate foods, limited cooking skills, and financial burden.

International students prioritise acculturation and academic success over-focusing on their own mental and physical health. As a result, this can lead to common symptoms of fatigue, difficulty with focus and concentration,

and sleep disturbances. Studies have shown how vital physical activity can be to maintaining or improving mental health, reducing depression and anxiety symptoms, minimising the impact of stress, and promoting positive emotional well-being (Dorga et al., 2018). It can also reduce feelings of low self-esteem and social withdrawal (Sharma et al., 2006). Despite this evidence, many post-secondary students, specifically international students, still do not engage in physical activity (Sivapalan and Khan, , 2021). Among the existing issues, increased screen time and sedentary behaviour are common in this group, associated with poor mental health (Dorga et al., 2018).

Preventable Measures

The lack of importance on health leads to gaps in health knowledge among international students. In turn, this leads to a higher incidence of specific conditions in this population:

- Vitamin B12 deficiency
- Iron deficiency
- Thyroid dysfunction
- Mental health challenges

Even more concerning is the increased risk of suicides, gender-based violence, and unintended pregnancies (Heck, A. (2021)..

The list above shares a common element – they are preventable. For example, increased awareness of methods of contraception and emergency contraception would support the prevention of unintended pregnancies among female international students. Knowledge about diet and supplementation for vegetarians, which includes a high proportion of Indian international students, can help reduce the chances of low vitamin B12 or iron. Also, if cultural stigmas and myths around mental health are addressed, students who are struggling would access mental health services promptly.

Strategies to Better Support International Students

International students leave their home country searching for a dream, to be successful, to make their families proud, and to establish a career for themselves. However, once they arrive in Canada, they endure hardships during this crucial period for psychosocial development. Furthermore, COVID-19 restrictions added another layer of stress to their already stress-filled lives, leading to poor mental and physical health outcomes.

The reality is that the growth of the international student population has yet to be matched by the awareness, research, or resources to provide the required support. International students continue to remain an underserved, under-researched, and vulnerable group in Canada. Many international

students are struggling, and news of the impact has slowly surfaced in numerous media publications. Students are dying at an unprecedented rate, as indicated by the quote from the Global and Mail Article:

> A local funeral home (in Brampton) has called what it's seen a crisis lately: It handles four to five international student deaths each month – almost all of them suspected suicides or overdoses.
>
> (Bascaramurty et al., 2022)

Many of these students suffer loneliness and avoid seeking help for mental health concerns due to stigma and worry of how their friends and family may react or not understand confidentiality. They sometimes resort to self-medicating, which can lead to overdoses. This is further exacerbated by financial struggles, getting a job, and food insecurity.

Given the exponential growth in international students in Canada, there needs to be more research on the struggles and challenges that they face. Understanding their struggles is essential to ensure that the solutions meet their needs. Understanding international students' experiences when it comes to housing, financial struggles, mental health struggles, and gender-based violence (GBV) will address a fundamental knowledge gap essential for solid policy and services.

A recent international student symposium was held with a focus on policy change to ensure that institutions across Canada are adequately supporting international students. They drafted a literature review titled "International Students' Lived Experiences: A Review of Literature," which highlighted the following (El Masri and Khan, 2022):

- Health and wellness services such as counselling should be made as culturally relevant as possible to better accommodate international students' unique needs (Arthur and Popiaduk, 2010).
- Mental health support should be available with differing language capacities, i.e., different English proficiencies and other languages (Xiao, 2020; International Student Survey, 2021).
- Access to physical and mental health support at reasonable/no extra cost to students (Smith et al., 2013; Xiao, 2020). Some have called for the provincial government to better recognise its responsibilities to international students, such as providing a health insurance plan (Peel Newcomer Strategy Group, 2018).

However, the supports currently in place at most post-secondary institutions in Canada need more cultural sensitivity to address the needs of international students. Instead, they are typically a "band-aid solution" for a much larger problem. A WHO study revealed that post-secondary students prefer to handle challenges alone or seek support from friends and family (Erbet et al., 2019). International students were found to be even less likely to seek

help than domestic peers. This was attributed to cultural factors, negative stigma, linguistic barriers, and limited knowledge of mental health services (Skromanis et al., 2018; Siyuan et al., 2022; Ogunsanya et.al, 2018). It was also interesting to note that they were less likely to seek help from general practitioners, psychologists, or community mental health services (Skromanis et al., 2018). These articles and studies highlight the need for culturally sensitive strategies to create awareness and help with health education and access, which are tailored to the unique needs of international students.

Improved Health Literacy through Culturally Responsive Health Teachings

Although health teachings exist at various campus clinics, the problem is that current solutions are not culturally responsive, accessible, or focused on international students. With students living in a digital era, in-person seminars and handouts do not provide the same range as online platforms and social media. Students need access to a centralised, culturally appropriate resource to help improve their health knowledge. It needs to be flexible and barrier-free learning that provides accessible and up-to-date material that is evidence-based and community-informed. Ideally, these resources should be available before and after the student arrives in Canada.

By focusing on key topics such as sexual health, mental health, student rights, physical health, and preventative care and safety, there can be a reduction in many of the issues faced by international students.

When it comes to sexual health, discussion around different forms of contraception, sexually transmitted diseases, pap smears, and even consent can improve students' understanding and contribute to their well-being. When students understand mental health through a cultural lens, it helps them gain better insight and recognise the risks of not addressing their concerns or issues. Helping students understand what their rights are as an employee or as a tenant and how these stressors can affect their mental health can be especially useful. With physical health, basic dietary recommendations, benefits of exercise, and signs and symptoms of common diseases are simple but important topics that require awareness. Regarding preventative care, immunisations and other preventative care methods can ensure that students are also thinking ahead to the future.

Understanding that the international student population is diverse and ensuring that supports are culturally responsive, using gentle language, providing functional health literacy, and culturally appropriate examples, and incorporating more visual and interactive content, their overall well-being can be significantly improved. The short- and long-term effects of late intervention and healthcare barriers can be mitigated by addressing these gaps.

A Safe Space with Support Groups and Peer Facilitators

Support groups for international students need to be put in place to support the mental health and well-being of international students through post-secondary

and beyond. Individuals who are part of collectivist populations, such as South Asian and East Asian populations, tend to avoid reaching out for mental health aid and keep their mental health problems to themselves, as it can be interpreted by the family that they have failed to resolve the problem (Karasz et al., 2016). In addition to this, the somatisation of depressive symptoms is common in South Asian populations. Hence, if South Asian individuals present their symptoms to a physician for help, they are frequently left undiagnosed due to those individuals presenting their depressive symptoms as somatic symptoms (Karasz et al., 2016; Lai and Surood, 2008). Karasz et al. (2016) reported some somatic symptoms that have been identified to consist of fatigue, gastrointestinal issues, sleeping problems, and bodily pains.

Having a comprehensive, confidential, safe, and non-judgemental space to interconnect mental health support services, community agencies, and health resources on-campus can improve the overall well-being of international students. This is a space where international students can get the following:

(1) Resource navigation
(2) Culturally responsive counselling supports
(3) Peer-to-peer support
(4) Psychoeducational webinars
(5) Gender-based violence supports
(6) Resources to address food insecurity

The intention of having a focused space like this is to connect, strengthen, and streamline the delivery of campus and community health services under a culturally and socially responsive lens. This space will enhance access to critical support services and resources while reducing/eliminating barriers for students, staff, and/or faculty facing mental health challenges. It will foster an environment that can provide comfort, care, and accessibility during this high-risk period for international students while providing a sustainable solution.

Having peer facilitators working in a centralised place will help address multiple barriers that prevent international students from seeking help, such as

(1) Language
(2) Cultural stigmas
(3) Preconceived misconceptions of what mental health and sexual health care and treatments
(4) Lack of culturally responsive supports
(5) Feelings of isolation and loneliness

If this kind of network were to be established in all campus environments in Canada, international students would have a place where they would

feel empowered, regardless of their challenges. Providing a secure and safe environment supported by students of shared experiences is at the core of the welfare of international students. This safe space would cultivate a community where international students are informed and empowered to act on mental health and well-being as their first step to academic success. It would be a place for international students to engage in sensitive health and wellness content and dialogue in a culturally responsive way. This would help cultivate a new perspective on mental, sexual, and physical health education.

Regular Health and Wellness Visits with Medical Doctors

Providing international students with an opportunity to be seen by a physician for a complete health review and physical examination after they arrive in Canada can ensure that all international students have the following:

(1) Access to a primary care physician during their stay in Canada
(2) Access to up-to-date health information
(3) Access to preventative health measures
(4) An assessment for diseases so they can be treated early
(5) An assessment that may identify any issues that may become medical concerns in the future
(6) Access to updated immunisations

These components can, directly and indirectly, affect a student's academic performance. If needed, the use of appropriate cultural context and translation would further provide a clearer picture for both students and healthcare professionals. The completion of an integrated health review for each student is a multidisciplinary initiative that utilises both family doctors and registered nurses to deliver a comprehensive health evaluation. Ensuring that the physician is trained to be culturally responsive helps students feel welcomed, supported, and empowered to prioritise their needs. This type of support will not only help students stay healthy but provide a strong foundation for them to achieve their goals and dreams.

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2 International Student Migration

Family-Mediated Migration Trajectories

S Irudaya Rajan, Anand P Cherian, and Naurin P Alencherry

Introduction

Humans have always been in motion, and this mobility has been a crucial component of both economic and social development throughout history (McNeill, 1984). The World Migration Report (2022) states that since 2010, internal and international migration has steadily grown, exceeding population growth rates globally. International student migration (ISM) is part of a set of multinational migrations and is viewed as one part of a lifetime of mobility (Raghuram, 2013; Rajan, 2022). Student mobility has grown significantly over the past few decades and now plays a substantial role in the global higher education landscape. During the past three decades, the movement of foreign students has surpassed global mobility in general (OECD, 2019). As UNESCO (2018) reports, the number of international students in higher education increased from 2 million in 1998 to 5 million in 2016. Students from India constitute a significant proportion of these. In 2019, around 219,000 Indians held study permits in Canada, accounting for 34% of the country's international student population. In 2018, the number of Indian students in Canada surpassed the number of Chinese students, with the Indian student population quadrupling from 48,765 in 2015 to 219,855 in 2019 (Kumar, 2021). During the 2019–20 academic year, Indian students contributed USD 7.6 billion to the US economy (PTI, 2020). Indian students make a significant contribution to the global economy and play a role in the economic and social structures of other nations, but little is known about what supports and hinders their migration, or how they affect migration outcomes and patterns. This review focuses on the role of the family in Indian student migrants' decision-making process. What does the influence of family mean in various settings, and how and to whom does it apply? We investigate some of the factors that affect students' decisions to relocate to Western nations for higher education, particularly students from India.

Family: The Decision Influencer

Migration is a resolute decision that involves making complicated choices that are frequently influenced by a wide range of circumstances. India's

DOI: 10.4324/9781003490234-2

population of 1.2 billion people resides in 248.8 million households. The family is the most fundamental and essential component of Indian society due to its involvement in developing human capital resources including education, training, intellect, skills, and health as well as its influence over individual, domestic, and communal behaviour (Sriram, 1993). While migration is typically viewed as an individual or nuclear household phenomenon in Western literature, the Indian context strongly emphasises the involvement of parents and other members of the household. Family ties are deeper in India than in other countries (Singh, 2003). For those who migrate as students, families play a crucial role in their decision-making (AIEF, 1997; Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002). Student mobility is not a response to "global forces," rather it is attached to family and social expectations (Pimpa, 2005). The family has two kinds of effects on students' decision-making: guidance/advice and financial assistance (Defauw et al., 2018; Kainuwa, Binti, and Yusuf, 2013).

Family ties have always been a significant influence on how individuals behave and are motivated to move around. The socioeconomic and educational backgrounds of the family and their belief in the essential values of overseas study and proficiency in language influence the choice to migrate and the decision to study abroad. Fleischer's (2007) study on the decision-making process for migration shows that the fundamental decision to migrate is made by the extended family who invests in the migration of young people as an investment in human capital, with expectations of certain obligations in return. The costs and benefits of the current situation and the anticipated future are analysed before the individual migrates (Sjaastad, 1962).

There is an increasing trend of migration among the Indian middle class, with at least one family member from each family migrating to study or work (Baas, 2010). As a consequence of prior migrations, most members of the Indian middle class already know someone who has lived abroad and achieved economic success. As a result, they tend to believe that migration will improve one's quality of life. The expanding wealth and size of middle-class households are one of the main factors influencing international student mobility in countries like China, India, and Vietnam, which are primary sources (Tran, 2015). In these nations, a family's standing, wealth, and reputation are all based on how well their offspring perform. For their children's education, a lot of middle-class Asian families attempt to send them abroad (Huang and Yeoh, 2005).

According to Charlier and Croché (2010), one of the primary reasons families support their members' relocation is to preserve or increase social class and cultural capital. Families, therefore, favour migration because they consider it to be advantageous for the family as opposed to the individual. Before an individual migrates, the family considers both financial and non-financial costs and rewards, according to the "human capital viewpoint" (Sjaastad, 1962), and views it as investing their resources and money in a foreign nation (UN, World Youth Report, 2013). Apart from that, maintaining societal

relevance, which Waters (2006) also referred to as social class and cultural capital, is one of the main reasons for families to help their members migrate.

Family-mediated transnational migration is distinguished from its state- and market-mediated counterparts by the increased emotional mobilisation that occurs when people relocate with the help and guidance of their families (Xiang and Lindquist, 2014). Notwithstanding the marketisation of India's higher education system and the marketing of international student migration, studying abroad is typically depicted in mainstream Indian media as an elite form of educational consumption and a matter of personal choice. The state has made intentional steps to relax its control over international student mobility to solve the issue of the uneven distribution of educational resources in the nation. This is evident in both the uneven distribution of educational resources and the self-funded study-abroad industry in India (Mukundan, 2020; Muraleedharan, 2021). Members who move as a result of family-mediated migration need to deal with emotions between families and work (Hu, Xu, and Tu, 2020). Because of the emotional strain associated with family relationships and the financial stability of work, the distinction between an individual and an institution becomes hazy during this process. For Asian parents, migration destination choices are influenced more by factors grounded in cultural, political, and socioeconomic efficiency (Bodycott, 2009). According to Conklin and Dailey (1981), there is a clear correlation between the degree of parental encouragement and the drive for students to enrol in college. Financial assistance from parents was especially crucial for students who chose to pursue an international education (AIEF, 1997). The importance that Indian parents place on their kids' academic success serves as a strong incentive for Indian kids to seek further education and career aspirations.

Family motivation and encouragement are critical for pursuing higher education overseas. Parents give continual assistance to their children in both academic and non-academic areas. The desire for economic independence plays a significant role in the desire to migrate overseas (Ashby, 2010; Yakovlev and Steinkopf, 2014). Although the majority of students are extremely concerned about the difference between the wealthy and the poor in their own country, most people are willing to accept some inequality to have a free market economy. Students who like free markets are more inclined to immigrate to other countries (Papapanagosand Sanfey, 2001). The family uses its financial capital to obtain the desired institutionalised capital in their native nation to provide their children with the opportunity to receive a Western university education and thereby elevate the family's social position. Family plays a crucial role and leverages its capacity to focus on problem-solving, its ability to act, its speed of decision-making, the level of knowledge that organisations have, and its adaptability which can be described as institutionalised capital (Tran, 2015; Zanker and Hennessey, 2021). Personal loans, investment costs and returns, and other variables affect most Indians' decisions on where to study and relocate (Choudaha, Chang, and Kono, 2013).

Although both structural (social, political, or cultural environment) and interpersonal variables (such as familial relationships and psychological issues) affect the decision to stay in the host nation, friends and family tend to encourage the individual to return to their home country (Suutariand Brewster, 2000; Jackson et al., 2005). Individual and structural elements are intertwined: a person's experiences shape how they react to structural influences (Hazen and Alberts, 2006). Migrant students' emotional ties to their parents and siblings add an emotional dimension to decision-making. Individuals migrate because of a strong sense of commitment to their families and their financial well-being (Mai and King, 2009). Emotional and practical obligations associated with the family also have a major role to play in influencing post-study decisions (Monro, 2004). Depending on how they traverse the country's preferences, social networks have varying effects on students' decisions to go abroad. Students whose relatives and acquaintances have been or are presently mobile have particular notions of education migration, especially if the relative is a close tie. Some families make unanticipated investments in the migrant's prosperous future (King and Sondhi, 2016).

Family – The Tying Knot

Families and friends have a significant influence on migration decisions, but some researchers (West and Noden, 2002) argue that migration is more personal – that people migrate for a variety of reasons, including better work conditions, exposure to the host country's culture, language improvement, adventure, and travel experiences, escaping from certain situations, financial incentives, among others. Expecting high living standards (Geddie, 2013; Skachkova, 2007), a desire for professional advancement and opportunities (Asis and Battistella, 2013), better-quality institutions in the host country (Fitzgerald, Leblang, and Teets, 2014), and the socio-cultural background prevailing abroad are the major factors motivating them to migrate (Epstein and Gang, 2010). International students are neither immigrants nor self-initiated expatriates, but they are considered prospective self-initiated expatriates because they may return to their home country or remain in the host country after studies (Tamburri, 2013). Tung (1998) points out that diverse forms of socialising with host country citizens can be expanded to include students studying abroad who consider themselves self-expatriates. These people are different from assigned expatriates in that they actively seek abroad postings rather than waiting for their company to assign them one. This may be the result of a variety of factors, including the absence of employment opportunities in the country of origin and a strong desire to go abroad or reside in the host country.

The host nations support international student mobility because students are prospective skilled labourers. And because international students can contribute to the country's skilled labour force and economic growth, host nations tend to encourage and welcome students more than they encourage

other immigrants (Al Ariss, 2010). Students' career perceptions are a factor in deciding whether to stay in the host country or return to the home country (Hall, 2004). Studying abroad is often a beneficial turning point in a student's career since it raises their likelihood of becoming skilled migrants in the future (Vertovec, 2002). Host countries benefit from international student migration primarily through the revenue generated from fee-paying international students. The country's labour market benefits when students remain after their studies. But student migration from the origin country is a disadvantage for the sending country because it contributes to the depletion of already-scarce labour and human resources (Gribble, 2008). Developed countries' spending on education depends on the quality of education and the reputation of their higher education systems (Caruso and de Wit, 2015; Ackers, 2005). The host country's institutional social capital significantly increases students' employment prospects (Waters and Leung, 2013). These changes are viewed as a considerable loss to the sending country since receiving countries train migrants as trained professionals who eventually contribute to their adoptive nation's economic, social, and human capital (Nunn and Price, 2005).

An individual's networks in the host country reduce their expenses and raise the advantages of migration (Massey, 1990). Along with other conventional factors such as post-study work rights, graduate employment, university rankings, and lifestyle aspects, students' networks have a substantial effect on their decisions to study abroad. One of the principal motivations for international education is employability. The students' networks in the host country can help them acquire a job (although it may not be connected to their educational background and they can still face precarity). The Indian business diaspora in the host country is a prime source for Indian students who seek employment opportunities (Deutchar, 2021). The availability of employment opportunities in the host country compared with the predicted ease of finding a job in the home country will have a strong effect on students' decisions (Baruch, 2004). Post-study employment opportunities for overseas graduates are an important determinant in their choice of destination to study (IDP Education, 2014). Baruch, Budhwar, and Khatri (2007) found that student loans have a significant role in why students initially choose to stay in the host nation. Some of the paths these young people take structurally lead them towards precarious futures, such as working as lower-skilled labour for the IT industry, made possible by the convergence of the debts they owe, the university's neoliberal agenda profiting from their migration, and the potentially exploitative labour practices that take advantage of these circumstances. The satisfaction level that the individual gets from their studies abroad and related activities will influence the emotional part of the decision-making as well. The social support that students get in the host country is a major factor that influences their decision to return or stay (Muraleedharan, 2021).

Social networking site users can acquire a vast number of friends and followers who can function as bridges for the accumulation of social capital

and information about the different destinations, along with their advantages and downsides so that student mobility can proceed (Steinfield, Ellison, and Lampe, 2008). Social media can influence mobility in different domains (Amaro, Duarte, and Henriques, 2016; Tran et al., 2021). Before leaving home, the individual will search for feedback from people who have travelled for study or work. "Family migration capital" or the positive representations of migration experiences by relatives or friends can influence the migration intentions of students which eventually reduces the nonpecuniary costs of migration (Plopeanu et al., 2018). A known individual's migration experiences will boost favourable sentiments about migration and are considered less risky from the parent's point of view. Parents view such positive overseas experiences as rewarding and enriching (Ivlevsand King, 2012). Host countries increase the quality of their educational institutions using pragmatic methods to entice overseas students and get access to the benefits of human capital amassed through this process. Thus, one of the key motivators for students to study abroad is the difference in educational quality between a foreign degree and a local one (Szelenyi, 2006).

Indians frequently opt to study abroad since their country lacks top universities and there is fierce competition for the few available spots at the remaining schools. Admission to these colleges is extremely difficult since only a select handful offer high-quality education (Mukherjee and Chanda, 2012). The educational industry is extremely competitive in densely populated nations like India since there is a dearth of resources for high-quality education and career prospects (Sarma, 2014). India lags in various fields of expertise such as science, technology, and medicine as a result of this competition. People travel to countries that can provide them with the fundamentals for developing their knowledge and talents. Student migrants receive appropriate training throughout their further education, and their networks in the host nation expand over time, allowing them to work with prominent individuals and improve their prospects of being established in the global system (Vasudevan, 2018). In Indian culture, certain vocations like nursing are considered undesirable, yet in Western society, those professions are well-paid positions. People who have worked abroad are more likely to get employment in their native nation (Rai, 2005). The likelihood of finding a job in the host or home country impacts the students' decisions regarding their future career possibilities with overseas experience (Rauch, 1991; Tung and Lazarova, 2006).

Associated Responsibilities: Adaptation and Duties to Home

One of the most important responsibilities that international students have while attending their host college involves adapting to and assimilating into Western academics (Ryan and Viete, 2009). Students not only have to adapt to the new culture to improve performance and effectiveness (Shay and Baack, 2004) but also must cope with cultural differences such as language, conventions, norms, and traditions, which aid in social integration, the building of

networks and relationships, and the search for career prospects (Rajani, Ng, and Groutsis, 2018). Their links to their families, social networks, and socialisation processes, such as their capacity to participate in academic and social activities, are crucial when students have cultural difficulties when transitioning from one culture to another (Hercog and Van de Laar, 2017). India has had some of the most complex and varied migrations. Indian students appear to experience smaller cultural obstacles in English-speaking host countries compared to other international students (Budhwar, 2003). For example, Indian students have more chances of staying in the host country than students from China. This trend may be influenced by the impact of the "British Raj" on Indians (Oommen, 1989). During India's colonial era itself, emigration to the United Kingdom and Northern America began. The Anglophone link frequently caused a rise in the number of Indians, which benefited the students. The decision-making of foreign students is significantly influenced by the cultural differences between their home and host nations. A sense of belonging to one's home country's culture is critical for increasing the exchange value of intercultural capital in transnational mobility. In other terms, a transnational social field is an actual or virtual area that encloses the social interactions and behaviours that span national boundaries. The uniqueness of their multicultural relationships stems from the fact that they are international students. Due to their migration to a different nation, they are exposed to less family, cultural, and social support (Tran and Vu, 2017).

Transnational education mobility and its associated responsibilities improve international students' internal sense of attachment to their home country. They have to perceive and develop new responsibilities towards both their home and host countries, whereas domestic students lack this opportunity. International students represent their home country overseas. Students self-position their connection with their homeland through their identity by respectfully representing their motherland's identity through their behaviour and social responsibilities in the host country. Some associate their responsibility with their transnational education's future outcomes in their home country (Mukundan, 2020). Students extend their feeling of duty beyond their nation to the host country as well, blending in with the local population, following local norms, and acculturating themselves to the local culture. They also have interpersonal obligations – duties to the social networks developed as a result of their transnational mobility experience. They believe that they are accountable for treating other members with respect and consideration as well as being honest and aiding others when feasible (Tran and Vu, 2016). The primary barriers to overseas students' social integration are cultural differences and a lack of institutional assistance (Hail, 2015; Wei et al., 2007).

The Pandemic's Impact

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the intricate interplay of migratory infrastructures, which are made up of complex interactions among

institutional, regulatory, commercial, social, and technical elements that influence international educational mobility (Ma, 2020). International students were trapped in their host nations, unable to pursue their educational dreams (Hu, Xu, and Tu, 2020). When governments closed their borders and prohibited international flights to other countries to combat the virus and implemented city-wide lockdowns, the factors that influenced the migration decisions and destinations also changed – especially health security and safety as priorities in decision-making to move abroad (Menonand Vadekekat, 2021). The pandemic had a devastating effect on the economies of nations that rely on the tuition payments of overseas students (Tilak and Kumar, 2022; Marginson, 2020). Prejudice associated with COVID-19 exacerbated the powerlessness of Asian students in Western nations (Ma and Zhan, 2022; Tan, 2020). Reports of such experiences influence the future educational mobility plans of prospective students (Mok, 2020). Study programmes relocated to online platforms and student exchange programmes and summer schools have been discontinued or postponed.

As international students become a scarce resource in the international education sector because of the pandemic, competition among host countries increased and the rate of recovery from the pandemic and the post-pandemic governance became major influencing factors for students choosing their destination to study (Sharaievska et al., 2022). While the pandemic had a significant influence on international student mobility, demand will not fall as precipitously as predicted because a large number of young people in the higher education age groups remain interested in mobility. These students will be in high demand as they become a crucial source of talent and revenue (Rajan and Cherian, 2020; Brooks et al., 2021).

Before the pandemic, international institutions had already begun to shift patterns in teaching and learning scenarios by providing online courses and integrating foreign credentials into local settings through online networks, and collaborating with corporate organisations in India. As a result, the abrupt shift from offline to online classes was not difficult to implement, even if it was impeded by poor network connections and other related challenges (Mercado, 2020). In the post-pandemic scenario, the accessibility restrictions due to limited mobility might recede, but students still lack in-person cultural exposure and social well-being in the host country (Rajan and Cherian, 2020). Online education dramatically reduced students' opportunities to access international experiences. International students have also faced shortages in part-time employment opportunities which resulted in adverse financial conditions for them (Alaklabi et al., 2021). Financial burdens and health concerns coupled with homesickness have made international students anxious and frustrated (Aristovnik et al., 2020). Schulman (2020) postulates that the pandemic forced families to pressure their children to pursue studies in their homeland or countries where education is more reasonably priced.

Conclusion

Families play a crucial role in researching the decision-making process regarding foreign education, which, as prior research has demonstrated, combines the emotional trappings of familial goals and expectations, investment prudence, and the future of their children (Belousova, 2019; Waters, 2003). Even during the pandemic, families played both a source of hope and a protective barrier in the most vulnerable conditions (Hu et al., 2020). Although the markets catering to foreign students have evolved significantly, decision-making regarding student migration is essentially still a family affair. International students' families and countries of origin view them as investments while receiving countries see them as resource extraction sources. Despite students' significant contributions, little attention is paid to the complexities of students' decision-making process or their families' involvement. The regulations over international student mobility are constantly changing so prior study findings must be reviewed to reflect and accommodate the newer circumstances.

Acknowledgements

This chapter is prepared as part of DemiKnow, an international collaboration among four migration research centres: ECU TRACS Migration Research Network, Edith Cowan University, Australia; Canada Excellence Research Chair (CERC) in Migration & Integration, Toronto Metropolitan University, Canada; National Research Centre for Resettlement, Hohai University, China; International Institute of Migration and Development, India, funded by Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, Canada. This chapter also appeared earlier as IIMAD Working Paper no.5.

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3 Complex Pathways of Indian Highly Skilled Migrants and International Students to Canada

Rica Agnes Castaneda, Ashika Niraula, and Anna Triandafyllidou

Introduction

Why do people move across borders, and how are today's international migration pathways different from the past? In studying the global movement of people and resources over time, we as migration researchers see the need to step back and reflect on the resultant outcomes and complexities brought about by a rapidly changing world. Aside from asking "why do people move," a statement we are continuously grappling with, we also investigate how the drivers of migration and mobility are different from the past, and how the dynamics of an ever more interconnected world shape drivers and aspirations for migration. As globalisation liberalised the flow of goods, services, and capital, it also intensified the exchange of ideas and information, through advanced digital technologies, which in many ways democratised the process. More people are on the move; migrant types and profiles have increasingly diversified and so have their intentions and experiences. Many advanced economies faced with an ageing labour force have intensified their competition for both workers and international students, opening up new immigration pathways to attract and retain the best and the brightest (Chand & Tung 2019; Triadafilopoulos 2013; Triandafyllidou & Yeoh 2023). Lastly, individuals have navigated these available migration and mobility schemes to improve both their income and quality of life. People are moving not just to work and earn money, but they are also envisioning to live a good life (Coates 2019).

The internationalisation of capital and markets plays a role in the increased movement of people across international borders. Capital has created a burgeoning "new" middle class whose aspirations have been influenced by global imaginings and cultural globalisation (Brosius 2012). Through transnational linkages, mass media, and the internet, individuals have access to a bigger world, where they are exposed to places they have never been to, had they not heard from cousins based in Surrey BC, or influencers who post YouTube videos of them dancing the Bhangra along Lake Ontario – and where they pan out to another background – *look, it's the CN Tower*! A few seconds of this and the algorithm kicks in – *Wouldn't it be great to get international education, and live and work in Canada after graduation?* advertisements

DOI: 10.4324/9781003490234-3

would be positioned in every corner of social media. It seemed like everyone *is* doing it. Parents of students have been made aware of the value of overseas education, which ties to the aspiration of top-notch education and training and translates to higher returns in terms of investment through future job prospects (Lipura & Collins 2020). At the same time having one's children studying overseas has introduced a new type of middle-class indicator (Sancho 2017). Overseas education is for either those who have the financial resources to afford it or those talented enough to land a scholarship to study. Both visuals are understandably appealing.

Markets, on the other hand, have been at the advantaged receiving end of internationalisation due to the increasing demand for international education providers. The education route in international migration is normally described as a privilege, usually enjoyed by the wealthy who have the resources to pay for foreign formal education and the practical arrangements that come with studying overseas (Xiang & Shen 2009). In 2018, international students and visitors in Canada spent $22.3 billion on tuition, housing, and discretionary expenditures. This annual spending, directly and indirectly, contributed $3.7 billion in tax revenue in the same year, according to Global Affairs Canada (2020). According to figures, not only are there more individuals studying overseas, but they are also taking up long-term programmes, characterised to run for 10 months or more, in comparison to short-term exchange programmes that last for 2 to 3 weeks (Canmac Economics Limited 2020). As programme costs are normally tiered, this points towards a higher (almost tripled) cost to international students, on top of other fees with non-local rates, such as availing health insurance coverage.

International education providers, mainly colleges and universities, are active participants in the migration process in that they are poised to become the initial venue for local integration in destination countries. At the same time, they have been under a lot of strain in terms of structural readiness to accommodate a bulk of foreign-educated and credentialed individuals coming from different parts of the world. The application and admission processes have not been straightforward. The big business side of international education becomes more apparent, as admission letters can be sent, some of which already ask for tuition payment good for one year in advance, yet study visas can still be rejected, leaving students and families scratching their heads wondering about the thousands of Canadian dollars they sent via a costly money transfer.[1] Studies have noted the overt commercialisation of international education and its role in facilitating migrant trajectories for profit (Yang 2020; Baas & Yeoh 2019; Beech 2018). To add to these, recruitment campaigns have been mostly subcontracted by institutions to external advertisers such as educational consultants who are not all equally trustworthy and accountable to bring in recruitment numbers and observe ethical practices; the market has been viewed as both a solution provider and as part of the problem.

Taking stock of the above reflections, this chapter offers a case study focusing on Indian international students and (actual or prospective) highly skilled migrants to Canada. Indian migration to Canada has been fast increasing during the last ten years and Indian citizens form the largest nationality in terms of new permanent residents in Canada in the period 2015–2021 (see Figure 3.1), while there were also over 167,000 Indian citizens admitted to Canada with a temporary work permit (see Table 3.1) and another 226,205 admitted as international students during 2022 alone (see Figure 3.2). Thus, the India–Canada migration corridor offers itself as a natural laboratory to examine the complex drivers and motivations of highly skilled and international study migration.

This study has three main objectives. First, we aim to highlight how highly skilled migration is changing, diversifying, and multiplying, reflecting the complex aspirations and plans of an emerging international middle and lower middle class and its offspring that do not always conform with earlier stereotypes of affluent transnational households. In this emerging context – and

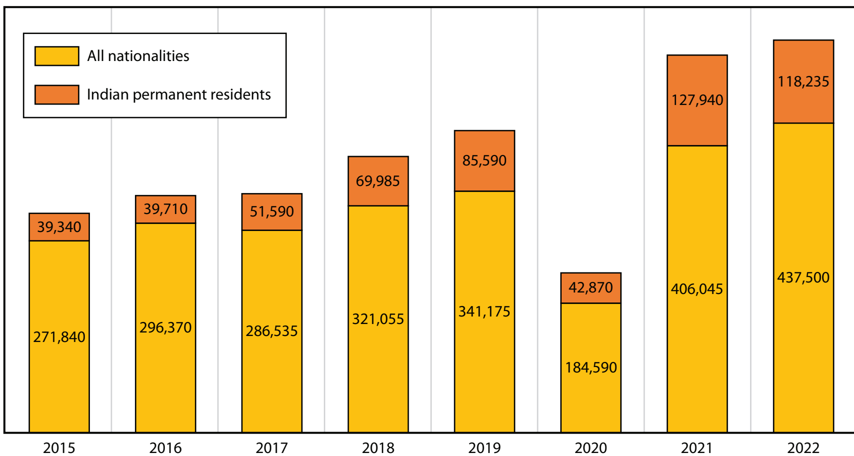

Figure 3.1 Admission rates of permanent residents of Canada 2015–2022.

Source: IRCC Open Data Source.

Table 3.1 Admission under temporary work permit (IMP* and TFWP**) in the year in which permit(s) became effective

Admission Category	*2015*	*2016*	*2017*	*2018*	*2019*	*2020*	*2021*	*2022*
Indian nationals	22,530	33,930	39,375	62,700	98,760	101,535	134,125	167,740
Total admission	249,255	286,015	301,185	337,365	401,515	313,535	412,155	601,110

Source: *Open Data Source; **Open Data Source.

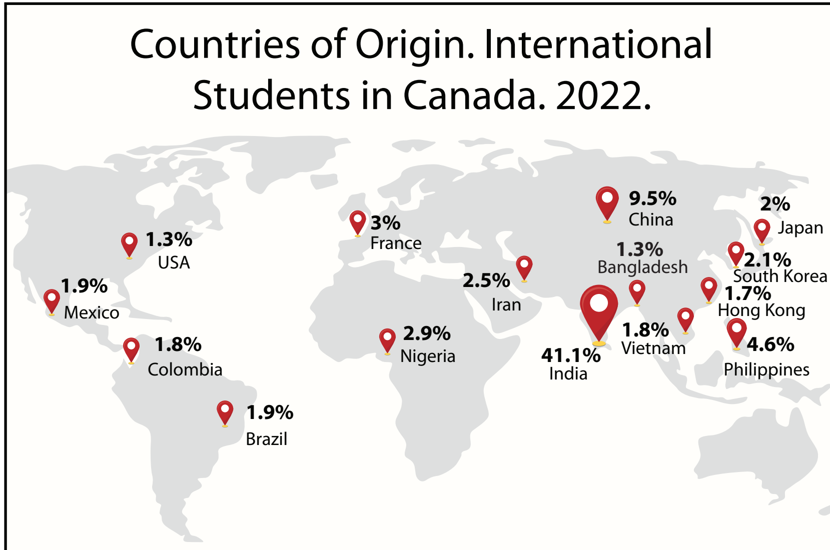

Figure 3.2 Country of origin of international students in Canada, 2022.
Source: IRCC 2022.

this is our second objective – we explore how highly skilled migrants exercise agency and navigate a complex policy environment. Studies on migrant agencies so far have mostly focused on irregular migrants and asylum seekers and their undertaking of often perilous journeys (Triandafyllidou 2019; Mainwaring 2016), while less attention has been paid to that of (prospective or actual) highly skilled migrants. Third, this study introduces the notion of migration pathways (see also Gropas & Triandafyllidou 2014) as a concept that allows for bringing together structure (migration policies and infrastructures) with agency (migrant motivations, plans, and actions) offering a dynamic understanding of complex contemporary migrations.

This study draws from 49 in-depth interviews with Indian nationals across 4 different categories – (i) study permit holders in Canada, (ii) temporary work permit holders in Canada, (iii) prospective permanent residency or work permit applicants outside Canada, and (iv) prospective study permit applicants outside Canada. Such an emphasis on diverse categories underlines the heterogeneous nature of the highly skilled migrant category, urging migration scholars to analyse diversity in the processes, experiences, and circumstances shaping migration pathways (see also Kogan & Weißmann 2013; Thomas & Inkpen 2017; Collins 2021).

This chapter is organised into seven sections. Section “Migration Pathways: Analytical Reflections” introduces our analytical reflections on migration pathways while section “Flows of Indian Immigration to Canada” offers an overview of recent Indian migration to Canada. Section

"Methodology" outlines our methodology while sections "Indian Highly Skilled Migration to Canada: Complex Gendered Pathways", "Complex Motivations: Migration as a Way to Change One's Life", and "Migration as a Family Project" present our findings and discuss their implications for the study of highly skilled migration and migrant agency more broadly. It is worth noting that we use the terms "migrant" and "immigrant" interchangeably given that our study includes informants with complex, both temporary (migrant) and long-term/permanent (immigrant) experiences and legal statuses.

Migration Pathways: Analytical Reflections

This section seeks to bring the different elements characteristic of a pathway together and further investigates how migrant agency plays a role in navigating these complexities. Triandafyllidou and Gropas (2014) coined the term "migration pathways" to speak of sets of relationships, policies, and opportunities that come together, a channel through which information and people flow between two countries. They used the notion of pathways to analyse the different types of migration flows in Europe in the post–World War II period and till the early 21st century thus distinguishing between co-ethnic migration, asylum seeking, family, irregular migration, and so on.

Scholars studying migration in Canada have more broadly used the notion of pathways in relation to legal trajectories and the acquisition of legal permanent status. Being temporary is viewed as the contingent, risky pathway and the direct route to permanent residency as the ideal pathway (Preston et al. 2022; González 2020). While both routes are legal, the former is bound by time-specific visa restrictions or work contracts. Temporariness has become a dominant feature of international migration today (Triandafyllidou 2022) even in countries like Canada that are settler colonial states and where immigration is seen as part of nation formation. Studies have also though shown how migrants exercise their agency and carve their own pathway (Lam & Triandafyllidou 2022; Nourpanah 2019), from temporary to permanent.

Migration pathways are complex and dynamic in nature and are interactively shaped by policies, intermediary actors, and the migrants themselves. Migration pathways capture the course of action taken by temporary migrants as they undergo complex and changing situations, navigating also a changing policy environment. Our study aims to cast light on the complexities of migrant decision-making, their motivations and aspirations, and how these materialise in the migration process.

In analysing migration pathways, we examine migrant decision-making as a complex process (Triandafyllidou 2019; Williams & Baláž 2012). Decisions among individuals despite being thought of as rational are formed imperfectly, bound by context, timing, and quality of information one receives. While we envision decision-making as a systematic process informed by a

careful risk and benefits assessment, of past and future projections, bounded rationality indicates that other dynamics seek not the optimal results, but outcomes that are "good enough" (Brunarska 2019) taking into account risk tolerance, limited resources, constraints, or aspirations and capabilities (de Haas 2010). Deciding to leave, for where, when, and how entails a process, mainly because it requires substantial resources (i.e., financial, time, effort, etc.) that are not easily reversible. As there are practical considerations in initiating, planning, and implementing a spatial mobility project, migration decision-making is also replete with non-practical, emotional things: imaginings that make risks seem tolerable, and the eternal hopefulness of humanity in the face of uncertainty. Bounded rationality is also about how decisions were formed and informed. Is the decision to migrate derived from the individuals themselves, or is it an inspired decision? What can inspire and ignite a decision, and how can elements external to the decision maker be an influence to move?

Before delving into our methodology and findings, the section below offers an overview of recent Indian migration to Canada with the aim of putting our study into its appropriate socio-economic and policy context.

Flows of Indian Immigration to Canada

For decades, Canada has become an attractive destination for immigrants to study, work, or permanently settle. Given that Canada aims to welcome 500,000 immigrants yearly by 2025, we need to revisit Canada's immigrant history, which originated from a settler colonial past and favoured migrants from Europe as its colonial administrators and settlers. Canada's connection to India travels a century back to their being part of the British Empire, a shared history with unequal paths to self-governance (Mongia in his book described this connection as *Canada is a self governing British Dominion, while India is a non-self governing colony populated by "British subjects"* (1999: 533)). More than a hundred years ago, Asian immigrants, including Indian nationals, were greatly excluded from the country. One measure which greatly affected Indian migration to Canada regards the passage of regulations amended by the Immigration Act of 1908. This Act required that immigrants coming to Canada should do so with a direct ticket from their country of origin. This made it impossible for Indian citizens to reach Canada as there was no direct passage to Canada. A notable case in history is the plight of the Komagata Maru (in 1914) sailing to Vancouver with 376 prospective East Indian immigrants awaiting on a boat the decision of the provincial court for 2 months only to be turned away made for a stark background. In the period between 1910 and 1920, only 112 Indian immigrants entered Canada (Knowles 1997).

Fast forward to the 1970s, the introduction of the "objective" point-based immigration system harking an influx of Indian immigrants to Canada. Since

1967, a merit-based point system, at present, presently known as Express Entry,[2] has been the main pathway for highly skilled immigrants to permanently migrate to Canada. Statistics Canada (2023) reported that over 1.3 million new immigrants settled permanently in Canada from 2016 to 2021. In 2022, Canada welcomed over 437,000 new immigrants, marking an all-time record for Canadian permanent residence admissions in one year. India has been one of the most important source countries for highly skilled immigrants in Canada for the last few years (Figure 3.1).

Along with permanent immigrants, Canada attracts a large number of Indian nationals as temporary work permit[3] holders and international students, many of whom later become permanent residents. Once in the country, people may apply to become permanent residents having acquired additional "points" in relation to their "Canadian experience" as this is codified in the Express Entry System (Hari & Wang-Dufil 2023; Crossman et al. 2022). Over the last several years, the number of Indian nationals holding temporary status has significantly increased through both the International Mobility Program (IMP) and the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) (see Table 3.1).

With almost three-quarters of a million international students in 2019, Canada became the third most popular destination for international students in the world, next to the United States and Australia (Preston & Akbar 2020). From 2010 to 2022, the number of international students in Canada has grown by 170% (IRCC 2022). The year 2021–2022 alone saw an increase of 35%, with most students coming from India (40%) and China (12%). The case of India as a major source country (see Figure 3.2) is more recent in terms of record high numbers of international students, which two decades ago was dominated by China (until 2018), South Korea, Japan, the United States, and France. From 2000 to 2004, Indian students accounted for 5% of the total international student population among universities in Canada and 4% at the college level. Between 2015 and 2019, India became the top source country for colleges, accounting for 67% of the international student population (followed by China and Brazil at 3% each), and 21% among those in universities (Longitudinal Immigration Database, Statistics Canada from Crossman et al. 2021).

Given the high and increasing number of temporary migrants (international students and temporary work permit holders), India offers naturally a particularly interesting case in analysing highly skilled migration pathways and the ways in which migrants navigate a complex policy landscape.

Methodology

This chapter draws on 49 in-depth interviews with actual and prospective highly skilled workers and international students of Indian nationality in Canada. It includes 26 Indian migrants in Canada (i.e., 25 study permit holders and one temporary work permit holder) and 24 Indian prospective

immigrants outside Canada (i.e., 18 prospective permanent residency or work permit applicants and five study permit applicants). Our interview respondents had a good representation of those who identify as female (n = 27) and male (n = 22), with most international students enrolled in an undergraduate degree at a university. Of the 25 Indian international students in Canada, 6 had completed graduate degrees, while 10 had completed their undergraduate degrees. Nine were pursuing an undergraduate degree at the time of the interviews. Compared to the prospective immigrants (prospective permanent residency or work permit applicants), the Indian international students we interviewed were younger, and many had moved to Canada right after their completion of an undergraduate degree or secondary school. As the age bracket of our interview respondents ranged from 19 to 41, international students in Canada form the most represented in the interviews, and the youngest cohort (between 19 and 23 years old). Most of these respondents were single (n = 17), while most of the prospective permanent residents and work permit holders were male (n = 10). All of the interview participants were residing in or intended to reside in Ontario, Quebec, or British Columbia.

The interviews were conducted between November 2022 and April 2023. Diverse tools and strategies were employed during the interview recruitment process, including posting the recruitment flyers on different social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn as well as engaging with stakeholders to disseminate both recruitment posters, including post-secondary institutions, credential evaluation providers, settlement service agencies, and ethnic migrant organisations. Moreover, in-person recruitment was conducted in the Greater Toronto Region in Canada, which included putting posters in ethnic-specific food stores, libraries, and post-secondary institutions. A majority were recruited via the online survey in which those who were interested to take part in the interviews had left their email addresses. The interview questions broadly focused on the highly skilled migrants' and international students' motivation to migrate to Canada, the roles of families and Canadian immigration policies in decision-making, and the influence of the pandemic on migration decision-making. We analysed the interview transcripts asking these specific questions: *What are the motivations of actual and prospective Indian highly skilled migrants and international students when choosing to come to Canada? How do they navigate the available migration policy categories and options? What drivers were significant in shaping their decision to migrate to Canada?*

Here, it is important to acknowledge that the findings presented in this chapter are ultimately the product of researchers' interpretation of narratives of the actual and prospective Indian highly skilled migrants and international students. Hence, it is significant to acknowledge and reflect on the positionalities of researchers[4] involved in this study. A majority of the interviews were conducted and analysed by the migrant researcher with a South Asian background. Due to the ethnic matching with shared socio-cultural understanding

(Papadopoulous & Lees 2002) and shared identity of being a highly skilled migrant, the researcher was often granted the status of de facto insider by the informants. It provided a significant vantage point for the researcher to gain access and create a common ground to have productive conversations (Ahmed 2022), which at the same time provided an avenue for power signalling "within the establishment" creating a positive image of themselves (Rhodes 1994).

Indian Highly Skilled Migration to Canada: Complex Gendered Pathways

This section analyses three different pathways of Indian highly skilled migration to Canada: the first is that of direct study migration to the country; the second involves previous work or study experience in Canada and hence is a two-step migration within the same destination country; and the third pathway highlights complex migration pathways that involve a third country where people migrated before moving to Canada.

Our analysis of these three pathways shows the complex interplay between aspirations (to a better work, income, family life, and future prospects), policy categories available, resources mobilised (human capital: education; social capital: family and networks; and economic capital: money) and their interweaving into a singular migrant journey. Our analysis further details the ways socially constructed gendered roles and expectations in the Indian culture shape the migration trajectories and experiences of our informants. Such an analysis of gendered (and also class-based) migration motivations, first, offers a critical reframing of the neo-classical assumption of (highly skilled) migration as a rational economic consideration of relative benefits and costs, primarily of higher wages in the destination country (also see: Fischer et al. 2021). Second, it illustrates how migration decisions and pathways are shaped by a variety of gender-related factors and relations between individuals, within families, and in Indian societal institutions (Kanaiaupuni 2000).

International Student Pathway: Gendered Reflections

Previous studies have shown that human capital is a dominant driver of migration (Ellermann 2020; Lutz et al. 2019; Cañibano & Woolley 2015). Often migration scholars equate human resources as an attribute gained through years of education training and work experience. It is often presumed that migrants (highly skilled and international students) and their families decide to migrate only if the expected return of migration exceeds the projected costs of migration (de Haas 2021).

Of the actual and prospective international students in our study, 9 out of 30 shared that their main motivation to migrate to Canada was due to the quality and affordable education and then better career prospects. They expected that after graduating from a Canadian university, their educational

credentials will be valued more in the Canadian labour market and thus will positively affect their labour market outcomes in the longer run. However, for female international students, their motivation to come to Canada was often intertwined with the hope for not only better educational prospects but also a way to escape from traditional gender expectations, in particular, related to their educational and career prospects. Ruchi, a 19-year-old female from Goa, had come to Canada in 2022 to pursue an Arts degree. Ruchi always aspired to work in the film and web series industry and thus wanted to pursue media studies after completing high school in India. As the entertainment business is often not considered a good path, especially for girls, in India, Ruchi constantly faced restrictions from her family and the broader society to pursue a career in the media sector. As Ruchi searched for media-related courses in India, she did not come across many courses that could provide her with hands-on experience of how production works in terms of the entertainment business in India, while such courses were provided vastly in Canadian educational institutions. Unlike the Indian male international students in our study, getting approval from parents to study in Canada was an integral part of Ruchi's migration narrative. Being female, unmarried, and a single child, Ruchi occupied a more tenuous position, in terms of facing overprotectiveness from her parents, resulting in their reluctance to send her abroad and then not being able to study and work in a gendered profession in India.

For Ruchi, the good reputation of the specific Canadian University programme that she applied to and consequently the hope of a better career opportunity after graduation were important factors for her decision to choose Canada. However, for her parents, the global reputation of Canada was equally important:

> Canada? First of all, the programs and universities, I found a good reputation, a good course, and a good scope for me in terms of my career as well. Most importantly, Canada is considered one of the safest countries, especially for girls. So that was one of the major things that I looked into and which is why even my family agreed to send me here.

Given the Indian cultural expectations that parents have to protect and control their daughters and societal assumptions on marriage and family goals for women (Varghese & Rae Jenkins 2009), many Indian female international students in our study had to deploy different strategies to convince their parents to let them go to Canada for further studies. In some cases, like Anita, getting the parent's approval to go abroad was a long and difficult process. Anita, a 19-year-old female from Punjab, had come to Canada in 2022 for her BA degree.

Initially, Anita had considered going to the United States for her further studies, but she knew that it would be challenging to convince her parents to go to the United States for safety reasons. Hence, Anita wrote a two-page

script and practised with her sister, comparing the prospects of studying in India, the United States, and Canada. As her strategy, she casually dropped the idea to her mother who initially thought that Anita was joking as she did not even have the courage to go to a bakery store outside her home. Later on, her mother became convinced that studying in Canada would be a good opportunity for Anita, and then she began convincing Anita's dad to let Anita study abroad. In order to convince her father, Anita had to utilise her social network in Canada to provide evidence of a better life in Canada, Anita stated:

> Earlier my dad was like, totally no. We're not going to send you. You have to stay in front of our eyes. Then I told him, okay, talk to this uncle who stays there and talk to my friends and their siblings who have already moved to Canada and they're living a better life. So that's how the conversation went. And slowly they started agreeing with me. We had a lot of debates and a lot of quarrels but then eventually, everything got sorted out.

Multi-stage Education Pathways

Atif, a 33-year-old male from Punjab, had come to Canada under a study permit in 2019. Atif had previously come to the country twice – first with his mother at the age of six and then for three-month research stay at a Canadian university after completing his MPhil degree in India. The three-month research stay provided him an opportunity to be familiar with the educational system in Canada, which he considered world-class. Atif was always intrigued by the immigration discourse in Canada; thus, he studied Canadian immigration during his MPhil in India. Atif's decision to apply for a PhD study in Canada was motivated by his academic interest, which he believed had a better academic and professional scope in Canada compared to India. Atif elaborated:

> I received a Shastri scholarship and I came to Canada for three months at [name of the university]. So after that, I made some connections and so I thought that if I want to do a PhD or go further into academics, I don't want to do that from India. I see, there are maybe better opportunities in Canada in terms of academia, and in terms of, if I want to do research in my area of specialisation. I thought Canada would be better, like, both for short-term and long-term, thinking of my life. And so I thought, I should apply to Canada.

While Atif developed a multi-step education pathway from India to Canada, another participant in our study, (Rita) a 22-year-old female from Chandigarh, completed her bachelor's degree in Canada and then obtained a post-graduate work permit with a perspective to obtain permanent residency.

Despite having a Canadian degree and experience working on-campus at the Registrar's office, she struggled to find a full-time job that would qualify her to apply for permanent residency. It is noteworthy that Rita was working in the designated field that could make her eligible for permanent residency, but her work hours could not be counted to fulfil the work requirement due to her temporary employee status. As Rita was getting desperate with each passing day, she was willing to relocate to other provinces in search of a full time to be able to apply for permanent residency:

> So that is really very tough, really very tough. The moment before graduating, somewhere around June/July, since then, I'm looking for a permanent job and until now, I didn't find any. And it's February now, yeah, didn't find any [job] in BC [British Columbia] and that's the reason I am looking to go to Toronto to get a good kind of job.

Multi-stage and Multi-step Work and Study Pathways Involving a Third Country

A majority of the Indian international students in our study had made thorough summaries of the pros and cons of studying in the United States, Australia, Canada, the UK, and European countries before choosing Canada. For nearly half of the actual and prospective Indian international students interviewed (14 out of 30), Canada's more approachable immigration policies, which included clear pathways to apply for permanent residency, played a vital role in directing their pathways to Canada. In addition, our interviews show that, for Indian immigrants, their selection of immigration category – i.e., permanent residency scheme, temporary work permit, or study permit – changed along different stages of their life course and was shaped by their family situation and gendered experiences.

Geetha, a 26-year-old female from Delhi, had come to Canada in 2020 to pursue a master's in business. Prior to coming to Canada, Geetha had lived in Singapore with her husband for four years and worked in a tech company as a project engineer. Geetha was one of the few migrants in our study who had migrated to Canada from a third country. Geetha believed that her prior-to-Canada overseas experience in Singapore and her Canadian educational credentials were key contributors to her landing a suitable government job in Canada after graduation:

> Upon graduation, I applied for a job in the city. I got an interview and was asked to present on what I used to do in my former job. At the end of the presentation, they said they're planning to work on something similar. I was hired. My interviewers were very aware of where I was coming from.

Nisha, a 30-year-old female from Uttar Pradesh, had dreamt of migrating to Canada since she completed her undergraduate degree from an Indian

university in 2014. However, the high cost of further studies abroad as well as her parents' resistance to sending their single child abroad at a young age, as in the case of Ruchi and Anita, interrupted her dream of moving to Canada. During her professional career in India, she came across a few of her colleagues who had initiated their migration process to Canada and the United States. Along with her colleagues, Nisha then created her Express Entry profile in 2018 and received two Invitations to Apply[5] (ITA) in 2019. However, at that time, Nisha had been married and then had moved to Dubai with her husband. Consequently, she decided not to proceed with the Canadian permanent residency application.

In 2023, Nisha divorced her husband, moved back to India, and thus was planning to re-apply to migrate to Canada. Given the significant increase in the scores to qualify for the Federal Skilled Workers Program since 2022,[6] Nisha was planning to apply under the Provincial Nominee Program for which she needed a job offer from a Canadian employer. Despite having qualifications in the sector that is facing a labour shortage in Canada, Nisha shared her challenges to find a job due to a lack of proper guidance. For a majority of the prospective Indian immigrants in our study, trying to find a job from abroad is "the biggest hiccup" in their migration trajectories, as stated by Nisha:

> I was trying to find jobs through LinkedIn because it's a professional network but to be honest, I have not heard back from any of them [potential employers and recruiting agents] for these many years. So I really don't know what's the proper way to get noticed by the employer as a candidate. So, that's the biggest problem for me, because I did not have any proper guidance at all till now. So, I'm still struggling to move to Canada because if you have a chance to go through my job profile, it's like the most wanted job across countries like Canada, the US, and all.

Kabir, a 29-year-old male from Karnataka, was an aspirant highly skilled immigrant who intended to apply for permanent residency in Canada. He had completed his tourism degree from the UK and had worked there as an intern for one and a half years. As Kabir struggled to find full-time work in his profession in the UK and fulfil the visa requirements, he went back to India in 2016. Upon his return to India, Kabir started planning to migrate to create a foundation for his family, in particular a better life for his three-year-old child. Kabir was open to migrating to any English-speaking country, but Canada became an attractive option for him due to its comparatively easier immigration process and diverse immigration pathway options:

> If I want to try for the US or the UK or any other English-speaking countries, the immigration process isn't as easy or as simple as Canada

> would offer. I would say that we're comparing the easiness of the process, it's simple. You have to login in, then you have to give your details there and you have to fill in those forms. So it's quite straightforward. I mean, whereas when I looked into other countries, I do not get such information which is quite straightforward.

For Jeevan, the flexible immigration policies and the existence of a larger Indian community in Canada made Canada an attractive destination. He had initially planned to move to Europe due to his familiarity with the European cultural context which he had experienced during previous short visits and lower admission and living costs, for example, in Ireland and Germany. He also considered the United States as another option to migrate. However, the long wait period to obtain permanent residency and uncertainty with regard to finding a job to qualify for the permanent residency made him disinterested to apply in those countries. Jeevan regarded Canada as the best option for further studies given Canada's preference for the two-step immigration approach, and thus, a better possibility to get permanent residency in a shorter span of time. Along with the immigrant-friendly immigration policies, the comfort of having familiar surroundings and social circle with a predominance of the Indian community in Canada motivated Jeevan to apply for a study permit:

> Canada, when I started researching more, the social media influencers and everything, Canada is one such option where you will find many Indians, many Asian stores. It could be like you are in a new country, but still, you can relate with many of the people. You can have a social circle with many Indians. So thing is, when you are taking a decision [to migrate], it's not just based on the career, not just on one thing. It's like so many factors. Absolutely, career is just one of them but also settling your life and having a stress-free life.

International Work through Education Pathway

Some of our informants talked about their experiences of navigating uncertainty by keeping their options open, i.e., by simultaneously negotiating and maintaining different legal paths. Sheena, a 31-year-old female now living in Ontario, had already completed a master's degree in Nursing from New Delhi and had five years of experience as an internationally trained nurse coming to Canada on a study permit in 2018. She knew that her husband, who used to practise as a dentist, would need a Canadian licence to be able to practice in Canada. Therefore, Sheena and her husband decided to simultaneously apply for a study permit and permanent residency from India. Reflecting on the intersection between her and her husband's career pathways and legal pathways, Sheena elaborated:

> In 2017, I thought how about I apply for PR now, which takes long to get approved anyway, while I also apply for a study permit. So I can start to practice right away when our PR is ready. We got my study permit in 2018 and then I was enrolled in a pre-health science bridging program. It was costly, and to be honest, the open work permit did not really make my husband employable even as a dental assistant. For that, he also needed to get a license. Thank goodness, we got the PR after one term.

Our study shows that highly skilled migration to Canada can be classified into four different pathways: direct move to destination for study purposes, previous migration experience to the same destination country for work or study purposes, previous migration experience in a third country whether as a separate experience or as a stepping stone to the final destination, and using the study pathway to migration for work. All four pathways are clearly gendered, marked by gender roles and the family situation of the actual or prospective migrant and the stage in their life course. All four pathways involve complex requirements and significant uncertainty in fulfilling those. All our informants engaged in complex planning and action, collecting and analysing relevant information, consulting with family and friends, and adapting their plans in relation to the options available to them. Our findings show that highly skilled migration is not a linear process as it usually involves several intermediary steps as well as new plans that bring together the original aspiration to a better life and a better job with the changing circumstances of the migrant's life and the policy options available (Liu-Farrer et al. 2021; Niraula & Valentin 2019).

Complex Motivations: Migration as a Way to Change One's Life

The growing intensification of work along with the fast pace of life has put lots of pressure on employees across the world, particularly in India. Although the fast-paced workplace culture has often benefited organisations, it often brings stress, burnout, and resentment among employees (Bhattacharjee & Ghosh 2020). In our study, for some Indian immigrants who had work experience in India ($n = 7$), lifestyle factors including overall job satisfaction, work–life balance, and breaking away from the traditional cultural norms, were key factors in their decision to migrate to Canada. Before coming to Canada under the permanent residency scheme in 2023, Binita, a 32-year-old female from Mumbai, had completed her post-graduate degree from the United States in 2016. After graduating from a prestigious American university, Binita worked for around three and a half years in the United States with various companies. However, Binita struggled to find an employer who would sponsor her H-1B visa in the United States, so she had to return to India in 2019. Nevertheless, Binita followed her brother's advice, who had also migrated to Canada in 2016, to apply for the permanent residency

scheme upon her return to India. In 2023, she migrated to Canada, making her return to India "a return," rather than, as has traditionally been assumed, "the final return" (Ilkjær 2016).

With her previous North American credentials and work experience, Binita was hopeful that she would be able to adjust to the Canadian lifestyle and work culture faster. However, despite obtaining permanent residency in Canada, Binita was not initially sure if she wanted to move to Canada as she had a good job with a good salary at a multinational company after returning back to India. However, the expectations in the Indian work culture to put in extra hours and effort just to get noticed or promoted often made her frustrated and thus she decided to move to Canada in search of a work–life balance:

> In spite of the job being very good, which is everything I liked with my current job [in India]. ... There's no work-life balance. There's no full stop there, that's the expectation. Yeah, even if you work for a foreign employer, there is still the expectation that you have to work 12 to 14 hours, that's a norm [in India]. That's pretty normal.

For many Indian immigrants, like Binita, the dream of achieving work–life balance in Canada was a significant goal paving their pathways to Canada. Lata, a 32-year old female from Uttar Pradesh, had come to Canada in 2022 to study for a master's in business. Prior to coming to Canada, she had seven years of work experience in the engineering sector. In 2019, she had planned to migrate to Canada under a permanent residency scheme right after her sister's migration. However, the significant increase in the score to qualify for the Express Entry forced Lata to change her migration strategy and apply for a study permit. Being a part of the corporate world in India, where single female employees were often expected to work more in particular the pandemic, Lata regarded her master's education in Canada as a refreshing start. Lata believed that she made a good decision to move to Canada for further studies and thus to leave a very hectic work culture in India:

> I was working in India. I don't think they have any concept of work–life balance. So now it is more of you're home [during the pandemic]. So you can do this [extra work]. My managers used to, I mean, they just assume that okay, this girl is unmarried. She's staying with her parents, so what other work she has to do anyway. So yeah, we'll just load over work.

Similar to Lata, Jeevan, a 26-year-old male from Punjab, chose Canada with the hope of a better work–life balance than India. Before coming to Canada for a master's degree in 2020, Jeevan worked in a multinational IT company in India for four years. During the interview, Jeevan constantly referred to the work–life pressure in India where he was expected to work 12-hour shifts for five days a week, which often blurred the lines between his personal and

professional lives. The experience of seeing his manager struggle to juggle her responsibilities of the job and her baby made him resentful towards the hectic Indian work culture. Jeevan did not want to have a similar experience in the future and thus made a conscious decision to move to Canada:

> She [the manager] is just getting time off at night around eight to 10 to just make her child asleep, to feed her baby, and then again, she is working till one at night. And it was like, there is no work-life balance. They are in India and at that point, it hit me hard, like she's having a two years old baby. She's not able to give him time. So is this what I'm going to expect in my near future, the next five years down the line? It's like, no, I don't want this. I need full family time, personal time.

A few informants ($n = 2$) spoke of migrating to Canada as "breaking away" from traditional cultural norms of same-caste marriage, which are pervasive in Indian culture. The societal and familial conflict brought about by intermarriage between couples with different religious orientations was brought up by coupled individuals as part of the motivation of moving "far away as we can" [sic]. Harpreet, a 27-year-old male, moved to Ontario in 2021 where he enrolled in a management programme to augment his background in construction engineering. He spoke of migrating to Canada as moving away from traditional marriage norms, where:

> When you become of age, your parents will still worry about you, why are you not married? Why can't you find a good wife? ... They feel like they can best help you by ... arranging you to meet someone. I let my mother do that, but I try to stay away, very far.

The family-mediated matchmaking is still apparent given the distance between India and Canada, which over the last decades has evolved into a transnational and commercialised enterprise (Titzman 2018; Aguiar 2018; Walton-Roberts 2004). A few of our female informants spoke of a rising concern in India for women over a certain age, i.e., around the age of 27, who remain unmarried, tying their professional success to their marital-type *undesirability* (Lamb 2020). This has led some women such as Anu, a 29-year-old female from Kerala, to explore international migration as a path, which she perceives would be less imposing about her life choices:

> I don't see what the fuss is. I worked hard in school, then at work. It was doing very well and I earned more than enough. Is getting a husband my ultimate goal, like everyone else? No. I am very competitive and ambitious. There should be a place for women like me. Doing this MBA in Canada will not only improve my career, but hopefully improve my life ... as this [sic] woman.

Our findings show that migration pathways for Indian nationals can be personal projects which can signal divergence from traditional norms or towards imagining a better work–life balance. This further highlights the linkage of migrant decision-making and agency in the middle of structural and cultural constraints. Consequently, Indian highly skilled migrants' determination to change their lifestyle via migration to Canada contests the dominant migration narratives which solely focus on economic motivation to migrate and assume migrants as "the homogeneous economic person to make decisions under conditions of perfect certainty, no costs, perfect information and the absence of risk" (Fischer et al. 1997: 88 cited in De Jong 2000: 309).

Migration as a Family Project

According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), out of the 281 million international migrants around the world in 2020, 17.9 million Indian-born people were living outside India (Natarajan et al. 2022). Such proliferation of emigration from India is the result of a growing "new" middle-class population over the last two decades, who often belong to the lower caste and/or lower social and economic position compared to the "established" middle class with inherited social, economic, or symbolic capital (Sancho 2017). The "new" Indian middle class often articulates migration desire as a class-based personal ambition of being highly educated, successful, and able to effortlessly travel across the globe. With an increase in the (family and individual) income and educated people in India, escalating access to global connections (e.g., goods, services, and travels), the significant numbers of Indians abroad are likely to accelerate emigration from India in the future. For many Indian migrants in our study, migration to Canada had become a family project under the "new" class ideology, underpinned by the ambition to be a part of the global/national migration culture coupled with the desire for a better future for the family.

Our interview data indicates that the aspiration for family well-being (e.g., children's better education prospects, living together as a family, and accomplishing the family's migration dreams) was a fundamental motivational factor for Indian migrants in their decision to choose Canada. In a few cases, the possibility to achieve family well-being had even re-directed migration pathways from a third country to Canada. Chandra, a 35-year-old female from Kerala, migrated to Saudi Arabia in 2014 to work as a registered nurse. Due to the tougher immigration law in Saudi Arabia with regard to family reunification and permanent residency, Chandra's children and husband were residing in India. With the hope to live together as a family and a better future for her children, Chandra applied for permanent residency in Canada. Compared to Saudi Arabia, Chandra envisioned Canada as a more open country to raise her two daughters:

> So, unfortunately, my family is not with me because Saudi Arabia is not giving the family visa. It's [Canada] an open country. It's good for me because I want to give my children a good education.

Usha, a 28-year-old from Tamil Nadu, had considered applying for a study permit in Canada immediately after completing her undergraduate degree in 2015. However, being married and having a kid, her motivation to migrate to Canada in 2023 was mainly for a longer-term settlement of her family and a stable future for her daughter. Usha regarded the uncertain temporary status under the study permit as a risk while moving with the family despite its advantage of shorter visa processing time. Usha elaborated:

> So right now, I am in a completely different life. I have a kid, not even a year old. So right now, moving to Canada for study purposes, I don't think it's a good option for me but when it comes to the permanent residency scheme, then I can take my entire family with me and settle down there.

Divya, an 18-year-old female from Gujarat, had come to Canada under a study permit for a business degree in 2022. For Divya, coming to Canada for further studies was the first time being apart from her family for a longer time. Her family was supportive of her decision to come to Canada and was also open for her to return to India at any time if Divya would not want to live and work in Canada or would miss home. In her family, Divya was considered a role model for travelling abroad for further studies. Her family hoped that her migration to Canada would also pave the way for her younger brother to migrate to Canada in a few years:

> They [her family] have been my motivation all the time, because I have a sibling, and my younger brother. My dad is always like that he'll learn from you. Whatever you do, he'll learn from you and now, I have come here. I'm 99% sure my brother will also be here soon to start [his studies].

It is important to note that all of our informants had family and/or friends residing in Canada prior to their arrival. Furthermore, some informants aspired to bring their family, either for long or short term, to fulfil their dreams of going abroad. Rahul, a 37-year-old male from Delhi, decided to study master's degree in Canada, motivated by the tragic event of losing his father due to the COVID virus in 2020. Although Rahul had travelled to Europe, China, and Sri Lanka for work-related meetings, it was his first time being away from his family for such a long period of time. As the separation had been challenging for him and his family in India, he wanted to bring his family to Canada to show them the world outside India:

Yeah, I'm interested in, and looking forward to bring all my family members here for some time at least, even my mother so that she also gets to see, come to a different place and have a different perspective.

In a few cases, Indian family values, i.e., children's obligations to ageing parents, were an important factor in initiating the considerations of potential return migration once the migration objective would be completed. Aditi, a 24-year-old female from Kerala, was planning to come to Canada to pursue a PhD. Aditi was thinking of returning back to India after graduation as she wanted to put her family first in her migration decision:

> I am unsure if this [plans to return back to India] will change once I'm there [Canada]. For now, I would definitely want to complete my education and come back and work in India because I do see possibilities. It is not as easy as it would be in Canada or any country abroad in terms of research and it may not be as financially well off as it would be in countries abroad. [...] But still, I would want to come back to India, primarily because of family.

Jeevan was unsure if he would return back to India after his studies despite the expectations from his parents and extended family members to fulfil his son's duties of taking care of his parents in their old age. Jeevan felt that his extended family had put a lot of pressure on his parents not to send him abroad, in particular being the only son and Jeevan's sister being recently married and soon migrating to Canada to reunify with her husband. Jeevan regarded leaving his parents in India, and often being mentally tormented as abandoning his son's duties, as an emotional process.

Our data shows that the process of deciding to migrate involved the family's approval, which involved not only encouragement and support but also disagreements and negotiations. The migration decisions of the Indian highly skilled migrants and international students were not fixed and often not based on one–off decisions as projected on the simplistic push–pull logic (Niraula & Triandafyllidou 2022). The migration motivations and the pathways to Canada often included the blend of individual and family expectations, hopes, and desires.

Concluding Remarks

The study focuses on Indian highly skilled migrants in Canada, pointing to the heterogeneities of migration motivations and aspirations and the agency of people who often used diverse legal, career, and spatial mobility patterns to come to Canada, while at other times, they decided to use one pathway over other or keep all pathways open as options. Consequently, migration decisions and connected pathways are to be understood "as processual, in

that, increasingly, migration is found to be stepwise, fractured – perhaps usefully understood as a journey or as liquid" (Erdal et al. 2022: 39). Only by doing so, we can move beyond the understanding of the migration pathways and associated migration decision-making processes as being exclusively rational, economic, and individualised processes.

Our analysis of interview data with Indian highly skilled migrants and international students points that migration patterns and processes (i.e., the decision for multiple migrations, return to home country, and onward migration) have temporal dimensions and are shaped by national immigration policies (e.g., flexible v/s restrictive immigration regimes), changing life cycle and priorities (e.g., from being single to married and then having children) and one's embeddedness within social/family network (e.g., at national and transnational levels). International students have become an increasingly large and productive industry in the host countries, including Canada, due to their total spending, for example, tuition fees, accommodation, food, transportation, and retail (Castaneda & Niraula, 2023). The potential to immigrate after studies, due to the bold policy measures, such as the TR to PR transition programme and extensions of post-graduate work permit up to 18 months and now full-time work permit for international students (Niraula et al. 2022), had strengthened the Indian students' imaginaries of Canada as a country that wants to compete for the best and brightest and thus informed their decision to choose Canada.

A report from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) indicates that three in ten international students who came to Canada from 2000 onwards became landed immigrants within a decade of landing (Crossman et al. 2022). Our findings show that we need to be critical of the simple assumption that the main motive of Indian international students in Canada is to obtain permanent residency. International students in our study, a majority of whom were university students, had in fact tailored their choice of course and university with a hope for a better career prospect after graduation, and not necessarily just to obtain a Canadian permanent residency. It is often assumed that the pathway from university and then to the labour market is a linear journey for international graduates, often resulting in higher career, financial and social mobilities (St. Denis et al. 2021). Given that international students and highly skilled work permit holders become permanent residents after holding multiple temporary permits and also are not eligible to access the settlement services, such multi-permit immigration often increases vulnerability, anxiety, and stress (see Akbar 2022; Macpherson & Rizk 2022). Although a majority of the Indian international students were interested in acquiring permanent residency, they were open to moving to another country in search of a better career prospect. Therefore, our study shows that providing permanent residency, amidst the lack of career opportunities, does not always result in retaining international graduates in Canada.

While there was a relatively smaller international student population of Indian nationality in Canada in the past, they are mostly profiled as coming from middle-class families sending their children overseas to study (Choudaha & Chang 2012; Srivastava 1974), a socio-economic aspect shared with the Hong Kong Chinese community from the late 1990s (Kobayashi & Preston 2007; Waters 2006, 2005). Our findings show that migrating to Canada for Indian international students is a costly process as international students often lack access to scholarships and bursaries, or even educational loans in Canada. Although international students and temporary work permit holders have helped to increase economic productivity in Canada in the post-pandemic times, often the positive effects of the productivity are not evident for the migrants themselves as they face difficulties in integrating into the labour market and/or the Canadian society.

The accelerating rates of highly skilled migration to Canada over the last few decades is expected to be a win–win situation, i.e., to bring higher economic gains to the Canadian economy and to fulfil the Canadian labour market shortage as well as to provide a better opportunity for a better life for immigrants and their families. Canadian immigration policies often prioritise the pathways to come to Canada through arranged employment, which is often rewarded through additional points and priority visa processing. Nonetheless, prospective highly skilled migrants, in particular those outside Canada, often face difficulties applying for jobs online, leading to frustrations and often loss of interest to come to Canada. As prospective immigrants desperately search for job offers from employers in Canada to fulfil their dreams of migrating to Canada, they often fall into illegal traps and false promises from recruitment agents, resulting in shattered dreams and loss of their life savings, which is beyond the scope of this chapter.

Acknowledgements

This chapter is based on the data from two distinct, yet similar, research projects that focus on migration decision-making among the actual and prospective highly skilled immigrants and international students to Canada. Decentering Migration Knowledge Project (DemiKnow) is a Partnership Development Grant funded by SSHRC (No. 48152) for the period 2021–2024. The Skilled Migrant Decision Making Under Uncertainty (DEMA) project has received financial support for the period 2021–2025 from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Insight Grant (435-2021-0752) and from the wider program of the Canada Excellence Research Chair in Migration and Integration at Toronto Metropolitan University. Both projects have been approved by the Research Ethics Board of Toronto Metropolitan University and in the case of DEMA also by the Research Ethics Board of the University of Ottawa.

Notes

1 On February 6, 2023, regarding the case of *Tehrani v Canada (Citizenship and Immigration)*, the Canadian Federal Court ruled that partial or full payment of tuition fees should not be a requirement for study permit applications.
2 The Express Entry, a point-based system, manages permanent residency applications under four main economic programs: the Federal Skilled Worker Program (FSWP), a portion of the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP), the Canadian Experience Class (CEC), and the Federal Skilled Trades Program (FSTP). The FSWP allows potential permanent residency applications across the world to apply for permanent residency in Canada, while the CEC and PNP largely facilitate the temporary status to permanent status of temporary immigrants already residing in Canada (Niraula et al.).
3 In Canada, the temporary work permit includes a great variety of sub-programmes such as the high-wage/low-wage stream, the primary agriculture stream, and post-graduate work permit holders under two overarching programmes: the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) and the International Mobility Program (IMP).
4 Five researchers involved in the recruitment, interviews, analysis, and writing phases were all migrant researchers with diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds (i.e., Greek, Nepali, Filipino, Moroccan, and French) and gender (four females and one male).
5 The ITA is issued to the Express Entry candidates who are ranked the highest, based on their score in the Comprehensive Ranking System, in a round of invitations. Once an applicant receives an ITA, s/he has 60 days to submit a complete application for permanent residence.
6 For more details of the CRS score in 2022, please see here: https://www.cicnews.com/2022/12/express-entry-comprehensive-ranking-scores-in-2022-1232266.html.

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4 “They Take the Money from Karan and Give It to Karen”

Education-Migration and Grassroots Advocacy for Punjabi International Students

Lilach Marom and Balraj S. Kahlon

Introduction

In the last decade, there has been a steep increase in the enrolment of international students at all levels of Canadian education (CBIE, n.d.). In 2022, 388,782 students were enrolled in Canadian higher education (HE) institutions (Erudera, 2023). Since 2015, following the inclusion of India in the Student Direct Visa Stream (SDS) that reduces the processing time for visas (Government of Canada, 2023a), the proportion of international students from India has grown considerably, with 67% growth at the college level (CBIE, 2018). Recent data demonstrates that international students from India now outnumber students from China (Vanderklippe, 2019). India is the leading country in study permit holders in Canada, with a total of 180,275 international students (Erudera, 2023).

Within the segment of international students from India, a subgroup of Punjabi students (PS) has emerged. PS are often Sikh and come from farming families. In many cases, they are the first in their families to attend HE, particularly abroad. In Punjab, the decline and instability of the agriculture sector (Government of Punjab, 2020), the limited job opportunities beyond agriculture (Lokniti & Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, 2021; Rampal, 2021; Rampal & Agarwal, 2022), and the drug crisis (Hindustan Times, 2018) contribute to the large efflux of PS to Canada. PS are particularly clustered in municipalities with large Punjabi-Canadian communities (e.g., Brampton, Ontario and Surrey, British Columbia).

To critically analyse PS’ trajectory, one must look at Canadian HE as a site of intersecting (and often contradicting) migration and education agendas. The term “education-migration” captures the process of recruitment and retention that morphs international students into migrants (Robertson, 2013). Canadian international HE has a prime role in this process as universities are instrumental in producing highly skilled workers in a competitive knowledge-based global economy. Attracting international students who can subsequently turn into “ideal migrants” is a natural progression (Scott et al., 2015). Yet, in a time of shrinking governmental funds for HE, universities have developed a high dependence on international students as sources of revenue (Statistics Canada, 2020). HE institutions increase their outreach

DOI: 10.4324/9781003490234-4

to "new markets" while charging international students three to five times more in tuition fees compared to domestic students (Statistics Canada, 2022). The mass recruitment and admission system is maintained via an industry of "education agents" and has little to do with educational considerations (Bozheva et al., 2021; Brunner, 2022b; Marom, 2022a).

This process particularly impacts international students, such as PS, who are admitted to lower-tier universities and colleges that provide low-value diplomas and degrees leading to low-skilled jobs (Baas, 2010; Marom, 2022a). Some HE institutions act as "permanent residence (PR) factories" targeting students for whom "PR is just as (or even more) important than the quality of education received in the end" (Baas, 2010, p. 2). In recent years, there has been a growing awareness of the exploitation of international students in the education-migration pipeline. This is particularly true in private colleges that provide questionable education and programmes that do not qualify for the post-graduation work permit (PGWP) – the permit leading from student visa to permanent residence (Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2021a; Shingler & Hendry, 2022).

The negligence left by government policies and the HE sector was taken up by non-governmental grassroots organisations (NGOs). These were founded by members of the Canadian-Punjabi community and/or former PS, with a mission to provide support and advocacy for PS facing barriers in education-migration. Grassroots NGOs have connections with PS, local communities, and communities back in Punjab. Thus, they have gained deep knowledge about the experiences of PS from the start of their education-migration journey in India to post-graduation. Yet they are not in the decision-making circles regarding education-migration. This chapter draws on interviews with grassroots NGOs' volunteers to enrich the limited literature around the education-migration of PS in Canada.

The main research questions were: What barriers does PS face in education-migration? What needs to be done on policy, HE, and practical levels to support PS in this process? We start with a theoretical frame of education-migration, followed by a literature review of PS in Canada. In the findings section, we discuss the main barriers in education-migration and the support offered by grassroots NGOs. We end with recommendations for creating more just and coherent education-migration policies and practices.

Theoretical Frame: Education-Migration

Education-migration (Robertson, 2013) has become a main engine in the internationalisation of HE. While internationalisation is driven by academic, social, political, and economic motives (de Wit, 2002; Harman, 2004; Knight, 2003), it is tightly connected to the global formation of a neoliberal knowledge economy (Grubb & Lazerson, 2007; Weis & Dolby, 2012). Global organisations, such as the OECD, have become central players in the educational arena promoting policies that construct HE as a form of human capital (Sellar

& Gale, 2011). Discourses of internationalisation often use equity terminology, notably UNESCO's (2016) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goal 4 to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education" (p. 7). Yet, it has to be taken with a grain of salt when measured by economic benchmarks in consumer-based knowledge economies (Barrow & Grant, 2019).

The neoliberal shift in education shrunk government funding and constructed universities as global competitors, hoping to increase revenues through expansion into untapped international markets (Harvey, 2005; Olssen & Peters, 2005). This was accompanied by a shift "from aid to trade" (Harman, 2004): From providing education to students in developing countries as a public good to recruiting international students as a revenue stream (Connell, 2013; Mazzarol & Soutar, 2001). As Connell (2013) explains, "Increasingly, education has been defined as an industry, and educational institutions have been forced to conduct themselves more and more like profit-seeking firms. … Higher education [was redefined] as an export industry, extracting income from overseas students" (p. 102).

The international student market is a pinnacle case in what Brown et al. (2011) call "the broken promise of education." It is a misconceptualisation that HE is tied to social mobility, which drives middle-class families to invest considerable resources and money in university degrees. Brown et al. (2011) demonstrate that the expansion of the HE market globally leads to less specialised jobs on the one hand and wider global competition over skilled jobs on the other, driving earnings down while limiting access to jobs that promise social mobility.

This all becomes more daunting when considering the direction of international students' movement from the Global South to the Global North (Stein & Andreotti, 2016). As a gatekeeper of education-migration, Canadian HE is entangled in border imperialism (Walia, 2013), separating elite professional migration from the masses of international students. Castles (2004) argues that this "is really about regulating North–South relationships and maintaining inequality" (p. 223). PS credentials and limited work experience hardly put them in a position to gain a spot in Canada's competitive "express entry" PR category, where they share the applicant pool with PhD graduates and internationally educated professionals (Hou et al., 2020). "Despite rhetoric implying otherwise, post-graduation labour market success remains elusive for many international graduates" (Brunner, 2022b, p. 9). While education-migration in Canada rests upon the assumption that international education is a route to both migration and valuable credentials for skilled jobs (Brunner, 2022a), in reality, PS trajectory skews towards migration, often at a high personal and professional cost (Kahlon, 2021).

Literature Review: PS in Canadian Higher Education

There are some underlying factors driving PS to seek education-migration. The seemingly easy route to migration post-graduation and the political

climate and education policies in other countries (Baas, 2010; Beech, 2018; Migration Advisory Committee, 2018) have turned Canada into a desired destination. Punjabi families hope that their children will have better employment opportunities and better lives in Canada. The established Punjabi-Canadian communities in Canada and the availability of international education seem to make this vision a reality.

Many PS come from farming families in rural Punjab – a socio-economic sector impacted by economic and occupational instability. Another factor that contributes to the large efflux of PS is the drug crisis in Punjab. This is apparent in a local news article that states,

> The two serious issues of drugs and mass emigration are not unrelated. The drug menace in the state is a grim reality, especially in rural areas. Parents, worried about losing their young sons to drugs, are left with no choice but to send them away.
>
> (A. Mehra, 2019, para. 4)

Another article reports: "As Punjab debates the distressing issues of unemployment and drugs, a silent exodus of students is on" (D. Kaur, 2018, para. 1).

However, when arriving in Canada, PS face multiple challenges in education-migration. A survey conducted by the World Sikh Organization (WSO) in Canada (Baughan & Minhas, 2018) gives an insider analysis of Sikh/Punjabi international students' struggles and challenges in British Columbia (BC). The survey finds that many PS do not have a support system in Canada (66.7%) and that most (88.6%) both study and work. The top three challenges reported by PS are as follows: managing school and work, maintaining good grades in university (23% reported being on, or having been on, academic probation or suspension), and discrimination. Recent studies similarly describe economic, academic, social, and psychological challenges that emerge in the education-migration pipeline (Kahlon, 2021; Marom, 2022a; Mohanty & Wilson, 2021).

International students such as PS, who are not in the target group of elite universities, are often subjected to deficit terminology at host universities and constructed as of "lesser quality" (Caluya et al., 2011). In a study on international students in lower-tier universities in Australia, Tran and Vu (2016) argue that the students are perceived by administrators and faculty as "PR hunters," which "can undermine teachers' sense of responsibility and take its toll on the teacher-student reciprocal educational experiences" (p. 211).

Because international tuition is unregulated, PS are also vulnerable for tuition hikes and often need to work to support themselves. Since the student visa is limited to 20 work hours, many PS resort to illegal work to be able to make tuition payments and cover the cost of living in Canada. In 2022, the federal government changed the student visa requirements for one year to allow students to work more than 20 hours, arguing: "This measure will

provide many international students with a greater opportunity to gain valuable work experience in Canada, and will increase the availability of workers to sustain Canada's post-pandemic growth" (Government of Canada, 2022). This demonstrates the entanglement of international education and the post-pandemic economic recovery and is an example of how seemingly arbitrarily the government can make policy changes when it suits its agenda (McCartney, 2020). While this move can help PS earn more money in the short run, it might have a negative impact on their work–school balance and academic trajectory. Lastly, the large influx of PS also leads to tension with local Punjabi communities, and PS face exploitation in housing and employment in local businesses (Kahlon, 2021; Marom, 2021).

Grassroots NGOs Supporting PS

The negligence left by governing bodies and the HE sector was taken up by grassroots NGOs aiming to support international students caught in the leaky education-migration pipeline. In some cases, already established NGOs that are faith-based (grounded in the Sikh religion) or community-oriented (providing advocacy and service for South Asian communities in Canada), added support and advocacy for PS to their mission. Since these NGOs are connected to Punjabi communities in Canada, they were early to identify the PS crisis and provide support (Kahlon, 2021; WSO, 2022). Such NGOs include Punjabi Community Health Services in Ontario whose mission is "to improve the well-being of individuals, families and communities using an anti-racist and oppression framework" (PCHS, n.d., sec. Mission); the South Asian Mental Health Alliance, a non-profit that serves the South Asian community specifically, fostering mental health awareness and connecting individuals to mental health resources (SAMHAA, n.d.); the Canadian chapters of Khalsa Aid, an international NGO that provides humanitarian aid around the world, based upon the Sikh principle of "Recognise the whole human race as one" (Guru Gobind Singh Ji, cited in Khalsa Aid, n.d.); Moving Forward Family Services (n.d.) that offers free short-term and affordable long-term counselling options to underserved communities across Canada (including services in Punjabi); and the World Sikh Organization of Canada (n.d.) that promotes and protects the interests of Sikhs in Canada and around the world.

The above NGOs are examples of community organising in the sense that they are grounded in "collective action by community members … to decrease power disparities and achieve shared goals for social change" (Staples, 2016, pp. 1–2). This is a form of "citizen participation" (Checkoway, 1995, p. 288), aiming to "fill voids where elected or appointed officials have failed to act in a manner that meets the needs of community members" (Staples, 2012, p. 289). While PS are a distinct group within Punjabi-Canadian communities, their shared religion and background and their settlement patterns (in areas such as Surrey and Brampton) made their experiences visible to the wider community (e.g., Voice, 2019; Ricci, 2019).

The support for PS also emerged from a conflict of interest. Conflict of interest "might include a social, political, or economic injustice (or a combination of these), or an issue conflict between two or more groups" (Bettencourt, 1996, p. 213). Interestingly in this case, while the injustice of education-migration is created and sustained by government policies and HE institutions, it created a ripple effect on local communities. Hence, a concrete focus of the grassroots work is to mitigate tensions between PS and the established Punjabi-Canadian community and deal with exploitation in the community context (Marom, 2021).

One Voice Canada (OVC), the NGO centred in this chapter, was founded in 2019 in response to the plight of vulnerable PS. It is a unique case as a collaborative initiative of professionals in the community (e.g., counsellors and immigration consultants) and former PS (Bettencourt, 1996; Friedman, 1996; Kroeker, 1996; Yeich, 1996). This composition makes OVC adept at supporting this vulnerable group: Former international students are still connected to the international student community and provide a nuanced understanding of this hard-to-reach population. Middle-class professionals provide an understanding of laws, policies, and bureaucratic processes to help address the hardships many PS experience and identify the systemic barriers afflicting this group. OVC provides practical support and connects PS to appropriate resources and services related to exploitation, mental health, immigration, etc. (Kahlon, 2021). It also advocates for reforms to address systemic issues with international education (e.g., Singh, 2023).

Methodology and Positionality

This chapter is part of a bigger project focusing on the experiences of PS via a case study of one teaching university in BC, Canada (Marom, 2021, 2022a, 2022b). This chapter focuses on data that was retrieved through ten interviews with participants who are in leadership positions in NGOs providing support for PS (e.g., KhalsaAid, WSO, South Asian Mental Health Alliance, Moving Forward Family Services, and OVC). Many of the participants volunteered in a few of the NGOs. This created an advocacy coalition and practical support web (Bettencourt, 1996). Some interviewees were former PS and some were Punjabi-Canadian professionals who volunteered in their area of expertise (e.g., counsellors and immigration consultants). The participants chose or were assigned a pseudonym to conceal their identity and received the transcript for review prior to publication.

While conducting these interviews it became apparent that grassroots NGOs are hubs of valuable knowledge and data about the education-migration of PS (Kahlon, 2021). The participants had connections not only with PS but also with Punjabi families in India, Punjabi communities in Canada, and university administrators and policymakers. In some cases, the interviewees acted as a "middle person" between PS and local Punjabi-Canadian employers or landlords and between PS and representatives of Canadian institutions

(e.g., admission administrators and migration officers). The participants were exposed to social media and local news in Punjabi, which are not accessible to those external to the community, and participated in community forums, debates, and advocacy.

In this chapter, we draw on interviews, data collected by OVC, and policy and document analysis. To keep a researcher-participant gap, the interviews were solely conducted by Marom, while Kahlon had access to OVC institutional documents and data, as well as to news and social media in Punjabi. This chapter centres on the knowledge and recommendations by grassroots NGOs to fill gaps in the understanding of education-migration of PS, a phenomenon that until recently went under the Canadian public radar (Baksh et al., 2022).

In conducting this research, Marom is mindful of her positionality as external to the Punjabi-Canadian community. This is less significant in critiquing HE institutions and their complicity in education-migration (Marom, 2021, 2022a), but is pertinent when writing about "intraethnic tensions" within the Punjabi-Canadian community. Writing about intraethnic dynamics in racialised groups might "lead to blaming the victims and move attention away from the racist institutions and practices that privilege whites at the expense of people of colour" (Pyke & Dang, 2003, p. 151). Co-writing with Kahlon, a Punjabi-Canadian and one of the founders of OVC, is important to ensure a nuanced insider position, which can both critique exploitation in the community and acknowledge the support systems it provides.

Findings: Barriers for PS in Education-Migration

Policies and Regulation Barriers

Education and migration are intertwined in Canadian policies via a process that allows international students to apply for a post-graduation work permit (PGWP) under conditions such as completing certain academic programmes in a designated learning institute (Government of Canada, 2023c). International students can apply for PR after graduating from their academic programme and obtaining work experience. This process aims to draw on a pool of skilled workers who have experienced life in Canada and attended Canadian HE institutions and therefore are positioned as "ideal immigrants" (Brunner, 2022a). However, research suggests that Canadian immigration policies are not well designed to meet this objective. Studies find that on average, Canadian-educated immigrants have significantly lower earnings than their Canadian-born counterparts (Hou & Lu, 2017). International student graduates have lower earned income than Canadian citizens for all fields of study (Choi et al., 2021). The greatest earnings gap is in the field of business and public administration, which is the most common field of study for international students (Choi et al., 2021).

The participants acknowledged flaws in the education-migration pipeline, starting with the entanglement of international education with market

mechanisms and migration avenues. Amrit shared: "It is a way to make money and raise the GDP. So many G-7 countries have been profiting of international education and Canada wants to get in on "this business" … International education is just a part of that game." Jaspreet gave a concrete example for the entanglement of policies in a case of PS who while waiting for a PGWP became terminally ill: "The province will say, 'it's an immigration issue, talk to the federal government.' The federal government say, 'It's an education issue, talk to them.' That kind of mess we have to deal with quite regularly."

Canadian HE institutions take advantage of loose policies and lack of regulation to recruit international students from previously untapped markets, in order to increase their revenues and account for a decrease in governmental funding (Statistics Canada, 2017; Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2021b). The lack of regulation also led to a rise in private colleges and shady collaboration between public and private institutions, which in some cases target mostly international students. Jaspreet shared:

> [Some private colleges] are literally above some store, and when you walk in, you feel like you've walked into India. … There are really no students there. Everyone's kind of working, studying from home, and it is just fiddling the system, to get people in. … They're a commodity. That's how they treat them. They don't treat them as human beings.

Some of these private colleges do not qualify for the PGWP, but PS do not always know this until it is too late (e.g., D. Brown & Manucdoc, 2022). Jagvir gave an example:

> [The PS] didn't know until one year was done…that the school would not qualify for a PGWP. … Her father [who paid for her schooling] passed away. So, she was working, and doing her schooling. Then she found out: "I'm not gonna get a PGWP with this college. What am I gonna do? I can't pay tuition for another school." She was crying at one of the temples. A friend saw her there, and she phoned me and said, "I have this girl here. She's a student, and she's crying and crying, and she says that she just found out her school is not giving post-grad work permit."

On the receiving end, many Punjabi families do not have the knowledge needed to distinguish between academic institutions and assume that the quality of education in Canada is apriori good. They often see education as an entry point for social mobility in Canada. Navjot explained:

> Parent want the best for their kids. There are no opportunities in Punjab for young people. … Even if they've done their master's, they can't find

> a job in Punjab…if they can't even find a job, what's the point of having an education? So, parents are willing to pay to send them to a country where they will get educated. … They even borrow money and sell their lands in order to send their children here so they can have a better opportunity in life.

The economic, mental, and academic challenges lead many PS to reduce their academic trajectory to the minimum (e.g., general diploma programmes), which do not provide access to skilled or managerial positions needed to move from a PGWP to PR. Jagvir shared:

> When PS have done their schooling, they have to get a supervisor or manager job, or a high skill job. But … they're only doing an associate degree. ... How are they going to get a higher skill job with an associate degree? … That is where the disconnect is.

When a PGWP does not lead to a high-skill job an alternative route towards PR is via jobs that qualify for a Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA). An LMIA justifies hiring foreign workers where no Canadian candidates can be found, often for labour-intensive jobs or jobs in remote locations. LMIA policy leads to fraud by "ghost consultants" (WelcomeBC, 2023) who charge thousands of dollars for an LMIA, and exploitation by employers who provide PS with an LMIA in return for cheap or free labour (Kahlon, 2021; P. Mehra, 2021). Nisha explained:

> [Employers/agents] charging them anywhere from $20,000–$70,000 to give them an LMIA. … So that's where the financial exploitation comes in, that's where the sexual exploitation comes in. That's where the emotional exploitation comes in because that "student-worker," who is a temporary resident here is afraid of being deported.

The segments above demonstrate the vulnerability of PS in education-migration and how immigration policies distort international education. As a recent example, during post-pandemic recovery, Canada dropped the 20 hours work limitation for international students, letting them work full time "to help address Canada's labour shortage" (Government of Canada, 2022). While this might decrease exploitation emerging when students work "for cash," it also demonstrates the blurry line between the PGWP and temporary workers' migration routes. The impact on PS is yet to be seen. As Jagvir argued:

> Employers are going to say, "Okay, let's do an LMIA, and you can be here full time. Forget about school." I just don't want these kids now to drop their schooling, because without those points for schooling, they're never going to get the PR that they need.

The route from international education to migration, which is promoted by Canada as a successful model for migrant-receiving countries (Brunner, 2022a), has many shortcomings. Starting with the underlying assumption that the current configuration of international education supports the transformation from a student to a skilled worker, to the mechanisms and policies that frame this process, often leading to exploitation (Brunner, 2022a). Regulatory bodies, education institutions, and some employers and education/migration agents are complicit in participating in this process, which, in reality, does not lead to professional mobility but rather to low-skilled jobs (Marom, 2022a).

Recruitment and Admission Barriers

The recruitment of PS is done mainly via agents and operates as a business model in which agents gain commission (in some cases dual commissions from both HE institutions and students). This model creates an incentive to maximise the number of students enrolled in HE institutions. While more reputable universities try to regulate the work of agents, this is not easy to do across national, cultural, and linguistic barriers (Coffey & Perry, 2013). Private colleges, in particular, contribute to a shady recruitment industry in India. Australia's Independent Commission Against Corruption highlighted problems with the integrity of recruiting agents and identified India as a high-risk jurisdiction for fraud with respect to study visa applications (ICAC, 2015). Jagvir explained, "There are false advertisements and it's deluding all these people with dreams of going to Canada for a better life." Amrit further described:

> You drive down the street (in Punjab) and there are billboards all over the place, and there are pictures of the Niagara Falls. … These agents really take advantage of people living in rural areas, who don't know much about the world outside their own community.

Recruitment problems are not limited to private colleges, public institutions find ways to generate revenues via partnership with private colleges (Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2021b). Jaspreet explained:

> These private colleges are the wild west of education. But there are also established colleges, who are licensing their names to these private colleges. So, they're making a lot of money, but at an arm's length.

Shady admission processes lead to further problems such as misalignment between student credentials and interests and the institutions and programmes they are being admitted to. In many cases, agents only offer programmes in institutions they get commission from, regardless of whether it is a good fit for the student. This has a negative impact on PS' academic trajectory (Marom, 2022a). Amrit explained:

> PS rely on agents to pick the program for them and sometimes they'll just drop them into random programs. … They don't know that you need to choose the courses [in India the academic tracks are fixed], so when they come here to university, they realize that the agents chose their courses. Sometimes it's all over the place.

Gunkar added:

> Agents say, "Oh Vancouver will become a big IT hub" to send students for computer science, and that person is a poor farmer he thinks, "Oh my God my son will be doing computer science in Canada and then he will be working for Bill Gates." Then that student, who has no background in computer science, gets computer science diploma in some college.

The recruitment and admission processes are maintained by the "global imaginary" (Stein & Andreotti, 2016), assuming education in the Global North is superior. It is a new packaging of old colonial power dynamics in a neoliberal market context. The constrained mobility of PS from a rural periphery in the Global South to the Global North through the funnel of HE is a manifestation of what Sheller (2018a, 2018b) calls mobility (in)justice. It highlights inequality underlying the governance and control of movement. PS are an embodiment of mobility injustice that is sustained by the global imaginary.

Economic and Employment Barriers

Most PS do not come from an affluent background. Many families take loans or sell land to afford international education assuming that the initial investment will suffice and that once in Canada PS would be able to work and provide for themselves. However, PS are misinformed about the real cost of the process (e.g., conversion rates, the cost of living in Canada, and minimum wages) (Singh, 2022). Daljit explained: "PS now come straight out of high school from rural areas in Punjab. Their parents may have to pick up major loans or sell their land. They're coming with already a huge, finances problem that they have to face." The farmers' protest, which impacted many families, added a recent layer of economic instability and stress (R. Kaur & Singh, 2018). PS are aware of their family's sacrifice and know that a lot is at stake, which can lead to high levels of stress. Inderpreet explained: "The expectation of a child is very, very high. It's like, 'Hey. We're selling our property. We're selling our land. We're sending you abroad to study. Make sure you do well.'"

Gunkar explained how a lack of awareness of the actual expenses and financial insecurity can lead PS to work illegally (for cash):

> Working 20 hours [the limitation on a student visa] legally can hardly get through tuition, and day-to-day expenses. This is how the trap is

> laid and now that student is getting into that trap. They cannot discuss this with family back home, so PS start working illegally.

Until recently, international students were limited to 20 hours of work off campus (Government of Canada, 2023b), which is not sufficient to cover the living and tuition costs. Consequently, some PS opt to work "under the table," often in Punjabi-owned businesses. This can lead to cases of work exploitation (Baas, 2010; Baughan & Minhas, 2018; Marom, 2021). PS work outlets are often gendered; men take on physical and risky jobs such as security and construction, and women engage in domestic and service work. Gunkar further explained:

> Some owners of small businesses know that PS cannot work more than 20 hours; so, they take full advantage of this. PS work for cash for $8 per hour doing hard construction job or some other job in restaurants working 16–17 hours a day.

Furthermore, local Punjabi employers know that PS are in a precarious situation and will not report work exploitation out of fear of being deported. Jagvir gave an example: "Indian employers were exploiting these students, and they would threaten them, "Oh, we're gonna deport you" or "We're gonna report you to IRCC. You have to do what we say."

Even when working legally PS are often unaware of employee rights and thus can be easily intimidated by threats of deportation. Jasvir added: "They don't know that if they get injured at work, they can actually get coverage. Instead, employers will just say, 'Oh no, don't say it happened at work.' … Or 'we'll report you.' PS don't want to be sent back."

Due to their economic vulnerability PS are willing to work for less, which leads to tensions with the local community, and feeds, into the fears of PS competing over jobs (Sharma, 2018). Gunkar explained: "Some anxiousness is real, for example there are a lot of students who are doing trucking, and a lot agree to drive trucks at a much lower wage, that's a real concern."

Work-related problems persist post-graduation because to be able to switch from a PGWP to PR, students need to work in certain professions or in managerial positions that will gain enough points for skill-based PR. This is unrealistic based on the academic programmes and work experience most PS have. This situation leads to another form of exploitation by the creation of "fake" managerial positions for money, as Jaspreet explained:

> Someone who's done two years of education, barely 20 years old is asked to get a manager's job. We often see PS working for some small business who's giving them the title of manager, like in the trucking industry, but they're truckers. Or they're really baristas, but they've been given the title of manager. … And you assume that, you know,

> they're getting cash under the table to get those jobs. So, every level of this process, unfortunately, leaves a lot of room for exploitation.

PS' economic vulnerability and awareness of their family's sacrifice drive PS to work illegally and to do whatever it takes to secure a future in Canada. Misinformation about the costs involved, constraining governmental regulations, fear of deportation, and lack of awareness of employee rights, converge to make PS an easy target for work and economic exploitation.

Accommodation Barriers

Accommodation barriers are tightly related to economic barriers but deserve special consideration since housing is a basic need, and unstable housing has a severe impact on PS' well-being. The influx of PS has driven up rental prices, particularly in areas such as Surrey, BC, home to one of the largest Punjabi communities in the Indian diaspora (Nayar, 2012). The proximity of a same-origin community contributes to the decision of parents to send PS to study abroad at a young age, but it also leads to tensions, particularly around housing and work (Kahlon, 2021; Marom, 2021). Many PS live in suboptimal conditions (e.g., crowded basement units), which impact their ability to study (particularly online during the pandemic). Inderpreet shared, "the currency rate alone, they can't afford their rooms. Room rates have gone up. So, they rent a two-bedroom apartment, and they'll be like 6/8 of them in there."

Many PS are not familiar with tenancy laws and Canadian laws more widely, which increases their risk for exploitation and in some cases sexual harassment. Rajdeep gave an example: A landlord can say "you can't live here anymore, and I won't give you your deposit back. So that PS becomes a homeless overnight." Jaspreet expanded:

> A lot of landlords are mistreating the students. … We had a case yesterday, where the landlord had accused one of these PS of damaging a mug. So, he pulled these girls into the kitchen and basically smashed their mugs, and it turns out that he has restraining orders from local schools. It's essentially a sexual predator, but PS don't know.

The education-migration pipeline that is driven by an economic logic and sustained by governmental policies is a fertile ground for exploitation. Economic challenges, work exploitation, and a lack of adequate and affordable housing all negatively impact the ability of PS to commit to their academic studies (National Housing Strategy Act, 2019).

Academic Barriers

Academic challenges emerge as an outcome of navigating multiple arenas (e.g., work, schooling, and life in a new country), knowledge gaps in previous

education, and differences between school systems (Marom, 2022a, 2022b). The business-oriented recruiting and admission process enhances these challenges because PS often have a limited understanding of the academic expectations in Canadian HE. Amrit explained, "A lot of PS come from families who didn't receive high-level education, they don't know much about post-secondary education, they are misinformed and ill-equipped to study in Canada."

Many PS are unfamiliar with the more participatory and active-learning style in Canadian HE, such as projects and discussion boards. In addition, a lack of knowledge about academic writing norms can lead to unintentional cases of plagiarism (Marom, 2022b). Rajdeep explained some main differences between the school systems:

> In India, we are very much lenient with what we call here plagiarism. PS never heard of it. They do it and they get into trouble. In India you have the final exam, which weighs 60% and the rest it's pretty lenient. So, PS don't check [assignment] allocation. They don't know why they fail. … They end up in depression…because they will have to pay for that course again.

When PS fail courses, it leads to greater economic insecurity because they need to repeat the course and pay extra fees. It also leads to stress and loneliness because PS do not want to worry their families. Jaspreet explained: "If PS flunks the odd course, suddenly they have that concern of, kind of shame, to have to go back to India, and on top of that, their parents have incurred, you know, a $50,000/$60,000 debt." Jagvir further explained:

> When PS apply for classes, they're always full … [But] they must take the minimum, 9 credit requirement, because if not, they lose out on following the regulations of the study permit. So, they're taking something that they don't even know and they end up failing, or their grades are low, and then they're having to retake something else in order to make the grade point average (GPA) or they're put on academic suspensions.

Because many HE institutions accept a higher volume of students than their actual course capacity and because registration dates often correspond with GPA, PS are at risk of being waitlisted for courses. This can further drive PS to take the most flexible programmes (e.g., a diploma in general studies or business), which does not make them competitive in the job market post-graduation.

Socio-Cultural Barriers

PS face two layers of socio-cultural challenges. They need to adjust to the "mainstream" Canadian society and culture, but since they often reside in neighbourhoods in which there is a large Indo-Canadian population, they

also need to navigate their identity as a subgroup within a subcommunity (Marom, 2021).

Some adjustments to life in Canada are mundane, such as operating a washing machine (for students coming from rural areas without utilities) and dressing appropriately for cold/rainy weather. However, some difficulties in adjusting can lead to dangerous or even deadly situations, for example, learning to stay safe while navigating the roads (e.g., as a pedestrian or driver) or the water.

Other adjustments are more complex in the sense that they relate to one's positionality within a certain societal and cultural context. PS experienced microaggressions and racism from White Canadians, as Jaspreet described: "We see a lot of microaggressions, in jobs that are retail orientated, or coffee places in which they're this 'Other.' If they have a bit of a tension with another employee, the racism comes out very quickly."

It seems that the main tensions PS experience in day-to-day life were with the local Punjabi communities (Kahlon, 2021; Marom, 2021). Even in HE they often clustered in colleges and universities in which they were a majority, limiting their interactions with domestic students (Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2021a).

The local Punjabi-Canadian Community in Surrey is a source of support and services for PS (e.g., religious services in Gurdwaras, ethnic food, and clothing); however, tensions arise when an established community is changed by large migration waves. Pyke and Dang (2003) use the term "intraethnic othering" to describe "the specific othering processes that occur among coethnics in subordinated groups." "Intraethnic othering involves the ridicule and isolation of some coethnics—usually the more ethnically-identified, by other coethnics, usually the more assimilated" (p. 152).

Intraethnic othering is multilayered because it acknowledges power relations between the "mainstream" society and a racialised ethnic community and their manifestations in power relations inside an ethnic community. Intraethnic othering takes particular forms in specific contexts, based on intersections of race, ethnicity, class, and immigration status. Jagvir described how intraethnic othering manifested in the Punjabi community in Canada: "There is a disconnect between the community that's already in Canada and the ones that are coming as international students. They go, 'Oh, those students! Oh, those students are filling the buses! Oh, those students are everywhere!'"

PS were subjected to different stereotyping by segments of the local Punjabi community. Some of the older generation Punjabi-Canadians judged PS as too modern, while some younger generation Punjabi-Canadians judged PS as foreigners and "fresh off the boat" (Marom, 2021). Gunkar described his own experience at a university orientation:

A brown girl was like, "Oh why can't these international students study in their own country? Why are they coming to our city and our university?" So that really threw me off. … I thought, "Oh my God it's gonna be tough because it was from someone of my skin colour and of my background."

The subject of PS is a popular trend on local Punjabi media and social media (Sandhu, 2016; Tehlka Media, 2020), at times used as a scapegoat for inappropriate behaviour (e.g., fights and vandalism). Jagvir gave an example: "You see a YouTube video of PS doing something [wrong], and it just goes viral, and everybody just gets clumped together. So, PS got to get over this mindset of people that are here already and prove themselves."

The negative stereotypes towards PS and the stories about exploitation in the community led to pushback from some members of the community. Daljit shared that community members organised a community forum in one of the Gurdwaras to support PS. This initial meeting eventually led to the establishment of OVC. Daljit shared that at first, they encountered mistrust by PS:

> Some PS didn't come upstairs [to the meeting] because they were afraid that the community was speaking against them. … We said "PS need guidance, they need resources. … We need to provide them with the necessary means in order for them to have a better living here, and to get away from the abuse and exploitation." When some of the students heard that … they realized that not all the community is against them. There are many, many members in the community who are there to support them. And so, one by one, they got up, and they told their stories, and they shared the exploitation they were facing.

PS simultaneously navigate their positioning within the Canadian mainstream culture, as well as within local Punjabi communities that are often their main source of interaction. This can lead to feelings of loneliness and being out of place that, when combined with the barriers described above, can contribute to mental health problems.

Mental Health Barriers

In rural Punjab families typically live in an extended family structure and close kinship; hence, living on one's own far from home was hard for many PS. Particularly, men were not used to domestic gendered tasks like cleaning and cooking. Some women were wedded prior to arriving in Canada with the aim of bringing their husbands on a work visa, which added another layer of adjustment as a married couple. Participants described how facing multiple challenges and the lack of a support system led to mental health problems. Daljit shared:

> "They're coming at a younger age. It's not the mature students that we used to see 10 years back. … They've never left their parents' side before. They find a lack of support, lack of resources, not knowing where to turn." Navjot Seconded: "They're overwhelmed, it's very difficult for them to see whether it's them, or is it a system, they're not sure how to cope with that, they feel low."

A survey of international students conducted by Khalsa Aid and OVC found that 6/10 respondents suffered from poor well-being and 3/10 respondents were living with a clinical or major depressive disorder (Kahlon, 2021). In some cases, severe stress can lead to suicide attempts. A funeral home in Brampton reported receiving multiple international student bodies on a monthly basis (Callan, 2021). These findings align with on-the-ground observations by the participants. Community advocates have raised concerns of the alarming trend of suicide among international students. Gunkar shared: "PS realize 'Oh I am trapped in this trap and have no choice beside to push through it.' Many get into tunnel vision, and they become suicidal. We have so many suicides."

In Punjab, counselling is not as common as in Western societies and can have negative associations; so, even when universities offer affordable or free counselling services, PS often do not use them. Navjot added:

> In Punjab, it's mostly a joint family, so you talk to each other. … In the villages, they have a panchayat (i.e., village council). If there is a conflict … they will all go in front of the panchayat … they will sit down and they will discuss everything. So, paid counseling was not recognized. There is no need for it. …. But here, it's a big shocker because there's not enough people to talk to. … They can't even tell their parents, "I'm going for counseling, I'm on medication" because they might get judged.

Mental health challenges were created by the multiple stressors that PS had experienced and exacerbated by the cultural differences and approaches towards mental health services. The loss of the collective support system in Punjab and the limited cultural relevance of Western counselling models left many PS struggling.

Advocacy and Support for PS

The participants described multiple forms of support their NGOs offered PS. NGOs also engaged in advocacy on two levels: external (e.g., federal and provincial governments and municipalities) and internal (Canadian-Punjabi communities). In the section below, we highlight some main aspects of this work with relation to the barriers described above.

Legal Support

PS are reluctant to pursue justice in cases of exploitation for fear that being involved in a legal dispute may hurt their prospects of obtaining PR. They worry they may be seen as "troublemakers," or in violation of their study visa requirements. Perpetrators often weaponise this fear by threatening to report PS to immigration authorities or implying that any legal challenge will hurt their likelihood to obtain PR. Many PS are from rural India, a region with a relatively lower literacy level (IBEF, 2022). They were raised in an environment governed by informalities and verbal agreements. For these PS

who are still young, naïve, and susceptible, the prospect of navigating formal legal and bureaucratic processes is intimidating if not overwhelming. To pursue legal recourse PS often require the support of grassroots NGOs. Daljit shared:

> Sometimes we get cases, but PS may not want to report them. So, we assist them the best we can. Keeping them anonymous we try to provide them with the necessary counseling. We teach them to immediately leave that job or workplace. If they're not wanting to report, we can't really force them, obviously, but we do encourage it. We do tell the police officers of cases that are coming to us, so that they're kind of on board.

The most common legal problem is labour exploitation (Rana, 2021). A systemic barrier in addressing this issue is that legal aid NGOs do not have a mandate to cover employment matters (e.g., Legal Aid BC) or only support migrant workers and not international students (e.g., Migrant Workers Centre). This leaves grassroots NGOs to fill the gap. For example, OVC represents PS in disputes against their employers for unpaid wages. In cases of more serious transgressions (e.g., extortion and wrongful dismissal), it supports PS in finding legal counsel. As an outcome of this support employers are becoming more cautious when hiring PS. Daljit shared:

> We send a notice to the employer to state that OVC is now involved: "We're handling this case, you owe this student X amount of salary." We always make sure that the student is aware that we are only able to advocate and represent up to that 20 hour a week.

Another main source of exploitation is by the Canadian private colleges industry. In the South Asian community, the industry has gained a reputation for profiting off a substandard education for international students. There have been several accounts of colleges being unscrupulous in their dealings with PS (Baksh et al., 2022; D. Brown & Manucdoc, 2022; Shingler & Hendry, 2022). The Auditor General of Ontario raised concern of the lack of oversight of private colleges and the exploitation of international students (Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2021a). The participants shared accounts of dealing with private colleges engaging in malpractice (e.g., not refunding tuition money to PS transferring to another programme). Jagvir gave an example:

> [This PS] realized she's not going to get a PGWP from that school, so she wanted to switch to another college. She asked for a refund and that college now is saying, "Sorry, you didn't pay the full tuition." But she did [paying a year in advance is required from international students].

> Nobody ever mentioned that she had not paid her fees, but now they're saying that the receipt she has is fraudulent.

Slow-income renters unfamiliar with tenant rights, PS are also taken advantage of by landlords. PS are often cheated out of their security deposit or wrongfully evicted by landlords. Grassroots NGOs help PS in finding housing resources and represent them in disputes between landlords and tenants.

Mental Health Support

Canadian HE institutions are responsible for providing student services, including mental health resources. However, the participants pointed to a lack of sufficient support, particularly when considering the multiple challenges facing international students (Hensley, 2019; Treleaven, 2022; Varughese & Schwartz, 2022). HE institutions are often unequipped to provide culturally appropriate services to a vulnerable student group, such as PS. Amrit gave an example: "A PS had concerns and the college [administrators]were like, 'you can speak with some counsellor John about whatever,' and I'm just wondering if this John can make someone from rural India feel comfortable?"

Culturally appropriate counselling and the availability of counselling services in Punjabi are particularly important in complex cases such as those concerning sexual harassment. In such cases, even the participants, who were insiders to the culture, faced difficulties in reaching PS. Daljit shared, "if they're being sexually harassed or assaulted, to come forward and report it. Because a lot of them are still very afraid to report it based on, you know, what their reputation may look like after." Grassroots NGOs are aware of these challenges and attempt to make services more accessible to PS through counselling by members of the Punjabi community and in Punjabi, ensuring privacy (e.g., designated email address for reporting sexual exploitation), and offering gender-based counselling.

Another problem is that NGOs that offer counselling services often cannot use government funding to provide services to international students (Mohanty & Wilson, 2021). Hence, the only way to provide support to PS is by offering services free of charge. NGOs, such as OVC, connect PS in need of counselling to NGOs that offer counselling services, such as PCHS and South Asian Mental Health Alliance. Some of the participants in this study are counsellors volunteering their time to serve PS (Callan, 2021).

Education and Resources

NGOs create resources and workshops aiming to orient PS towards life in Canada. Basic information about transportation, banking, and safety tips (e.g., how to cross the road), are not obvious for PS coming from rural India. Gunkar shared: "So many students were getting into accidents because they weren't aware of wearing reflective gears or clothing in the winter. So, we did an entire project on road safety." Jagvir added: "PS don't know how the

systems work here in Canada. When they come off that plane, what do they do? Where do they go? How the bus systems work, how the banking works, how to get to school, to find housing."

NGOs also create resources to help reduce stigma and normalise discussions around mental health and provide information about laws, rights, and regulations regarding student visas and the PGWP, in order to prevent cases of exploitation and deportation. Daljit explained: "The employer gets only a slap on the wrist, a fine or something, if they get caught. But the student themselves get deported. So, we've been making that awareness across Canada, and we've been very successful with that." Jagvir added:

> I always say, "If you're not being paid by cheque, then you move on. … You want these points for work experience. You gotta show it on paper." … So, it's the not knowing. I just need more knowledge to be put out there, that is easy for these kids to see.

PS arrive in Canada at a young age, with a limited understanding of what being an international student entails and with limited financial means. Keeping that in mind, many PS demonstrate outstanding resilience and persistence in navigating the multiple barriers they face in education-migration. Currently, NGOs provide resources and education for PS who are already in Canada and who were often already targets of exploitation. Providing information and resources prior to the arrival in Canada could help families in making informed decisions and PS in detecting fraudulence and exploitation.

Basic Needs and Crisis Response

Grassroots NGOs often receive requests for help from PS at risk of homelessness, in need of financial support, or even food (Singh, 2022). To address this many NGOs developed initiatives to provide basic needs, such as food banks and clothing drives. The fact that this level of support is needed exemplifies how Canada's management of education-migration contributes to poverty. Gunkar explained: "Homelessness is increasing. We connect PS with shelters or with housing resources but they're not many housing resources for students. One of our directors had to keep two PS in her house for a week."

In some cases, negligence by agents and colleges demands an immediate intervention. Gunkar gave an example: "A PS was promised to have admission in Surrey, but his college was in Prince George. When he landed, he had to sleep on streets for two days until he can get a flight to Prince George." Some PS have no family or community support systems, as Jaspreet shared: "A girl gave birth in the hospital, and they wouldn't release her because she didn't have a car seat. She had no idea she needed one. So, we got one for her."

NGOs also provide emergency response in cases of exploitation as Jagvir explained: "We had cases where landlords have exploited tenants, especially

females. So, we've taken these students out and found them different places to live." In life-threatening situations, such as cases of PS at risk of suicide, NGOs provide both emergency response and support in navigating Canadian institutions. Jaspreet shared a case of a PS experiencing severe depression, who required a complex procedure to get his parents from India.

> [You don't] get visas from India that easily, it could take months. So, you have to get an emergency visa. Right now, we've got a letter from the hospital, we now go to the local MP and convince them to write a supporting letter, then send it to immigration and, hopefully, then they'll issue an emergency visa.

With the increase in cases of suicide, support is also needed for handling the aftermath of PS deaths. The families of PS often lack the accessibility and financial means to arrange funeral logistics (Garcha, 2021; Neustaeter, 2021). Jaspreet explained:

> We're experts in funerals now. You know. Start a GoFundMe with the family's name. Decide if you want to cremate now or send the bodies. It's going to cost more if you send the body. Go to the funeral home. Deal with the Indian Consular and do the paperwork. … Don't raise just 10 grand to send the body. Raise 40, because the family would need the other 30 to survive. … It's literally down to a T, how to do it.

Cases such as the ones above demand familiarity with local regulation and ability to navigate complex bureaucratic systems. Grassroots NGOs are instrumental in providing support in times of crisis.

Community and Political Advocacy

Indo-Canadian communities in Canada provide many forms of support for PS; however, the influx of PS also led to tensions and intraethnic othering (Marom, 2021). Daljit explained: "Most of the problems are in, Surrey, Brampton, these areas. It's very unfortunate, and I'll be very honest that in our community, it's pretty much the South Asians that are doing the exploitation against South Asians."

Punjabi community members and grassroots NGOs made considerable efforts to draw the community attention to the plight of vulnerable PS and highlight the need for change. In Surrey and Brampton, community forums have been held on issues regarding international students. Jagvir shared an exchange with family members:

> [They say] "It's the government fault. They're bringing PS over they should be handling it." … I always say, "Hey, they're from India.

> They're from our background. … Without us, how else are these kids, I feel so strongly that they are our kids, manage?" … They deserve a chance.

Grassroots NGOs have an important role in connecting community members with PS and advocating within the local communities. Gunkar shared some examples of such interventions: "We release student success stories in the media to highlight the positive impact PS have been making on the community. We had a food bank where international students served the homeless people."

While community advocacy led to more awareness and support within communities, PS cannot vote, and their plight is too niche to be an election issue in South Asian communities. Therefore, the myriad of problems concerning PS has little political cost in the short term. Grassroots NGOs engage in political advocacy to highlight the impact on PS in education-migration, yet politicians of all parties do not give much credence to these criticisms. Navjot shared her frustration: "Even if we have 1 or 2% that have died because they didn't get the support, it's a shame on us. When many have died, it is a crisis. Those young people dying from lack of support." NGOs have produced reports to strengthen the credibility of their advocacy, where they discuss systemic issues regarding international education, the lived experiences of PS, and service gaps in supporting this vulnerable group (e.g., Kahlon, 2021; Mohanty & Wilson, 2021). However, governments are slow to act, as Amrit shared:

> [Governments] know that there are problems, they know that people are not happy in the community, but nothing has really been done about it. My own take is because this is a multibillion-dollar industry.

Jaspreet added:

> We had a long meeting with one of the provincial governments and gave them a list of all the issues we were seeing in that province, and the end result was, "we should make a pamphlet." I was just shocked. It was a complete and utter waste of our time. A pamphlet is not good enough.

Advocacy also aims to enhance governmental and institutional policies and regulations to protect PS. Yet it seems that many politicians do not understand the education-migration pipeline. Daljit shared:

> We approach politicians for funding or grants but because they're "just international students" the expectation is that eventually they'll go back home. We've tried to explain that's not always the case, the majority of them are here to stay.

The participants advocate for coherent policies and regulations that will create alignment between job market needs and the PGWP. Jagvir gave an example:

> We have that shortage of early childhood educators in BC, but it is only a one-year program. … It's not gonna qualify for a 3-year work permit. So, we can't fill that demand with those PS because they are not going to take that one-year program.

The disconnect between the job market needs and the PGWP is detrimental to the ability of PS to mobilise to skilled jobs as envisioned in the education-migration blueprint. Canada's complicity in short-term fiscal gains from international education not only stands in the way of developing humane policies but also leads to policies that are lacking from a sustainable economic perspective.

Discussion

While Canadian education-migration is promoted as a successful model for migrant-seeking countries (Brunner, 2022a), in reality it is full of loopholes and leads to exploitation. The lack of political will to address the problems raised by advocates is characteristic of the neoliberal market of international education, in which economic interests are entwined with and influence public systems and services. It seems that the dual goals of PS to receive good education and professional migration trajectory are not compatible with the current goals of Canadian international education. The federal government's *Building on Success: International Education Strategy* (2019–2024) report reveals that the main purpose of international education is economic growth. The only indication of "success" is how much international students contribute to the Canadian economy ($21.6 billion and 170,000 jobs for Canadians) (Global Affairs Canada, 2020).

At a time of global competition and decline in government funding, Canadian universities have been complicit in prioritising revenues over quality education and student services (Marom, 2022a). Insufficient policies and lack of institutional support have created a fertile ground for exploitation by for-profit players including private colleges, immigration consultants, and employers wanting cheap labour.

In an exploitative global economic system, the human pain and suffering caused by this process is merely the cost of doing business. It seems that there is an increased blurring of international education with current definitions of human trafficking as "the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude" (U.S. Department of State, 2022). This calls for deep reflection by those involved in education-migration in its current formation. While PS gain

mobility via international education, their mobility is conditional and underlined by injustice and exploitation.

Concluding Remarks

Providing support to PS caught in the education-migration pipeline has considerable challenges. Given their economic situation many PS have knowingly or unknowingly violated their study visa requirements. In these cases, PS often choose to not enter a formal dispute process to avoid the risk of deportation, even at a financial loss. Because of their upbringing in Punjab many PS work under verbal agreements and informal communication. This means there is often a lack of evidence to support their claims. For all these factors most PS victims of exploitation do not get justice in Canada.

Many of the grassroots NGOs providing support to PS are maintained by volunteers and operate with limited resources. Even established organisations lack the funding to adequately support PS. Still, NGOs have had some success in helping vulnerable PS and in highlighting the systemic barriers in education-migration. Despite this success, many PS are still in a vulnerable position. Sustainable solutions to the plight of PS require fundamental reforms to international education in Canada.

Issues regarding international education in Canada are divided among different entities: the federal government is responsible for immigration, provincial governments oversee HE, and HE institutions provide education and services. Therefore, we highlight key recommendations on expanding levels.

For HE institutions, it is important to provide student housing and other specialised services for international students. Universities are in a prime position to reach international students and thus be proactive in mitigating the problems afflicting many PS. Services can include information on pathways to obtaining permanent residence and legal information and advice as well as culturally responsive counselling and learning services.

Provincial governments should regulate international student tuition fees. Currently, post-secondary schools can determine international student tuition fees, which have been rising steadily. Provincial governments should also take a stronger stance on eliminating the for-profit college industry catering to migrants. The private college industry across Canada has been shown to engage in questionable practices and provide a substandard education, while public institutions engage in shady collaborations to make profits. Provincial governments must take a critical look at the purpose this industry serves and its impact on the labour market.

The federal government should critically examine education-migration and define what differentiates international education from other economic migration streams. Current policies have blurred the line between international students and migrant workers, in ways that negatively impact both the educational and professional trajectories of PS.

At the bottom line, as Nisha reminds us, before being students or migrants, PS are humans and deserve to be treated as such:

> We jeopardize their lives, and we don't understand the implications of jeopardizing the student's life, because you don't have time to listen, or to understand. What if it was your child in that position? They've come across the world to a foreign country. They have no support. They're already being exploited by employers and then by the school, they're vulnerable.

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5 International Student Mobility

The Role of Brokers

S Irudaya Rajan and Anand P Cherian

An Overview

India is the world's second-largest student-sending country after China, and the number of Indian students abroad has increased fourfold in the last 14 years. International students have increased considerably worldwide, primarily from countries in the Global South with a more significant demographic dividend and a rising middle class willing to invest in international education to improve returns on human capital. In 2018, 5.6 million students worldwide were enrolled in a degree programme outside of their home country (OECD, 2020). International Student Mobility (ISM) needs to be situated with the more significant global flow of capital, goods, and services. Since the inception of the Indian census-collection procedure, education has been a factor in migration inside India. Around 4.6 million Indian students moved from their regular domicile to a location with superior educational resources, according to the 1981 Census (the first year it was counted). In addition to its overburdened bureaucracy, India's educational system has always struggled with general issues of poverty and inequality. According to the Census of India, the average literacy rate was 73% in 2011; however, according to the National Statistical Commission, it was 77.7% in 2017–18. Urban regions have a higher literacy rate (87.7%) than rural areas (73.5%). In India, mobility has always been regarded as having a sought status and being inextricably related to the country's economic prosperity and social order. According to the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India (2022), 1,33,135 Indian students were studying abroad as of March 20, 2022. According to the sources available, the United States of America (USA), Canada, the United Kingdom (UK), Australia, New Zealand, and Germany are the top five countries for Indian students to study abroad. Between 2007 and 2022, the number of Indian students studying in the United States and Canada increased steadily, but the number of students studying in Germany increased dramatically, from 3431 in 2007 to 20,810 in 2022. From 2007 to 2012, New Zealand's Indian student population increased, but from 2017 to 2022, it remained stable. Compared to statistics from 2007, Australia saw a modest dip in 2012, but starting in 2017, there was a continuous rise of students from India entering the country. The UK shows fluctuating statistics from

DOI: 10.4324/9781003490234-5

Table 5.1 Student mobility from India to top five destinations

Year	*USA*	*Canada*	*UK*	*Australia*	*Germany*	*NZ*
2007	94,563	7304	25,905	27,078	3431	3855
2012	96,754	28,929	N/A	12,629	5745	11,349
2017	206,708	100,000	14,830	63,283	13,740	30,000
2022 (till July)	211,930	215,720	55,465	92,383	20,810	30,000

Sources: IIE Open Doors, UK Higher Education Statistics Agency, Australia Education International, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, New Zealand Ministry of Education, DAAD/HIS (Germany).

year to year. Apart from that, student requirements and demographics are evolving as well. Institutional motivations and justifications for attracting and keeping Indian students are changing at the same time (Table 5.1).

Despite the relatively long history of transnational educational migration, the number of students moving abroad to pursue higher education has significantly increased in recent years. The process of enrolling students has evolved into an industry, and this development can be understood in the context of the ubiquitous libertarian rationale that is reshaping higher education as well as the way the market-driven agenda and its values that are changing the priorities and routines of university life (Slaughter and Rhodes, 2000). The Asian regions are where the majority of people are migrating and India, China, and Korea dominate as important marketplaces. The transnational movement of students in South Asia is mostly fuelled by the migration regime put in place by migrant brokers and recruitment agencies; prospective student migrants must pay upfront, and the majority of the agencies are linked to private banks, making it easy to obtain loans. In this chapter, we take a deeper look at how educational migration and migration recruiters or intermediaries in the current environment are leaving many of these young people in hazardous situations.

We draw on interviews with 20 migration agencies in key Indian cities including Delhi, Chennai, Kochi, and Trivandrum (June–September 2022) to interrogate student mobilities, precarity, and strategies further. My participant observation is based on my ad hoc involvement in gatherings and public events hosted by various universities and migration agencies. Attending these educational fairs gave me first-hand experience with the strategies agents navigate among students, establish relationships, and stress over the Western study experiences and it also helps us to record the strategies that brokers, universities, and other organisations use to promote enrolment. When feasible, or right after each fair, thorough field notes were made. These notes were then transcribed and analysed. My ethnographic fieldwork in India is mostly concentrated in its cities. The locations of Delhi, Chennai, Kochi, and Trivandrum were beneficial for several reasons. Cities are the primary hubs for migration agencies, utilising their branches in rural areas to attract

potential students. Cities are also important places of contact that can encourage introspection (Valentine, 2008; Valentine & Sadgrove, 2014), foster social relationships, and influence migratory paths (Wang & Collins, 2016). Nonetheless, it is acknowledged that the encounter's language is extensively used and applies to several social interactions. Second, a variety of organisations with various country focuses are found in cities. Third, these are the cities where we spoke the local tongue and where we were familiar with the migration patterns. We were better able to see dynamics outside of the migratory zones since we felt at ease moving around the city.

A few photographs were taken while in the field. The intention of visual ethnography was to translate the statistics and enumerations to illuminate the precarity of students and the urban transformation. The photograph provides insight into the complex nature of anxiety and how the portrayal of upper-class whims and fantasies is depicted.

This chapter scrutinises the operations of student migrant agents that recruit and place students in various universities as a part of a wider, still-developing system, which are examined in this research. Through the discussion of the experiences of student migrants, we take a deeper look at the mechanics of recruitment utilised by migrant agents to understand how they manage the issue, heeding the request from scholars to throw light on the phenomenon of international student migration. We show that, while migrant agents and educational fairs did serve as venues for re-enacting gendered respectability supported by class and caste, they also served as venues for contestation.

International Student Mobility and Precarity

Although there has long been an international movement of highly qualified personnel, the development of information and communication technologies (ICT) in the 1990s created considerable interest in luring student migrants. By the late 20th century, the aspirations of the Indian middle class to migrate started to increase at an accelerated pace. The data generated by the researchers themselves acknowledged that they only partially mirrored social realities (Rajan and Wadhawan, 2015; Rajan, 2022). The neoliberal higher education policies implemented in the 1980s were the primary force behind the movement to increase university internationalisation and student recruitment from outside (Beech, 2019). Mobility has always been regarded as having the desired status and being intricately linked to financial wealth after the Indian economy was liberalised and the global expansion of the Indian education market. Student mobility is further influenced by certain factors including the political and economic systems, the cultural logic of class, gender, sexual orientation, and ethnicity. Student mobility is not a matter of personal preference but is instead shaped by several social actors. However, by the early 2000s, state-affiliated and unaffiliated intermediary organisations or

student migrant agents started dominating the Indian migration market. Some earned legitimacy through governmental backing, unparalleled access to specific information sources, and avenues of communication with foreign institutions. Post-2010 the migration growth of students accelerated quickly (Madge et al., 2009), which added to the surge in migration agents as well as the loosening of government oversight towards this. The astonishing growth of intermediaries, particularly the highly institutionalised migrant recruiting sectors, has been fuelled by a globalised neoliberal economy (Cranston et al., 2018; Fernandez, 2013). These agents build their reputation by highlighting high-quality service, through their rural networks and mass advertisements by highlighting migration as a powerful establishment of emancipation, financial stability, and modernity. Mr Jacob, a private agent in Cochin, claims that the easing of visa regulations in popular study-abroad countries including the USA, the UK, Canada, and Australia in the late 2000s helped to accelerate the growth of private intermediary services (Table 5.2).

A portion of the issue is caused by the fact that certain truths are impenetrable, information deficient, elusive, and challenging to articulate. Due to data variations from other information sources, the information supplied by the Indian government is challenging to grasp. According to the Ministry of External Affairs, the United Arab Emirates has over 10,000 students enrolled, which is far too stretched as the Gulf is filled with labour migrants. The popularity of and daily usage of English in India, as well as the sizeable and influential Indian diaspora in most major study destinations, contribute to the Indian market's preference for English-speaking countries. Indians have significantly higher retention rates than Chinese students in almost every OECD nations[1] including Canada, Germany, Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and Japan.

Creating a stark distinction between the students who are abroad and the students who study in India created a bourgeois sensibility and hierarchical mobility in terms of caste as well. A transnational framework emphasises interpreting migrant experiences as essentially shaped by capital and state interests, despite some narratives of globalisation (Appadurai, 1996; Featherstone, 1990) suggest a fall in the importance of the nation state (Basch, Glick-Schiller, & Szanton-Blanc, 1994; Vertovec, 2001; Louie, 2004). The marketisation of higher education in India, the unemployment rate, and the unequal distribution of educational resources can also be

Table 5.2 Indian students abroad

2022 (till March 20, 2022)	1,33,135
2021	4,44,553
2020	2,59,655
2019	5,86,337

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, 2022.

considered enamoured by Western education fetishism (Brooks & Waters, 2011; Gribble, 2008).

Most universities abroad subcontract their undergraduate and postgraduate programmes to migration agents, who are allowed to recruit students on behalf of colleges. The colleges connect to the agents and prior relationships are navigated through an under-the-table word that the agent may provide 60–70% of the students. However, such partnerships are not governed by state law. Universities make use of these intermediaries and they are compelled to do so as they understand the value of these brokers who have extensive networks and established legitimacy in India. Also to attract prospective students these intermediaries brand the cities and make sure to create the notion that the future belongs to the city they suggest. The term "migration infrastructure" refers to the interconnected technologies, actors, and institutions that facilitate, condition, and give meaning to mobility (Xiang & Lindquist, 2014). The making of student mobility from India highlights the intricate ways in which India participated in this global field. For instance, Shaji, a migration agent based in Cochin, Kerala, India explained,

> Initially I was part of a migration agency which is now one of the biggest. Later, I moved from there and started the one I am running now. Many students just want to move to the United Kingdom or Canada. They don't have many ideas about the college, city or whatever. They often feel that because their friends are moving abroad I want to move too. Many students get cheated as well. At least twenty percent of the students coming here have lost money to unauthorised agencies. My responsibility is to act as a liaison between prospective students and Universities and Colleges.

The representatives and the institutions to whom they refer students typically benefit from student tuition, which is far more expensive than ordinary college programmes in India. The agencies and foreign institutions typically split the revenues. Five interviewees in Kochi agreed that advertisements, rural networks, and higher education fairs are essential to their universities' recruitment strategies because they help connect with students, build relationships with them, and provide students with provisional university placements. But despite their determination to act, choose, and plan their futures independently, the majority of these students lack knowledge of the application process or even complete adequate research before meeting the agents. It was evident that agents benefited from the student mobility and money that foreign institutions and universities offered within this push-and-pull relationship. The majority of the agents used their own special methods to sway prospective students, such as school visits, celebrity endorsements for their commercials, and stirring up hatred towards the government for failing to support their dreams to become middle-class citizens (Figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1 Advertisements when you enter into migration agency.

Source: Authors, fieldwork 2022.

The entrance of an agency in Chennai suggests the approach of them re-establishing the idea of a successful career abroad. The agency is not merely an appropriate area but also a location that has been domesticated and individualised. The idea of stepping into today's globalised world and establishing a Western status benefits migration agencies, who try to reciprocate certain benefits regardless of the initial class and caste belonging of prospective student migrants. The entire setting echoes upper-class subjectivities in order to highlight the need for relocation so as to establish a transformation in the social hierarchy.

The concept of aspiration and the idea of "mobile aspirations" as a link between processes of "desiring mobility" and "making futures through mobility" is evoked in various ways in the various contributions through the plans, desires, anticipations, possibilities, expectations, and ambitions that shape young people's imaginaries and experiences of im/mobility across various social and cultural contexts (Robertson et al., 2018). Students frequently referred to their programmes as the greatest in their field throughout my research, which the agents informed them was true. Additionally, they spoke highly of agents as though they were indebted to them. The lack of information regarding the universities allows agents to benefit from organised migration. Acts of translation serve as the foundation for this component of the

agent's duty. Following COVID-19, several agents in India noticed the special time of reliance and began extending it to small towns as well. Many of our interviewees told us that COVID-19 created uncertainty and the current unemployment ratio had made things unpredictable for students and unstable for people from all walks of life. Also, the sense of being burdened by the families led to expectations and pressure on them. As a result of dealing with this kind of uncertainty, the students are attracted to these mediators. Antony, a migration agent based in Chennai, put it, "Covid actually gave us an identity; the students started exploring their desire to migrate. It brought out the community of migration agents out in the open." Antony implied the educational fairs and subsidiary agencies in the rural areas expanded the legitimacy, which in turn attracted the students. Most of the educational fairs will be held at a seven-star hotel attached to English stand-up comedy. The place which is meant for the fairs is also crucial as it demonstrates the desire to get international exposure and it creates tension among the students with the British-accented English put forth among the prospective students. The place creates a notion of deprivation, seeding aspiration among these students. Even the students who are from rural backgrounds are invited to the city where the migration agency head office is located, surrounded by constructions, at the top of an enchanting environment, wooden staircase which open and light designed along with polished marble flooring affirming the idea of abundance. The city itself functions as an aspirational lure for migrants, becoming an essential launching pad for reaching objectives, particularly those that necessitate continuing power and social mobility, in addition to playing a structural part in fostering the current fetishism for the English language. The heuristic idea of an assemblage is beneficial in this setting since it emphasises that a city is constructed via unequal, power-laden behaviours, which have a considerable impact on the migratory paths of Indian students (McFarlane, 2011, p. 221). Cities are described as spatial assemblages created by actions that have been continuously restored, kept connected, nurtured, and mended through a multitude of sources (Farias, 2011, p. 370).

While talking to the employees we understood the way to talk, and the level of openness which needs to be put forth towards the students and even the minor sectors are calibrated for different moments. There were certain classes to cover – physical, psychological, social, and aesthetical aspects of the consumer through image management groups. In this way, openness laid the groundwork for friendship and care, which will absorb students into certain migration agencies. The idea of elitism can be seen among these agencies as well as the educational fairs conducted by them. This is to demonstrate the idea of modernism and through these upscale settings serve as a stand-in for a respectable and confident target of status that is motivating and guiding. Also, these spaces serve to highlight mobility prospects, encourage introductions, and develop a positive working relationship between potential applicants. In the Indian context, colonial rule and hegemonic ideas of property

were accountable for establishing and expanding the socio-economic divide. Such divisions have led to creations of inferiority and material necessity that still rule and shape numerous discourses on mobility, identity, stability, and prosperity.

The Role in Student Mobility

Most prospective students were perplexed by the abundance of study-abroad information and the variety of brokerage services. Despite the profit-driven nature of the brokerage business, most of the students view brokerage as a crucial component of the study-abroad experience. The aspirations of a student are for being educated and move up from the ladder of the middle-class and casteist tendencies. The economic and cultural resources that parents and students have influence or are restricted by their ability to bargain with migrant agents despite the fact that they are not passive consumers of the neoliberal commodity of international education (Brown et al., 2017; Naafs & Skelton, 2018). Families that want to provide for their children's work and educational prospects are a deserving example of the migration of their children, who would traverse a public setting for them and frequently blend in as "power" by elevating Western education as a valiant effort. The agents further add the competitive edge of having a hunger for amenities and status by reinforcing the aspirations. The agents and the migration to the Western countries, however, have become a force to reckon with within Indian Society.

As exemplified in Figure 5.2, it portrays how educational fairs tend to construct their social position. Through a specific intersection of class, caste, and race with the social hierarchies that are seldom addressed in student mobility, it builds in professional space. It compels the students to compare their social position there to their previous one. By exoticising the desire for migration the agents frequently highlight the happiness and quality of life which would implicitly or explicitly be driven by a successful career.

India's educational migration infrastructure strongly mediates, meddles, and restricts prospective students' choice of destination nations, host universities, and study fields. Some migrant agents assist their students in getting into colleges abroad of their choice, while others market the idea of travelling and studying. While some successfully lure job opportunities and effectively attract the student by emphasising the life of the city the migrant agent wishes to move to. This is primarily because of the profit margin that specific nations and universities that the migration agent is affiliated with get. Ram Manohar, who has more than ten-year experience in the field of intermediaries, explained:

> Most of the students coming to us have no idea about the universities they want to study and they just wanted to move to London, Toronto, and Melbourne. Our main job is to understand what they are

Figure 5.2 Educational fair conducted at a seven-star hotel in Cochin, Kerala.
Source: Authors, fieldwork, 2022.

> interested in. We have initial tactics for understanding this and most of the employees try to get into the universities where they get the most financial margins. This is true in every agency, not just here. Then some students want to move to a certain city as their peers, family or relatives are settled there. The challenge of getting into the students is becoming tough these days; the money pumping into this industry is really huge. Post-COVID there is a mushrooming of this industry. You need to build trust among these students. These days we provide them with free IELTS classes for whoever is going through our agency. This is along with assistance in getting accommodation and part-time jobs.

Migration agencies increasingly provide one-stop services, which include pre-study-abroad consultation, help with language learning and university application, support for visa interviews, airport pickup, accommodations, and host families, assistance with registration in the host university, application for an identification card, and other logistics and post-graduation career planning. These services reaffirm the neoliberal ethic of self-responsibility among migrant students increasingly attracting their interest to study abroad. Almost every migrant agent tries to build familiarity with the students to get connections and through that they try to reflect a story that emphasises the

liberty which is associated with the idea of migration. They try to portray the notion that through migration class and caste, hierarchies could be practised, challenged, broken, and reaffirmed. Regardless of the migration, this is something the students longed for a long time. During our fieldwork, we understood that the students prefer specific agents as it is comfortable and not time-consuming for them. Apart from that, they could just confirm a city, where they are interested to move. For example, Muhsin, who works at another agency, told us warily,

> Some of the students lack clarity in what they wish to study and where they want to move. While some students are lured to city life, they are only perplexed. They lack precise information. They ought to be able to express it themselves.

Additionally, there were hints that this was occasionally coordinated or confused with family expectations for their stay abroad. Muhsin further adds some girls come here just with a wish to migrate as they want to seek independence and avoid surveillance from their family and relatives from going out to deciding what to wear. Many of them wish for a transition from a "village girl" to a "cosmopolitan girl." While some families try to conform to glorified portrayals of women in their conventional roles, despite their limitations, the women themselves aspire to improve their conditions. Migration helps especially women students to acquire the ability to provide new gendered possibilities for experimenting with speech and attire. Migration provides agency to women in a patriarchal society in a way that facilitates their empowerment. Migration agents recognise women's restrictions, which are frequently the product of complicated disparities, as a "cultural" issue that could be overcome through migration and economic independence (Moeller, 2018).

Denny, who identified himself as the father of a prospective student migrant, explained:

> Of course, there is risk in constructing a career path in another country. It is also characterised by precariousness, uncertainty and luck. But when you think about the high status and this decision is best for her.

Migration serves as a venue for learning about and contesting acceptable social limits. They also serve as spaces where ambitions are rooted in diverse logics that develop from populist-ideological mediations, biographic-historical legacies, and evolving conceptions of future possibility, beyond discourses of human capital and economic competitiveness (Robertson et al., 2018). The educational fairs highlight the social circumstances of the prospective student migrants, the way they confer over the fees, and the way they comprehend and strive for a better future which they may or may not materialise.

The Ambivalence

A significant proportion of prospective student migrants have hesitation and scepticism regarding their agents as economic exploitation is regularly in newspapers. The French Institute of India runs an allied organisation that aims to improve student mobility in France. Ram, who is the head of the programme, describes the problems faced by them for the past year.

> These days, a lot of false papers are being produced. When we interview the students, they reveal that the majority of them were created by agents. These consultants charge the students a lot of money and create documents just to ensure their arrival in France. I sometimes think their migration is becoming pointless. These consultants take advantage of their simple desire to relocate. Even the interviews for the visas are prepared for. Then there are students who do a course for the namesake and they take their wife and children along with them.

Despite Ram's scale and reach to understand the documents he accepts, sometimes the students could get away from them. They frequently encourage migration by raising people's knowledge of opportunities for employment abroad and educating potential student migrants on the tools and facilities that make this feasible (Lindquist and Xiang2018). However, intermediaries' actions aren't always good or beneficial. Intermediaries may limit access to information and resources that hurt migrants or even deliberately mislead them (Dyer et.al., 2008). In practice, for student mobility, the migrant agents have a variable role in determining the direction of the students. The extensive number and competition of migration agents in facilitating mobility is a sign of the volume of money exchanged and, at the same time, a cause of the rising costs associated with student mobility. The dire circumstances in India can also be considered the reason behind venturing education abroad. Meagre earnings after graduation are also an apparent reality in India. With the economy becoming murkier because of the pandemic, the unemployment rate in the country stands at a whopping 27.11% according to the latest reports by the Centre for Monitoring the Indian Economy (CMIE), with the lockdown estimated to have snatched away 120 million jobs. The explosive levels of unemployment in general and comparable levels of unemployment among the educated have resulted in many issues (Kannan & Raveendran, 2019). Employment in the country is on a sharply declining trend.

Employers, government representatives, and even friends and family take part in the chain in different ways. Many times, the educational institutions that students intend to attend are questionable, which drives them to locate low-paying employment on the grey market and live in dangerous, decaying suburbs. Because of the unconstrained informality of the situation and the agents' deteriorating financial interests, they are able to openly recruit and send students on education visas to fraudulent, blacklisted, and nonexistent

colleges (Rajan, Varghese & Jayakumar, 2013). These days, agents operationalise through several venues. Through the popularity of mobile phones, the Indian youth is filled with aspirations. Through social media advertisements, the aspirations are shaped by the global culture that circulates around them, which in turn falls into the social ladder. Their ability to participate in communication frees them from attaining knowledge with regard to mobility. One of the most important findings from all of these interviews is that the agents are cautious in their answers to student movement. At the same time, they are keen on ensuring student loyalty as well. All the educational intermediaries through their marketing tactics are fervently supporting educational consumerism. The influence of social media has both positive and negative sides. At one's fingertips, it offers a vital forum for the exchange of knowledge about study-abroad resources and first-hand accounts, and at the same time, it forces some parents and students who didn't have any prior intentions for an international education into the market for self-funded study abroad, which eventually end up in the hands of the agents. These agents sometimes forge an intimate, emotional connection to these students and parents on the false or limited information that can then fuel a misplaced sense of satisfaction about making a move abroad with lesser money. Through their interactions with a purposefully decontextualised and gendered concept of migration, these agents carry out their actions. If the students are deeply invested in the idea of migrating, some agencies condescendingly assure admission to prospective students with a package of complete refunds.

Conclusion

The regulatory, commercial, and social intersections of India's educational migration infrastructure encourage excessive reliance on brokerage services, undermining parents' and students' autonomy when deciding to send their children to school abroad. Mobility can also be used to motivate young people to deviate from life-course expectations intentionally or to pursue alternative paths and opportunities. They are frequently the focus of ongoing negotiations across complex mobility networks and programmes influenced by caste, class, and gender.

While acts of mobility ultimately determine the social order, there has been an increasing desire throughout time to improve social and economic circumstances. The perspectives of students are missing in this, especially when concepts like empowerment and rights seem to apply just to migration, but the research strives to develop the voice of the students. Understanding how Indian student migrants achieve educational migration will offer a useful comparative perspective on the various behaviours, difficulties, and meanings that arise from their experiences. The neoliberal context, where the knowledge economy is emphasised as essential to achieving global political and economic influence, must be considered while analysing Indian student mobility.

Additionally, the actions made possible by the state's implicit approval go counter to the contemporary paradigm that holds that the "neoliberal" state is always at odds with the underprivileged. However, the pandemic altered the environment for student mobility and other related services. In order to fully comprehend the dynamics around this, more research is required.

Note

1 The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) is a unique forum where the governments of 37 democracies with market-based economies collaborate to develop policy standards to promote sustainable economic growth.

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6 "To Whom Should I Complain"?

Exploring the Obfuscated Role of State and Non-State Agencies in Indian International Student Recruitment by GTA Colleges

Sutama Ghosh and Raymond M. Garrison

Introduction

The dramatic growth of international students (ISs) in Canada demonstrates the multiple and diverse policy goals of the provincial and federal governments. The Canadian Bureau of International Education (CBIE) reports that, by the end of 2021, there were 621,565 international students in Canada – a 135% increase since 2010 (CBIE, 2020). By adopting an International Education Strategy (2014–2019), the federal government was able to double IS enrolments in just five years and between 2017 and 2018, enrolments grew by 31% in one year alone (Government of Canada, 1999, 2020; Statistics Canada, 2020). ISs from India are a very important part of this growth. Since 2016, India has surpassed China as the leading source of ISs to Canada, and in 2021, 37% of all ISs to Canada were from India (Government of Canada, 2021).

Although historically the internationalisation of Canadian higher education was "rooted in liberal humanism and driven by humanitarian concerns" (Cudmore, 2005, 46),[1] since the mid-1990s, this motivation has been increasingly replaced by neoliberal governance (Plumb, 2020). In a climate of ongoing cuts in government funding for higher education, attracting ISs has become an essential survival strategy for most post-secondary institutions (PSIs) (Kalamova et al., 2020). As a result of this within the past two decades, two important changes have occurred in the higher-education "business" in Canada: first, the number of privately funded PSIs has rapidly increased in the form of private universities and career colleges, and second, partnerships have developed between PSIs (government and privately funded educational institutions) and these "education agents"[2] (Hemsley-Brown et al. 2006; Wiggins, 2016; Ghosh forthcoming). Studies have also demonstrated that these institutions and recruiting agencies work with both agents locally and transnationally with minimal state supervision (Nikula and Kivisto, 2018, 2020; Plumb, 2020; Ghosh forthcoming). Thus, within the past two decades,[3] a "system" has organically evolved in the Canadian higher-education business, involving various state and non-state actors who assume various roles and capacities, at local and transnational scales (Collins, 2012; Coffey, 2013; 2014; Yi et al., 2018; Nikula and Kivisto, 2020).

DOI: 10.4324/9781003490234-6

Despite the growing importance of this seemingly dynamic and complex environment of internationalisation of higher education (see e.g., Knight, 2000; Kallur, 2009; James-Maceachern, 2018; Kavilanz, 2018), unlike in the UK and USA, research on IS recruitment processes is limited in Canada. Furthermore, until recently, most studies have documented and analysed the settlement experiences of Chinese graduate students in Canadian universities. As a result, the migration and settlement experiences of college students in general and non-Chinese ISs are less known. Therefore, the main objective of this chapter is to study the migration experiences of 30 Indian ISs in community and career colleges in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Toward that goal, we identify and analyse the involvements of various government and non-governmental actors in IS recruitment in India and Canada, at various scales and stages of student migration. We begin by setting the stage – i.e., presenting the migration context of both Canada and India, followed by a brief discussion of the extant literature, and arriving at the main research questions. Next, we discuss the research methods and present our research findings, discussion, and some conclusions.

Setting the Stage: Canada

Currently, the province of Ontario, which attracts most ISs to Canada, has 23 publicly assisted universities, 24 community colleges, and more than 500 career colleges (Government of Ontario, 2023; Ghosh, 2022) In Canada, immigration is a federal government portfolio. As a result, while institutions choose "whom to accept," the ultimate choice of "letting them in" remains with the state. The federal government's active encouragement and stake in IS migration is evidenced by its commitment to providing $150 million CDN in funding through the International Education Strategy (2019–2024). In terms of governance, the state ratifies a list of Designated Learning Institutes (DLS). However, the designation process is handled by the province on behalf of the federal government, under section 211.1 of the IRP Regulations.[4] DLIs in Canada are of various types – universities (mostly publicly funded) and colleges (publicly and privately funded).

Unlike the British and the Indian[5] (source country) higher-education systems, the institutional structure in Canada is different and arguably, relatively complex. In this country, PSIs include both universities and colleges, however, while most universities are publicly funded, colleges can be both publicly funded (officially known by a range of titles, e.g., Community College, Technical Institute, and University College), as well as privately operated (interchangeably called career colleges). In this chapter, we will use the terms "community college" and "Career College" to differentiate between Canadian colleges. Also, unlike the British and Indian systems, colleges are not necessarily linked to universities. In other words, a college diploma usually carries less weight than a university degree (discussed below). Community

Table 6.1 Types of Colleges in Canada

Post-Secondary Institution	*Community College*	*Private/Career College*
Minimum Duration of Study	2 years	6 months
Tuition Fees	30,000/year	9,000
Admission Requirements IELTS	Score 6	Variable
Services Provided to ISs	For a Fee	Variable
Value in Job Market	Tier II Occupations	Tier III Occupations

Source: Collated from the websites of five community colleges and 40 career colleges in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA).

and career colleges also differ in their international tuition fees, admission requirements, value, and services provided to ISs (Table 6.1).

As described in Table 6.1, the duration of study varies widely between community and career colleges and within these colleges by specific programmes of study. While it takes two years of full-time study to complete a community college programme, at a career college, a similarly titled course may be completed within just a few months.

As mentioned earlier, designating the learning institutes is a provincial responsibility. An important requirement of designation pertains to the payment of "crown debts." Whereas most community colleges receive public funding based on enrolment, performance, and the proportion of special groups such as Indigenous student populations, etc., career colleges must make substantial payments to the province annually (ibid).[6] As our research findings will reveal, this is an important challenge for immigrant-owned career colleges, which are often started with loans from government and private financial institutions and may suddenly close (with ISs enrolled) over nonpayment of debts.

With decreasing federal cash transfers to provinces, publicly funded universities and colleges in Canada are increasingly dependent on international tuition fees for operating costs (Silverthorn, 2016). In Ontario, for instance, international tuition fees have almost doubled within the past decade (Statistics Canada, 2023) – an issue that has been widely recognised as one of the main challenges ISs face in this province (Tavares, 2020; Ghosh et al., 2022). International tuition fees, however, vary widely by PSIs (university/college and public/private), programmes, levels of study, location, etc. In Ontario, the average international tuition fee at a community college in 2021 was about $30,000 CDN per academic year, compared to $9,000 CDN at a career college. Also, within the province, in comparison to smaller census metropolitan areas, tuition fees were relatively higher in the GTA (Ghosh, 2022).[7] As our research findings will demonstrate, such variable fee structures are often used by PSIs to mislead and steer ISs into specific programmes of study, often unrelated to their previous training.

The admission requirements particularly in relation to International English Language Testing System (IELTS) scores are unstandardised between

and within colleges as well (IELTS 2020). For example, while most community colleges require an IELTS score of 6,[8] there is no such standardised requirement for career colleges. Therefore, although some ISs may have an easier pathway into those colleges, arriving in Canada with insufficient linguistic capital[9] may lead to over-dependence on their ethno-religious groups for economic, social, and psychological needs (Chevrier, 2018; Ghosh et al., 2022).

Even though most community and some career colleges provide services to ISs upon their arrival, including, airport pick up, initial accommodation, and meals, such services are often contracted out to sub-agencies (Jafar and Legusov, 2020). Since PSIs have little control over the cost and quality of services provided, ISs may be subjected to deception.

Finally, diplomas obtained from community and career colleges are not of the same value in the Canadian labour markets. As shown in Table 6.1, according to the government of Canada's National Occupation List (NOL), whereas a community college diploma ideally translates into Tier II occupations and associated pay scales, those from career colleges lead to Tier III occupations and comparatively lower earnings. Therefore, although the title of the course/programme may be similar, whereas a diploma from a community college can lead to Tier II or supervisor-level jobs, diploma from a career college can only translate into third or fourth-tier occupations, e.g., office support staff.[10] In sum, for ISs who are unaware of these differences between and within Canadian colleges, enrolling in a short-term programme at a career college may seem more attractive, especially when tuition fees are at a comparatively lower cost, and admission requirements are less stringent. Thus, although Ontario has been the most popular destination for ISs since 2016 – 51.4% of all ISs in 2021-perhaps because international tuition fees have almost doubled in Ontario since 2010, more than half (51%) of all current ISs in this province are enrolled in a college (Statistics Canada, 2023).

India

ISs from India have been migrating to Canada since the late 1960s. Despite that, very few studies have attempted to document their migration and settlement experiences, as a result, their voices are lost within the broader conversation about economic migrants (see, e.g., Ghosh and Wang, 2003; Walton-Roberts, 2003; Ghosh, 2014). Until 2019, the Government of India (GOI) did not recognise ISs from India as emigrants.[11] In its mission to transform India into "the Skill Capital of the World," the GOI established not-for-profit organisations, such as the India International Skill Centre Network (IISCN), as "the nodal platform to facilitate international workforce mobility opportunities for Indians." (NSDC 2017)[12].[13] These organisations do not regulate the training, mobilities, and rights of Indian ISs overseas, however. Criticising the GOI some policy forums describe the current emigration

policy as "a means of managing the export of human capital rather than a humanitarian framework for safeguarding Indians overseas."[14]

Even though the current cohort of young Indians still uses education "as a means of social and spatial mobility" (Walton-Roberts, 2015, 70), there are noteworthy differences between the most recent and previous generations of Indian ISs in Canada. In comparison to the earlier cohorts of Indian ISs (Ghosh, 2014; Walton-Roberts, 2015), a significant proportion of the recent group is arriving from a small city/town (e.g., Hisar in Haryana) and semi-rural backgrounds (e.g., Ajnala or Barar in Punjab), and instead of arriving in Canada to attend universities, they are taking admissions in public and private colleges (Ghosh, 2021, 2022). Furthermore, their process of becoming permanent residents in Canada involves at least two steps, following their investment in Canadian higher education – first, they must apply for post-graduate work permits (PGWP) to gain Canadian work experience and then apply for permanent residency.

Compared to 1999, when only 51,000 Indian students emigrated to study abroad, in 2018 over 375,000 left India to study, and of those 172,000 (46%) came to Canada (UNESCO, 2019).[15] In March 2023, *The Economic Times of India* reported that, compared to 1999, in 2021–2022, more than 750,000 had enrolled at an international educational institution.[16] Although currently ISs from India "go to more than 240 countries" to learn, traditionally, the UK (since the colonial times) and the USA (since the late 1950s) have been the most coveted destinations. Over the past two decades, however, this trend has somewhat changed, with Canada emerging as one of the most sought-after destinations. As a result, in 2021, while about 210,000 Indian ISs were studying in the USA and 140,000 in the UK, there were almost 220,000 in Canada (Government of Canada, 2021). As of December 31, 2022, 319,130 Indian ISs were enrolled at Canadian PSIs.[17]

Among the factors identified as triggers of migration for Indian ISs (e.g., overpopulation, a highly competitive education sector, and lack of employment opportunities), one that is less explored is the ongoing agrarian crisis, particularly in the state of Punjab (Tripathi et al. 2002, 2005). This issue is contextually important, as the period of the Indian agrarian crisis coincides with the dramatic increase in the emigration of Indian ISs noted earlier.[18] The ongoing agrarian crisis in Punjab began in the late 1980s with the negative effects of the Green Revolution (e.g., overuse of high-yielding variety of seeds, pesticides, and groundwater) adversely affecting the agrarian economy of that state. To enhance agricultural production, contract farming was introduced by the government "wherein small and marginal farmers lease out land to large and medium farmers who are often contract growers" (Singh, 2005; AERC 2017) for companies such as Pepsi and Nestle and are forced to cultivate commercial crops (like tomatoes and fruits) instead of traditional grains (i.e., wheat and paddy)[19] (Tripathi et al. 2002; Singh 2002, 2005, 2013). The policy failed,[20] and one of the major consequences was a massive increase in farmer suicides (Bera, 2015)[21] and the outmigration of

primarily young men from villages to towns/cities in search of jobs in the service sector (Bera, 2015). As our research will highlight, it seems that a substantial proportion of Indian ISs have arrived in Canada from rural Punjab and from similar socio-economic backgrounds. Most of them were recruited by agents working for career colleges.

Multidimensional Recruitment Processes of ISs to Canada: The State of Knowledge

Although not stated explicitly, Canadian scholarship recognises the scalar influences of various state and non-state actors in the migration of ISs – the immigration policies of the state at the macro-level, the recruitment practices of the educational institutions and education consultants/agents at the group or meso-level, and the students' internal socio-economic circumstances at the micro-individual scale (see Kim and Kwak, 2019; Tavares, 2020). In its report, CMEC (2014) had reported that: "The multi-jurisdictional nature of the agent phenomenon, coupled with the competitive recruitment environment, has slowed efforts to develop regulatory frameworks in many destination countries. Not surprisingly, most efforts have involved persuading agents and jurisdictions to voluntarily comply with codes of practice and conduct. While concerns about immigration-agent misconduct initially preoccupied Canadian policy-makers, attention has pivoted to international student recruitment. Proposed new regulations at the federal and provincial/territorial levels would require educational institutions to obtain government approval in order to recruit and enroll international students".

Recent studies have reported that Canadian educational institutions use various tools to recruit ISs, including marketing, direct engagement, and third-party agencies (Yang, 2003; Coffey, 2014; Ghosh forthcoming). For effective marketing, these institutions most commonly use online websites, print publications, and advertisements (ibid). To accomplish such tasks, many institutions hire professional services (ibid). The direct engagement strategy involves institutions contacting students and families through a designated representative. This may be achieved by sending staff and alumni to global education fairs (Coffey, 2014; Beech, 2018) or to face-to-face meetings with consumers (Yang, 2003; Robertson and Kimljenovic, 2016). Finally, the most common strategy is to hire third-party private vendors or education agents who handle marketing, recruiting, arranging travel documents, and other associated tasks required for immigration (Collins, 2012; Huang et al., 2016; Bista, 2017; Beech, 2018).

GoIi (2016) observes that the number of agents is higher when the cultural distance between the students and the host country is greater, and there is less governance by the host country. This is particularly noteworthy in the context of Canada where most international college students arrive from countries like India and China – from dissimilar cultural backgrounds and different education systems. Discussing the importance of such agencies in

New Zealand, Collins (2012) demonstrates that they "contribute to the crafting of migrant subjects to fit into overseas labor markets" (2012, 142). In doing so, the agencies serve not only the interests of the educational institutions but also, by extension, that of the nation-states at relatively low costs.[22]

Hiring third-party agencies to recruit ISs is an established practice among most Canadian PSIs, and most university students are known to hire their services to search for suitable universities, help with application packages, procure travel documents, and arrange airport pickups and accommodations upon arrival (Coffey and Perry, 2013; Coffey, 2014; Jaffar and Legusov, 2020; Nikula and Kivisto, 2018, 2020). It has been recognised that both PSIs and students face several challenges in hiring third-party intermediaries. For example, often unbeknownst to institutions and students, agencies may work concurrently for competing Canadian universities/colleges (Yang, 2003; Keung, 2012; Coffey, 2014) as well as for institutions located in other countries like the UK, USA, and Australia (Robertson and Kimljenovic, 2016; Lewington, 2019; Jaffar and Legusov, 2020). Agent management is therefore particularly difficult for educational institutions since they work overseas in a different cultural context (Nikula and Kivisto, 2018; Plumb, 2020). Therefore, even if the agents provide misinformation, disinformation, manipulate application processes, and commit financial fraud to recruit students, it is hard to monitor their activities or reprimand them (Nikula and Kivisto, 2020).

Based on the current knowledge of the context of Indian IS migration in Canada and recruitment practices, we arrived at the following research questions: (i) What common and differential recruitment strategies were used by PSIs (community and career colleges) in the Greater Toronto Are (GTA) to attract Indian ISs? (ii) What was the role of the agencies in this process? How did they reach out to Indian ISs transnationally? Were specific marketing tools used to attract students from large metropolitan areas versus semi-rural towns? and (iii) Did students' social networks (friends and family) play a role in steering students toward particular types of colleges?

Agency Theory

In their seminal article, Bergen et al (1992: 1) state that, "An Agency relationship is present whenever one party (the principal) depends on another party (the agent) to undertake some action on the principal's behalf…The hiring firm, or a manager representing the owners' interests, is the principal and the employee is the agent". As "the principal," the manufacturer uses "the agency," for bringing the product to the market, educating customers about the product, and taking care of the warehouse logistics, etc. For that, facilitating agencies such as advertising agencies, are often hired on a fee-for-service/commission basis to implement marketing programs. As a result of this, a key challenge arises due to information asymmetry – "when some information that is relevant to one party but unknown to the other"

(Banerjee et al., 2013). Also, the activities of agencies are difficult to monitor – i.e., "the problem of hidden action" (Banerjee et al., 2013). One of which is that the efforts of agencies may vary based on the payment contracts since agency remunerations can be both linear (i.e., fixed wage plus effort-based commission) and non-linear (i.e., the bonus is paid when sales reach a quota) – thereby often producing mixed results for "the principal" (Banerjee et al., 2013).

This specific aspect of Agency Theory has been used to explore the relationships between educational institutions and education agents in the higher-education business (see, e.g., Huang et al., 2016; Nikula and Kivisto, 2018, 2020). Noting in the UK context that "the relationship between universities and their international recruitment agents is that of a "typical principal-agent relationship," Huang et al. (2016, 1334) applied Agency Theory to demonstrate that universities incentivise, monitor, and enforce codes of conduct on agencies to successfully monitor their activities. In the Canadian context, Nikula and Kivisto (2018, 2020) further argue that since the primary objective of these agencies is to maximise profits with the least effort, they may often disregard the directives of the institutions, thereby suggesting that the "locus of power does not always lie with the principal" (p. 1349). In this study, we use this understanding to identify "the principal" in the higher-education business in Canada as well as explore the nature of the principal-agency relationship in the context of IS recruitment.

Research Methods

This research was conducted in the National Capital Region (NCR) of India and the GTA, using a variety of qualitative methods. In India, the first author visited multiple college campuses in the NCR, participated in one edu-expo, and conducted in-depth, semi-structured, topical interviews with recruiting agents, potential ISs and their family members, and college lecturers. In the GTA, information about the college programmes (including fee structures, admission requirements, and services available to ISs) was collected from all 5 community colleges and 40 career colleges. Additionally, we spoke to key informants (KIs), including college staff (administrators/recruitment officers), instructors, and recruiting agents (who referred to themselves as education consultants). All KIs in India and Canada were selected using a purposive sampling method.

To understand the migration challenges of the students, 30 ISs from India were interviewed using a semi-structured topical interview protocol (19 from community colleges and 11 from career colleges). All students were selected using a snowball sampling method and a "maximal variation" qualitative sampling approach (Creswell, 1992).[23] While selecting participants, a gender balance was also ensured. At the time of the interviews, most students were between 23 and 34 years of age, and they had been in the GTA for at least 1 year. Whereas most participants from the career colleges had arrived from small towns (in Punjab, Haryana, and Gujarat), all community college

students were from large metropolitan areas. Also, while most of the career college students were educated in the Punjabi/Gujarati/Hindi language and were therefore reluctant to converse in English, almost all community college participants interviewed had been educated in an English medium school/college and preferred to speak in English.

In the next few paragraphs, the main research findings are presented thematically: first, we present the differential recruitment strategies of community and private colleges in the GTA. Under this theme, we first discuss the direct marketing strategies used by community and career colleges in the GTA, which includes, websites, source country edu-expos, and Canadian ethnic media. Next, we discuss the challenges faced by GTA colleges in recruiting ISs and the barriers faced by ISs because of unregulated recruiting practices.

Research Findings

Most Indian ISs who came from large metropolitan areas revealed that they decided to study in Canada to achieve personal aspirations. For most of them, the "pull" factors included (i) lower cost of tuition compared to other OECD countries; (ii) "easy process of obtaining PR"; and (iii) higher wages (i.e., earning in dollars). Some students also spoke about coming to Canada for intellectual growth and the possibilities of creating a better life for themselves in Canada and for their parents back home. In comparison, ISs from rural Punjab seemed more concerned about migrating to Canada permanently, and training in Canada was an important step toward fulfilling their familial aspirations. In this regard, we found some connections between the current agrarian crisis in Punjab and the increase in students from villages and semi-rural towns of Punjab in career colleges. Harshdeep, who comes from a farming family in Punjab, said:

In Punjab right now there are many money problems, many problems with our land and all … after my graduation, [I had] two options I can go to Delhi or Chandigarh like that and find work, but getting a job with graduation degree is not easy plus you must stay there alone and all. The other thing was that my uncle and cousin brother were already here in Canada … my uncle advised us to see if we can become student. That way you can get PR also … my younger brother and I tried our luck [to come to Canada] together, lucky we got in college together (Harshdeep, Career College)

Like Harshdeep, other Punjabi students who came from semi-rural areas shared that they came to Canada "to earn in dollars and send money home" (Preeti). Another student said that more than a personal aspiration, it was their "family's strategy" (Yoginder) to send them to Canada as ISs.

Regardless of whether the Indian ISs were from large cities or small towns, it seemed that the decision to study in Canada was taken at the familial level. This became particularly evident when over one-half of the participants stated that their parents had either taken a bank loan or borrowed from private financing corporations to finance their education in Canada. Several

students also discussed their over-bearing responsibilities for repaying these education loans, which forced them to work at multiple jobs in the formal and the informal economies, and experience food insecurities (Ghosh et al., 2022).

The desire to achieve permanent residency is a strong motivational factor for ISs to come to Canada (ibid). While this is important, in our study only a few community college students ranked this motive higher than "getting a foreign degree." It seemed that they came to Canada to build a career, and in this regard, almost half of them expressed that they would prefer to return home after the completion of their degrees.

Differential Recruitment Strategies of Community and Private Colleges in the GTA

The responsibility of recruiting ISs was on the programmes – "program[s] market themselves following the college guidelines" (P.T, KI). As reported previously, three methods of recruiting were used to recruit ISs to GTA colleges: websites, direct marketing, and third-party educational agents (Yang, 2003; Coffey, 2014). However, some similarities and differences were also noted between and within the community and career colleges concerning how these methods were used.

Direct Marketing Strategies

Most community colleges and the more established career colleges used their informative websites to attract ISs, and titles of courses and programmes often matched the jobs listed under the **NOC.**[24] Using such titles for advertising may have benefited college programmes in attracting Indian ISs to their campuses, but the use of such strategies has also misled students into believing that once they have completed these courses and earned their diplomas, they would automatically find employment in a related field. As Ashmeet (Career College Student) remarked:

> The reason I came to *** college is because of this course. It was made very clear to me that even though I am an engineer, it is this business course that will give me a good job in Canada. But I put in all this effort, but I am still struggling to get a decent job.

In their UK study, Robertson and Kimljenovic (2016, 601) have described "edu-brokers" as flexible and fluid corporations that arrange international fairs and workshops for educational institutions, who pay to attend to hire suitable education agents. In doing so, such organisations bring together "education institutions, carefully chosen student recruitment agents, and providers of other services for the international education industry with the simple aim of improving IS mobility" (ICEF, 2012, 2021). The International

Consultants in Education and Fairs (ICEF) is one such corporation that is directly involved in directly marketing Canadian PISs to ISs from India.

Unlike Canadian universities and most community colleges, edu-expos were not commonly used by career colleges in the GTA (A.C. KI Community College). A. C. further elaborated that her programme regularly sends representatives to "source country edu-expos to create awareness. But I don't think other colleges can do that ... it is a very costly affair." Corroborating A.C.'s observations, the first author also found that in the two expos she attended in the NCR, while there were several representatives from US and UK colleges, Canadian colleges were by and large absent from those forums. S.S. (KI, recruiter, and owner of a small career college) described attending international edu-fairs in India[25] as "a waste of time and money." T.D. (KI, career college) further elaborated that using a direct marketing strategy by visiting specific towns in Punjab was more beneficial: "I visited [Punjab] … I have no agent; I know where to go and I do that … we give students from small towns to dream big in Canada."

It is well known that immigrant groups often use ethnic media for community building (Ahmed, 2015). However, until now, how ethnic media is used to recruit ISs is not widely known. This study found that career colleges in the GTA often used South Asian/Indian radio to advertise short-term courses (particularly, forklifting, long-haul truck driving, esthetician, cooking, etc.) to attract Indian ISs. Using pre-recorded testimonials of alumni, some career colleges even made dubious promises (high wages and easy transitioning into PR). Since most of these advertisements were only broadcasted in the Punjabi language, this is indicative of a target population – Punjabis in Canada – who may be ISs themselves, or their transnational social networks (discussed below).

Third-Party Transnational Agents

As previously mentioned, most Canadian educational institutions use private education agents for IS recruitment. It is important to note that many agents operate transnationally – in Canada and in the source markets like India. We found that while Canadian institutions hire Canadian consultants, these consultants subsequently hire sub-agencies in India, especially for recruiting purposes. Also, while it was common for community colleges (with relatively larger funding) to hire these agents, it was not a common practice for career colleges to do so, especially among the small and medium-sized institutions in the GTA.

Supporting the findings of Lestage (2016), all Canadian agencies we contacted for this study "misrepresented" (Lestage, 2016, 11) themselves as educational consultants. While acknowledging that they were paid a commission by the educational institutions for which they were recruiting, most consultants denied making any financial gains from the students themselves.

Describing his role, one such consultant (at a family-owned business) that works with Indian ISs said:

> We are managers … make sure that the students and the institutions get what they want. We see that legitimate people are admitted, and not with false IDs and test results. We advise our sister organizations to which place to send them, about new programs and all … the rest is handled in India … we monitor them regularly.
>
> (A.D.)

It seemed like a normal business practice for Canadian consultants to download the task of recruiting students to sub-agencies in India. These sub-agencies varied in size and capacity, ranging from a single-person operation to a corporation with over 30 employees. As a result, there were differences among these agencies with respect to their capacity for information delivery and/or service provision.

While admitting that they were working for both Canadian agencies as well as Canadian educational institutions, most Indian agents said that the students were also their "clients," and that they deliver "a client-focused service." From our interviews, however, we found significant inconsistencies among Indian agents with respect to their level of awareness of the Canadian education system. While some agents often conflated the Canadian system with "the American system," others stated that they were simply a conduit of information delivery and that the responsibility of knowing the education system rests with the head office in Canada. P.D., an agent in New Delhi, explained: "… I am not in Canada so I cannot be expected to have a clear knowledge about the colleges and all. I deliver the information I receive from the head office." Another agent, N.S. (with a familial connection to one of the GTA consultants), stated:

> My job is to co-ordinate with other agents [in Gujarat, Bihar, Andhra] so we are all giving out the same information … my goal is to grow this business here, to make it grow like the *** Centre, for that we need to have more clients.
>
> (N.S.)

An employee of a large-scale immigration agency in New Delhi, which was also an education agency for Canada and institutions worldwide, began by stating that the current focus of his agency was to send Indian students "close to home" (C.C.), which included Malaysia, Singapore, Russia, and China. During our interviews with several agents, which included probing regarding their expertise on the Canadian education system, it was revealed that despite their claims of a "well-trained staff," most agents were unaware of the differences between universities and colleges (and they often used them interchangeably) and arguably the associated quality of education and/or their

"market values" (i.e., how degrees, as opposed to diplomas, would translate into employment as per the NOC list). As one Indian agent said: "I think all colleges are similar … instructors pass the same test like in India (N.S.).[26]"

Indian agents seemed cognizant of the comparative differences in tuition fees between various institutions (and countries) as well. Fearing that his agency could lose clients if "good education" was prioritised over "cost," S.M. referred to a table listing the tuition fees of many public and private universities and colleges in Canada, particularly singling out the universities and asking: "why client go here if they get the same result elsewhere at a low price?" Similarly, referring to the potential capital investment in education made by student families, N.S. said: "ultimately it is about retrieving your investments, so we have to give options of lower investments but higher returns." Most agents also revealed that some of their former clients had advised them not to send students to Toronto due to the high cost of living and higher competition for co-op positions (Chevrier, 2018). Finally, as Lestage (2016) reported, agencies seem to offer various types of incentives to attract potential clients. For example, N.S. said, "the head office advised to offer discounts … wave application charges."

The above findings demonstrate that although the misidentification of educational institutions may not have been deliberate, there was clearly a lack of adequate training about the Canadian education system in general and there was also a particular aversion toward Canadian universities, which may have been a reason why many Indian ISs are increasingly seeking a college education.

As was previously noted, significant differences were found between community and private college students with respect to their pre-departure locational and educational backgrounds. Almost all community college participants were from metropolitan cities (e.g., New Delhi, Vadodara, Mumbai, and Hyderabad), they belonged to various linguistic and religious backgrounds, and spoke fluently in English, while an overwhelming proportion of the private career college students were from small towns in Punjab and Haryana. Furthermore, though the majority of community college students used an agent to choose an appropriate educational institution, the majority of world career college students appeared to be guided by their social and familial connections in the GTA. This finding thus nuances previous reports that most ISs in Canada hire education agents to make up for their own lack of knowledge, connections, time, and expertise (Coffey, 2014; Tian, 2017; Jafar and Legusov, 2020; Xu, 2020) and points to a critical difference between ISs in community colleges and in career colleges with respect to primary information sources.

In answering how they came to know about GTA colleges we found that many community college students had attended edu-fairs, where they found out about educational agents and institutions. It was also revealed that the attendees of such edu-expos were often rewarded with application-fee waivers and other discounts and benefits, such as airport pickup and

sight-seeing trips. Despite receiving some incentives for choosing specific agents, most community college students reported that they were misled by them. Describing their experiences, about a third of the community college students interviewed, who had worked with two well-known Indian agents, said that even though they were promised an increased chance of receiving multiple offers of admission if they applied through them, they were slotted into a college and a programme that was unrelated to their field of study. As Vinay said:

> No, there were no options given, I got an admission letter for just one college. … I had a Bioengineering degree, from there I came to do community and social work. … I initially said no but the agent convinced my parents that compared to my stream, community and social work has less competition and more jobs in Canada.

Some community college students said that it was only after their arrival in the GTA that they discovered the differences between university degrees and college diplomas and that with their qualifications they could have applied to attend universities. As Satkaran described: "I did not even know about university programmes, I thought college is university … it was never cleared." Some students were convinced by their agent that whether they attended a college or a university was immaterial as they would get the same degree and work experience through PGWPs.

Unlike the community college students, most career college students said that they came to know about the possibilities of becoming a student in Canada from their social networks, who provided guidance – they did not use an agent to choose where to study. It has been reported in the literature that, rather than being passive responders to external stimuli, ISs use the internet to gather information about institutions and countries (Howes, 2020). While this may be true for most university students, most students who participated in our study did not search for appropriate colleges and programmes by themselves. Using the internet was found to be even rarer among career college students, a majority of whom came from families with lower economic means. Thus, even though they came from the same country, Indian ISs' social and economic contexts of departure were not all the same.

Recruitment Challenges: Institutions and ISs

In discussing the challenges faced by individual programmes, especially those in community colleges it was revealed that "when programs find it difficult to get the target [i.e., the optimal number of ISs admitted that academic year] the source countries keep changing" (P.T., KI, Community College). Supporting P.T.'s comments, an ESL instructor revealed that, because her college is focusing on markets in India, she often fears losing her employment – "I know my college wants more Indians but the problem is that, if more Indians come in,

this is a problem for my programme, as it is hard to sell ESL to them, particularly those who have studied in an English medium school … so, even though I am Indian, I will say that we should stop getting Indian students, and try to get students from non-English speaking countries. Otherwise, I will lose my job" (C.A. ESL Instructor, Community College). C.A.'s statements are illustrative of the tensions between the ambitions of the college and the survival of some constituent programmes within them. However, P.T. summed up the overall objective by stating that "the college just wants numbers – its quantity, not quality." A similar sentiment was expressed by officers in charge of advertising career colleges as well – as S.S. said "we can only survive if there are enough ISs. Domestic crowd is simply not enough for the business."

An important issue that has not been previously reported is that, compared to the community colleges, fiscal constraints were commonly faced by several small and medium-sized career colleges (i.e., often located in strip malls, offering two or three programmes, and having a total of 20–30 students). KIs indicated that such fiscal constraints may arise due to a combination of factors, including increased competition among institutes (particularly in the GTA), rental charges, and marketing and operational costs. Career colleges are often owned and operated by self-employed immigrants, who obtain loans from banks as well as private lenders to start such potentially lucrative businesses, the survival of which often depends on their ability to attract and retain ISs. During the span of our data collection, we came across several such organisations that had closed and/or consolidated some of their programmes, and since they were unable to afford education agents, they fostered new marketing strategies such as using ethnic media, direct marketing, and "word of mouth."

It has been previously reported in the literature that Canadian education agents receive commissions from educational institutions (Collins, 2012; Coffey, 2014; Yi et al., 2018; Nikula and Kivisto, 2020), and we have previously mentioned that the Indian agents we interviewed did admit to being paid by both Canadian agents and the institutions to recruit ISs. A lesser-known fact in this regard which was revealed by our study is that some transnational agents receive payments from students not just for the ancillary services they may provide but also for other covert arrangements.[27] Many students reported that the agents had asked them for "extra money" to ensure the following: they get admission into a GTA college, to easily pass the international English language tests and to qualify for various educational loans, from financial institutions in India and private moneylenders in the GTA. When we brought up these issues to the colleges and the consultants, some explained that remote monitoring of such unscrupulous activities is challenging, especially with little funding. Others seemed surprised that some students had paid over 30 lakhs INR (the equivalent of $55,000 CDN) to an education agent just to come to Canada as an IS.

Regulatory gaps often created barriers for ISs. Upon arriving in the GTA, some college students came to realise that the programmes/colleges in which

they had initially enrolled were not the right match for them. In one case, the career college even closed within three months after the student's arrival. Under such circumstances, since "putting pressure back home" was not an option, some community college students were contemplating applying to universities, while a couple of career college students said that they were taking a semester off to work and then restarting their education at another college. As Simran disappointingly stated, "once tuition is paid what option does one have, the semester is lost, the money is gone." Our research found that the government directive under such situations is as follows:

> If the school you are studying at loses its designated learning institution status after you get your study permit, you can keep studying your program until your current permit expires, but only renew your study permit if you enrol at a designated learning institution.

These findings were particularly disturbing as the state seems to absolve its regulatory duties. Satkaran's statement sums up the complex nature of the problem:

> I did not know to whom should I complain? Is it to the college? The college told me it is your agent's fault. If I go to the agent they will show me another person it will go on like this. Or should I just blame my family?

Discussion

This study has demonstrated that several "push–pull" factors may be identified with respect to Indian ISs' economic and sociological motivations for studying in Canada. This includes comparatively lower tuition and living costs (USA and UK); safe and multicultural space; and the presence of networks – i.e., both institutional and familial connections. Additionally, efficient marketing strategies deployed by colleges (and specific programmes within those) and their transnational agents seem to pull Indian ISs toward specific institutions. In this regard, corroborating studies in the US, Australian, and UK contexts (Clark, 2013; Khanal and Gaulee, 2019), this research has also demonstrated that Indian ISs struggle to obtain accurate and useful information about Canadian college programmes.

In Canada, even though the activities of education agents working with universities are bound and metered by university-agency agreements (Collins, 2012; Coffey, 2014; Yi et al., 2018; Jafar and Legusov, 2020),[28] no such guidelines exist for colleges. As a result, colleges have no way of monitoring the activities of education agents, who may misinform their clients and steer them toward colleges, from whom they receive higher commissions. Additionally, misinformation may also stem from some of the inherent complexities within the Canadian education system that pertain to the hierarchy

of the educational institutions, non-standardised admission requirements particularly with respect to English language skills, and tuition fees.

As "cultural mediators" (Robinson-Pant and Magyar, 2018) the education agents are non-state actors who play an integral part in the higher-education business in Canada (Huang et al., 2016; Beech, 2018). As "the agents" of educational institutions, they steer specific types of students into specific types of colleges and programmes through various scrupulous and unscrupulous means. In this regard, Canadian education agents hire the services of Indian partners to promote those products that are the most profitable. The Indian agencies, as the agent to "the principal" – in this case the Canadian education agencies – also censor information from potential ISs to safeguard their own interests. Our study found that in some cases English-educated urbanised Indians from notably better socio-economic backgrounds were slotted into community colleges, while those from vernacular mediums and lower socio-economic conditions were sent to career colleges. It is also possible that information about universities was being withheld and conflated with colleges purposefully, as working with universities would necessitate that education agents abide by the university-agency agreement, and therefore they would not be able to financially exploit students and their families under various pretences, including the promise of assuring a placement in the GTA institutions despite lower IELTS scores.

We found that, despite India's progress in the high-tech sector and the resulting near "ubiquitous" availability of the internet and telecommunications, many community college students depended on education agencies to find them a placement (i.e., weak ties). In comparison, a larger proportion of career college students had used their familial and social connections in the GTA to guide their decision-making (i.e., strong ties). While many community and some career college students were affected by agent misinformation, disinformation, and fraudulent behaviour, overall, career college students seemed more content with their programmes of study.

While the federal government's active encouragement and stake in IS migration is evidenced by its financial commitment through the International Education Strategy (2019–2024), its lack of regulation and oversight of educational institutions and education agents recruiting ISs, clearly demonstrates the government's neoliberal agenda – commercialisation, commodification, and deregulation of the education industry (Plumb, 2020). Additionally, allowing thousands of ISs to enrol at undergraduate levels of study and short-duration courses in community and career colleges that are usually associated with lower-skilled occupations raises important questions about the state's actual purposes behind increasing IS migration to Canada. Finally, is the "system" involving various government and non-government actors purposefully convoluted, so that, when met with adversities, ISs do not know whom to turn to for help – agent, college, or levels of government?

Unlike in the UK, Australia, or New Zealand, there is no national approval system for education agencies in Canada (Robertson and Kimljenovic,

2016). The federal government, however, recognises that agents work on behalf of the educational institutions, thus absolving any responsibilities since it neither accredits nor endorses them, and even cautions students and their families to use agencies at their discretion (EduCanada, 2019). Furthermore, although The Department of Foreign Affairs and the Canadian Consortium for International Education claim to provide training for "all immigration agencies" – which may give a false impression that this includes education agents – no such training programmes or tests exist for them. Instead, the training and tests of education agents are conducted by "edu-brokers," which provide a list of approved education agencies permitted to work for Canadian institutions (Council of Ministers of Education Canada, 2013).

Our study also found that Canadian education institutions may be regarded as "the agents" of the state, fulfilling the state's need for revenue and Canadian-trained labour. In this regard, following the capitalist norms, the state encourages competition among these agents, who receive funding (i.e., community colleges) and can pay their "crown debts" (career colleges) by maximising IS enrolment (Flynn and Vredevoogd, 2010; Howes, 2020). Such a competitive environment necessitates the adoption of innovative marketing strategies, through proactive advertisements, direct engagement, and hiring third-party agencies as a crucial part of the capitalist project. Although it was mentioned earlier but could not be fully explored in this chapter, the survival of small- and medium-scale career colleges (which are often run by self-employed immigrants) is largely controlled by the unclear and sometimes changing standards of the provincial government (e.g., building regulations). Colleges may have to close or reduce programmes if they are unable to make a profit after paying for their capital loans, rent, and other related operational costs. When that happens with ISs enrolled in the programmes, rather than assisting them, the state simply suggests that the students change their programme of study or join another institution. In the end what one gets is "a curious state of affairs that is neither the product of deliberate, conscious design, nor the product of a sequence of random ad hoc experiments, but somehow a combination of the two" (Buchanan, 2017, 473).

Using the framework of Agency Theory in this context we argue that the Canadian state is "the principal" in the education business since it not only creates but also controls the survival of the educational institutions (and the programmes within them) by controlling the "purse strings" through funds and grants, as well as their accreditation status, and establishes a limited regulatory framework for recruitment practices and accountability. In this regard, while the state was found to exert more regulatory control in the context of the university-agency relationship, the colleges, whether public or privately funded, were not as well-supported or protected by a regulatory framework.

The above discussion demonstrates that the relationships between "the principal", identified in previous studies as the educational institution, and

"the agent," i.e., the education agency, are not a two-party system. State involvement cannot be ignored in this regard particularly because of its active role in commercialising, commodifying, and deregulating the education sector to mitigate the policy blunders that were recreated vis-à-vis the economic migrants. Interestingly, as it was seen concerning educational institutions (especially state-funded universities vs career colleges), while the stake of the Canadian state is clear, its role remains undefined with regards to the education agents as well. Therefore, while the private–public relationship in the Canadian education system is entrenched, the lines between "the principal" and "the agent" are often blurred and even interchangeable. The state, the educational institutions, and the education agents can choose to act or not act as "the principal," and as a result, when faced with challenges the onus is on the student (i.e., the consumer) to identify the regulating body for which to seek compensations.

Notes

1 The Association of Canadian Community Colleges and the Canadian Bureau of International Education (CBIE) were established in the late 1960s to provide quality education to students from developing nations (Hurabielle, 1998).
2 An education agent is "an individual, company or other organization providing services on a commercial basis to help students and their parents gain places in study programs overseas" (Coffey, 2014, 13).
3 Previous research suggests that until the early 2000s educational institutions worked independently to recruit ISs with little state interference (Knight, 1997; Walker, 1999; Galway, 2000).
4 http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/pepg/audiences/isp/requirements.html#ISP
5 In India, following the British system, most colleges are affiliated with degree-granting universities. Therefore, regardless of whether these are state-funded or privately operated, students train at college campuses but receive university degrees. For example, the Panjab University is a government university with 188 affiliated colleges https://puchd.ac.in/, while the Chandigarh University is a private organisation with 18 affiliated colleges.
6 As the research findings will reveal, this is an important challenge for immigrant-owned private career colleges, which are often financed by nationally regulated banks as well as private lenders. As a result of nonpayment of crown debts, they may lose their status with ISs already enrolled.
7 The career college websites did not readily share information on an IELTS requirement, duration of programme, or international tuition fees. We found that there was no such standard requirement and/or policy in place for career colleges with regards to tuition fees, services, etc. At one career college we were told that the fees were negotiable on a "first come first serve basis" (conversation with an official of a career college) https://www.ontariocolleges.ca/en/colleges/paying-for-college
8 https://www.ielts.org/-/media/publications/information-for-candidates/ielts-information-for-candidates-english-us.ashx?la=en-us
9 Linguistic capital, as a form of embodied capital, refers to one's ability to speak the dominant "official" language, as accorded by the specifications of the charter group (Nawyn et al., 2012). Studies show that higher English language proficiency makes it easier for ISs to navigate the system and interact with others, leading to better self-esteem and acculturation (Yeh and Inose, 2003; Smiljanic, 2017).

10 Recently, with new partnerships developing between some community colleges and universities (e.g., the University of Guelph-Humber) certain college level programmes are jointly offered with universities. In such cases, these hierarchies are further muddled. Also, within the same PSI while some programmes are jointly offered with universities, others are not, which can create more confusion https://www.guelphhumber.ca/futurestudents/programs
11 Through the Draft Emigration Bill 2019, the state finally recognized ISs as emigrants.
12 https://nsdcindia.org/iisc-network
13 https://nsdcindia.org/iisc-network
14 https://mea.gov.in/Images/amb1/Salient_aspects_of_Emigration_Bill_2019.pdf
15 http://data.uis.unesco.org/
16 https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/nri/study/these-countries-are-the-most-preferred-education-destination-amongst-indian-students/articleshow/98903435.cms
17 https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/nri/study/a-record-226450-indian-students-went-to-study-in-canada-in-2022/articleshow/98116721.cms?from=mdr
18 http://data.uis.unesco.org/
19 It was argued that with the advent of globalization, consumers seek diverse food, as a result, there is a surge in demand for non-food-grain products (Sharma and Singh, 2014).
20 To produce desired results due to a variety of factors including fraudulent practices of the PAFC, lack of sufficient infrastructure, and unlawful buying of farmlands by companies (Witsoe, 2006). What profoundly affected the farmers was that the companies often rejected their produce, which then had to be sold in the open market at minimal cost (ibid).
21 At the time of the interviews for this study, upwards of 1,500 farmers had committed suicide (2016–2019), accounting for almost half of the total number of suicides within the past two decades, and most of them were marginal and small farmers from the Malwa region of Punjab (Agnihotri-Chaba, 2019).
22 These numbers are not available for Canada, but in the UK it ranges between 10% and 17.5% of first year's university tuition fee (Robertson and Kimljenovic, 2016, 600).
23 Participants were selected according to the type of college they attended (community and private) and the geographical location of their campus, with an aim of examining the widest variety of situations possible.
24 The courses include professional and managerial training programmes in business and finance and health care, technical jobs, and skilled trades, such as construction-training (i.e., gas technician, plumber, and electrician), as well as on-the-job training courses (e.g., hospitality, personal services such as barbers, aestheticians, forklifting, and long-haul truck driving).
25 The informant went to the 2018 World education expo in Vadodara. However, such expos are organized in several metropolitan cities in India, especially in the national capital region of New Delhi, Chandigarh (North), Hyderabad (South), and Vadodara (West). http://educationexpogujarat.com/
26 The agent was directed to the website of private career colleges in Ontario, which had the qualifications of an instructor (vocational and general streams) clearly outlined.
27 Bista (2017) had reported that the agents offer an array of services to the ISs for a fee (including preparing bank documents and visa papers, securing travel itineraries, and arranging for airport pickup and housing in the host country).
28 The university-agency agreement prohibits agents from: publishing or advertising material related to the University without prior consent; assigning the admission-related tasks to others without prior consent from the University; describing

himself/herself as someone with authority to admit students, or as a CIC representative; and signing contracts or conducting negotiations without the prior consent of the University (Lestage, 2016, 9).

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7 Challenges Facing International College Students in Canada

Marshia Akbar

Introduction

Canadian policies have been designed to encourage growth in the number of international students given that their Canadian education, work experience, and proficiency in English/French make them potentially a vital source of highly skilled workers and future permanent residents (Arthur 2017). In 2022, there were 807,750 international students, across all study levels, who had study permits in Canada, which grew by 31 percent compared to 617,000 students in 2021 (ICEF Monitor 2023). Between 2000 and 2022, their number significantly increased by more than 400 percent. Overall, the diversity among international students in Canada has declined in recent years with more than 50 percent of all students coming from only two countries: India and China. Students from India comprised the largest group in 2022, accounting for 40 percent of all international students in the country (Figure 7.1).

Although most international students in higher education were enrolled in universities (60.5 percent) in 2019/2020, the proportion studying in colleges (39.5 percent) has been on the rise (Figure 7.2) (Statistics Canada 2021). Canadian colleges have experienced a major increase in international student enrolments. International enrolments in the colleges grew faster than those of universities. Between 2014 and 2018, study permit applications for international students planning to attend a Canadian college grew by 319 percent (College and Institutes Canada 2021).

The growth in the number of international students was most pronounced in Ontario and British Columbia (Statistics Canada 2022a). Ontario is the only province in Canada where more international students have been enrolling in colleges than universities since the 2018/2019 academic year and more than half of Ontario's international students (52 percent) enrolled in colleges in Ontario in 2020/2021 (Figure 7.3).

Colleges in Ontario are, thus, playing increasing roles in shaping the education migration pathway, educating future labour force, and shaping internationalisation policies and practices in Canada. However, there are growing concerns about the social and economic challenges facing international students and the roles of colleges in addressing these issues and supporting international

DOI: 10.4324/9781003490234-7

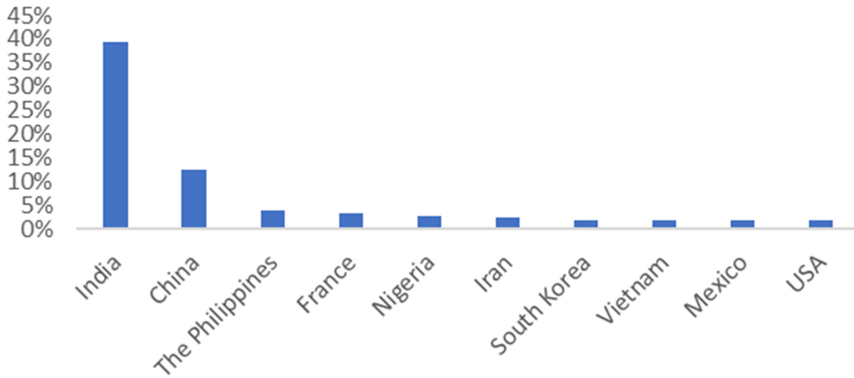

Figure 7.1 Top ten source countries for international students in Canada, 2022.

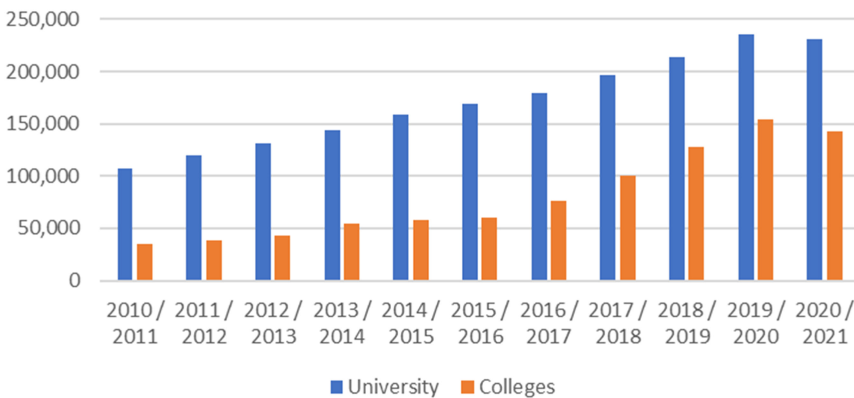

Figure 7.2 International students by type of institution in Canada.

Source: Statistics Canada. (2022). https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3710001801

students. International students' temporary status and their lack of access to services make them one of the most vulnerable migrant groups in Canada. The COVID-19 pandemic hit them particularly hard, intensifying existing challenges and creating new ones related to job loss, reduced income, social isolation, and lack of adequate health care and social support (Government of Canada 2021; Varughese & Schwartz 2022). Amid the pandemic, many academics and policymakers have drawn their attention to addressing the challenges facing international students, particularly in the college sector, which is comparatively an understudied sector compared to its university counterparts.

This attention has been intensified after the release of CBC's The Fifth Estate Series: *Sold a Lie 2022* and news reports such as "Here's What International

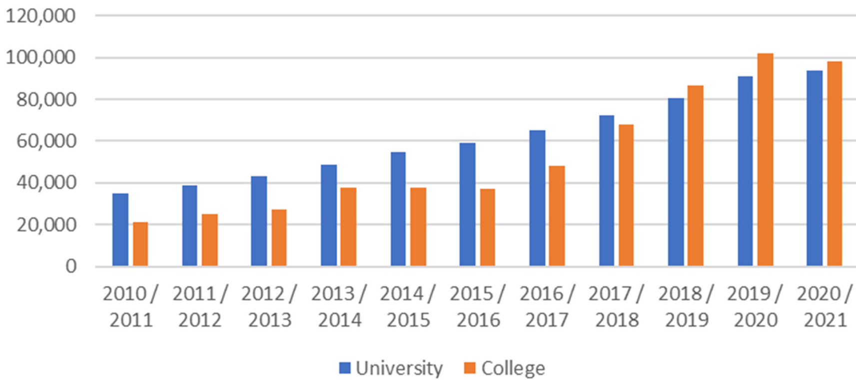

Figure 7.3 International students by type of institution in Ontario.

Source: Statistics Canada. (2022). https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3710001801

Students Say about Their Experience" in Canada, published in the *Toronto Star* (Pereira & Keung 2022), which captured Indian college students' challenging journey: deception and false promises from the recruitment agencies, lack of support from the colleges, financial difficulties due to high and ever-increasing tuition fees, and barriers to employment during the study and after graduation. The recent social media campaign, *Need or Greed*, by Ontario college students to reduce international tuition fees and obtain access to services also caught the attention of many policymakers, researchers, and practitioners. They emphasise the urgent need for examining how international students obtain college admission, experience academic adjustment, access social and employment services, the challenges that they face during their studies and after graduation, and the support they need to overcome those challenges.

Within this recent context, this study is a timely effort to produce theoretical and empirical insights into the barriers international college students face. This study will contribute to understanding how their social and economic integration can be facilitated through more effective roles of the public colleges and through designing and delivering appropriate services and support programmes. Examining their study-to-work transition challenges and access to services is also essential to address Toronto's labour market processes and the growing labour shortages, particularly during the post-pandemic recovery period.

Background of the Study

Factors Influencing International Enrolment

During the 1980s and 1990s, a neoliberal political ideology emphasising privatisation, corporate organisation, internationalisation, and inter-institutional competition gained prevalence in Canada's education sector.

As a result, Ontario's colleges experienced consistent cuts in public funding over time. When the Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (CAAT) were established in 1966, the provincial government through the Ministry of Colleges and Universities (MCU) and the Ministry of Skills Development (MSD) provided around 75 percent of funding, with student fees accounting for only 10–15 percent of total revenues (Mackay 2014). However, since then, public funding for Ontario public colleges has continued to decrease. In the 2008/2009 academic year, 54.4 percent of revenues in Ontario public colleges came from public funding, while 28.2 percent came from student fees. However, by 2019/2020, these figures had almost reversed, with student fees accounting for over half (53 percent) of all college revenues and public funding decreasing to 30 percent (Statistics Canada 2022a). Currently, public funding for colleges in Ontario is the lowest among all the provinces.

Ontario colleges have also experienced a decline in domestic student enrolment since 2012/2013. Between 2012/2013 and 2020/2021, public colleges in Ontario saw a 15 percent decrease in domestic student enrolments, largely due to changes in Ontario's population demographics and high school graduates choosing university over college education. In contrast, during the same period, international student enrolment grew by 342 percent. In 2020/2021, a majority of international students came from India (62 percent), followed by China (6 percent) and Vietnam (4 percent) (Office of the Auditor General of Ontario 2021). Linda Franklin, former president and CEO of Colleges Ontario, noted that the colleges had turned to international students to make up for declining provincial funding and the drop in the number of domestic students, and that the colleges were overly reliant on one country's [India] expatriate students (Greenfield 2021). In summary, the decline in domestic enrolment and low government support has pushed Ontario colleges to target the international market, particularly the Indian market, for revenue generation.

However, rather than just supplementing the numbers of domestic students, the colleges are focused on continuous growth in international enrolment, overlooking their capacity to sustain the increasing number of students. This growth-oriented approach has led many colleges to prioritise increasing their net assets through international tuition fees (Office of the Auditor General of Ontario 2021). According to the same report, international students who enrolled in Ontario colleges in the 2020/2021 academic year paid an average of $14,306 (more than three times higher) compared to $3,228 per domestic student. This represented an 8 percent increase from the average fees charged to international students in 2018/2019. Despite making up only 30 percent of the student population in Ontario's 24 public colleges, international students provided 68 percent of tuition revenue. Their fees alone were worth $1.7 billion, which is more than the colleges received in provincial grants in 2020/2021. However, this focus on revenue generation through international student enrolment has led to concerns about the sustainability of the increasing number of students and the quality of their education.

Dependency on Recruitment Agencies

To ensure an increasing supply of international students, colleges in Ontario rely on recruitment agencies. These agencies were paid over $114 million in commissions by Ontario's public colleges in 2020–2021 (Office of the Auditor General of Ontario 2021). A recent CBC documentary by the Fifth Estate (Sold a Lie) revealed how some recruitment agencies deceive students in India by making false promises about college programmes, employment, and immigration to recruit them for Canadian colleges. These agencies often assist students in obtaining a false English language test (TOEFL/IELTS) to gain college admission. Many Indian students invest their savings, sell their parents' properties, or borrow funds to enrol in these colleges. However, upon arriving in Canada, many students face challenges associated with high living costs, academic programmes, language barriers, employment, and the lengthy, costly, and competitive immigration process. The documentary showed how financial difficulties and lack of support in Canada often lead to depression, frustration, and even suicide among many Indian students. Recruiting students is a lucrative business for agencies, as each agency earns up to $3,000 to $4,000 per student from Canadian post-secondary institutions (One Voice Canada 2021). Ontario's public colleges continue to pay these agents to enrol more international students whose tuition fees guarantee revenue generation. As a result, colleges have become somewhat dependent on these agents for sustaining this revenue source. However, both agencies and colleges prioritise profit over students' on- and off-campus challenges (Jafar & Legusov 2021).

Service Framework

Although enrolling international students through recruitment agencies is a profitable venture for Ontario's public colleges, they often invest little capital in providing these students with adequate support services. While Canada has a well-organised federal government-funded settlement service sector, international college students, as temporary migrants, are not eligible for these services, except for those in Quebec. As a result, most international students rely on their colleges for academic, employment, health, and immigration services but often find that support and services are limited (Arthur 2017). The Ministry of Colleges and Universities in Ontario requires publicly funded colleges to provide support to international students, including language programmes, housing support, academic, career, and peer counselling supports, health and other social service supports, orientation or welcome services, etc. (Ministry of Colleges and Universities, 2022). However, Ontario public colleges often do not prioritise the service needs of international students (Buckner et al. 2022). The international student offices at colleges often lack adequate resources and staff to provide the broad range of services required by students, and there are no accountability measures in place to ensure that these services are available (Buckner et al. 2021).

Coordination between government and academic institutions to assess the social and labour market challenges and needs of international students in the

academic setting and during their transition to the labour market is currently limited. Additionally, there is a lack of information on the challenges and service needs of international college students, as most research is focused on university students, despite over 50 percent of international students in Ontario attending colleges (Statistics Canada 2022b). To address this issue, there is a need for greater collaboration and communication between government and academic institutions to better understand the unique needs of international college students. Additionally, in-depth research is required to identify the specific challenges faced by these students and to develop targeted support services that can effectively address their needs. By prioritising the needs of international college students, colleges and government agencies can ensure that these students receive the necessary support to succeed academically and in the labour market, which will ultimately benefit both the students and Canada as a whole.

Objectives and Scope

The main goal of this study is to produce evidence-based knowledge on international college students in Canada by achieving two objectives:

- To understand the challenges facing international college students enrolled in Toronto-area colleges.
- To learn about their service needs and service providers to address the challenges.

There are 24 public colleges in Ontario under the umbrella of Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (CAAT), which was established in 1966. Most colleges under the CAAT also were established in the 1960s (Government of Ontario 2022). Among those, the main campuses of six colleges are located in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). In addition, a few public and public–private partnership colleges have recently opened their branches in the GTA (such as Algonquin College, Fleming College, and Collège Boréal). In 2020/2021, a total of 104,937 international students enrolled in public colleges (Office of the Auditor General of Ontario 2021).

Toronto dominates in admitting international college students in Ontario. In 2021, Toronto colleges represented almost half (47.8 percent) of the total international students in all 24 Ontario public colleges (Office of the Auditor General of Ontario 2021). This study will focus on the six public colleges that have main campuses in the GTA and that have been providing diplomas/degrees to international students for a long period of time, since the 1960s (Table 7.1).

Methods

Data Collection

The research employs a qualitative case study approach, focusing on publicly funded colleges situated in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Both

Table 7.1 Selected colleges for the study

Selected Colleges	*Year of Establishment*
Centennial College	1966
George Brown College	1966
Humber College	1967
Seneca College	1967
Sheridan College	1967
Durham College	1967

Table 7.2 Interview participants from the selected colleges

Selected Colleges	*No. of Participants*
Centennial College	1
George Brown College	6
Humber College	4
Seneca College	3
Sheridan College	2
Durham College	2
Total	18

primary and secondary data and information are collected and analysed to understand existing knowledge on international college students and lived experiences of students. The secondary data are sourced from an in-depth literature review, while primary data are gathered through semi-structured interviews. A total of 18 current and former international college students studying in/graduated from six public colleges in the GTA were interviewed using virtual platforms such as Zoom between December 2022 and February 2023 (Table 7.2). Recruitment of participants was done through various networks, including international student offices, student organisations, community organisations, and settlement service providers, as well as through social media platforms such as LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter.

The ethical guidelines provided by the Tri-Council Policy Statement 2018 (TCPS) were strictly maintained to ensure the confidentiality of the research participants' identities and personal information. The study received an ethics certificate from Toronto Metropolitan University's Research Ethics Board (REB). The interviews were conducted after obtaining consent from the participants and they were given the right to withdraw their participation at any moment during and after the interview. The publications based on this study will be shared with the participants so that they can actively take part in knowledge dissemination and awareness building.

To conduct the interviews, an interview guide was developed consisting of a set of questions organised under seven broad themes. These themes

included: demographic information, migration history, educational and professional background, employment experience in Canada, impacts of COVID-19, transition to permanent status, and service needs. The questions related to these themes helped to explore the participants' specific challenges, service needs, and complex trajectories of transitioning from studying to working and from temporary to permanent status.

Characteristics of International Students

The participants in this study share some common characteristics with those identified by Decock et al. (2016). For instance, most of the participants (10 out of 18) were mature students in their 30s at the time of the interviews and all of them had obtained post-secondary education in their country of origin before coming to Canada to study at a college (Table 7.3). Of the participants, 11 had completed a bachelor's degree, 5 had completed a master's degree, and 2 held double master's degrees. While some of these students pursued college education to advance their career prospects, most of them enrolled in college education with the primary goal of immigrating to Canada.

Although Decock et al. (2016) found that international students in Toronto colleges were more likely to be male-dominated, this study's participant

Table 7.3 Demographic and social characteristics of international students

Age	Ranges from 22 to 40 (10 out of 18 are in their 30s).
Gender	Female-dominated study so far (12 out of 18 are women).
Marital status	Diverse marital status (5 married, 12 single, and 1 common law).
Children	Only 3 have children, so the majority do not have childcare responsibilities.
Country of origin	Diverse countries of origin include (India, Bangladesh, Iran, Philippines, Honduras, Columbia, Uganda, Egypt, United Kingdom, Turkey, Mexico, Chile, and France).
Migration history	Arrived in Canada with a study permit between 2018 and 2021. • 11 came during the pre-pandemic time (between 2018 and 2019). • 7 came after the peak of the pandemic in 2021.
Current immigration status	• 2 hold a postgraduate work permit. • 3 have implied status (waiting for the PGWP). • 13 hold study permits.
Education gained from the country of origin	• 7 have master's degrees (2 holds double master's degrees). • 11 have a bachelor's degree.
Employment status in Canada	• 4 are unemployed. • 14 are employed. • Out of 14, 12 work part-time.

group is female-dominated, with 12 out of 18 participants being female international students. This study adds to Decock et al.'s findings by exploring the specific experiences of female students, their reasons for enrolling in college programmes, their employment and transition experiences, and their service needs.

The previous study by Decock et al. (2016) also found that a significant proportion of international students (72 percent) in Toronto-area colleges did not work for pay, compared to 45.9 percent of domestic students. This lack of work experience may have made it difficult for international students to integrate into the Canadian labour market. However, in the current study, most participants (14 out of 18) were students or Post Graduate Work Permit (PGWP)[1] holders who were working at the time of the interview, with the majority holding part-time jobs. This is understandable given that study permit holders need to balance their studies and work during their time in Canada. However, as most of these jobs are in the low-skill/low-wage sector, the work experience they acquire often does not provide them with any benefit in terms of finding employment in their field of study after graduation. Additionally, the participants face a wide range of challenges in the labour market, which are discussed in the analysis section.

The student participants in this study are recent migrants who came to Canada with a study permit between 2018 and 2021. They are from diverse countries of four continents (Asia, Africa, South America, and Europe) and possess diverse ethnocultural and religious backgrounds. Having this diverse sample helped to understand the relations between their social characteristics, academic experiences, labour market integration, immigration process, and service needs to navigate all these aspects.

Analysis: Conceptual Framework

Information collected through literature review and interviews with international students is analysed using a conceptual framework comprising three interconnected parts (Figure 7.4). The first part is focused on

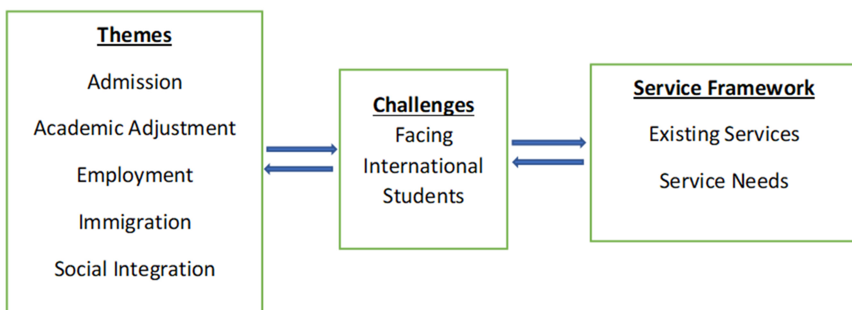

Figure 7.4 Conceptual framework.

identifying the themes to comprehend students' challenges. The themes that include admission, recruitment agencies, academic adjustment, employment, social integration, and immigration are chosen based on the narratives of the interview participants as well as from the findings of the literature review.

The second part involves the challenges students face concerning those five themes. In this part, the existing literature is analysed as well as the opinions and views of students are presented to explain the nature of barriers under each theme that affect students. Finally, the last part of the analysis emphasises the service and support structure for international students in the public colleges in GTA. The discussion highlights the service needs and existing services for students concerning the five themes discussed above.

The conceptual framework with these three interconnected parts provides a guideline to organise the rich interview data, reflect on the existing debates outlined in the literature as well as define the scope of the analysis focusing on the objectives of the study. Discussing the literature review and the narratives of international college students, the analysis brings together emerging debates, policy perspectives, and experiential views to inform future policy interventions.

Analysis of the Themes

Admission: Immigration as a Motivating Factor

To attract international students, many colleges highlight immigration pathways for students in their marketing strategies, often via recruitment agencies (Buckner et al. 2022; Office of the Auditor General of Ontario 2021; One Voice Canada 2021). The prospect of an immigration visa motivates many families in India, China, and other countries to send their youth to Canadian colleges as a way of establishing a foothold in Canada for opportunities, security, and freedom (Qadeer 2022). Several studies found that international student recruitment is closely related to immigration in Canada (Sá & Sabzalieva 2018) and that permanent residency in Canada is a primary goal of many international college students (Jafar & Legusov 2021; Buckner et al. 2022, 2021).

Most participants in this study (16 out of 18) also confirmed this tendency. They saw college admission as the first step towards obtaining Canadian permanent residency. Many found the direct permanent residency pathway difficult and time consuming and some of them could not secure enough points through the Comprehensive Ranking System (CRS)[2] to apply through the Express Entry[3] system. Getting admission to a college certificate course was the easiest way for them to enter Canada and have a better and more secure life compared to what they were experiencing in their home country. Participant "C" who is studying Project Management at Humber College explains:

> After getting my Master's Degree in International Relations and working for two and a half years in Turkey, I really wanted to change my life. I did not like the political situation there, there was no hope. I got fed-up. So, I was looking for opportunities in the UK and other European countries. Then I found information on colleges in Canada. The colleges are cheaper than universities. Also, the immigration system is much easier, well it looked easier on the website … so I decided to apply for "project management". I thought there would be a lot of [job] opportunities if I study this … I compared different programs on project management in different colleges but the program in Humber College looked more appealing. So, I applied to this college.

Similarly, "H" who came to study at George Brown College from India describes how she decided to get admission to the college to obtain permanent residency:

> Many of my friends and colleagues migrated to Canada before me and I saw their experience. Applying for permanent residency from India is really a lengthy process. Often it takes three years and then, you know so many things change in those years. So, if you can migrate in six months, you will choose this path. … Also, getting a college degree [from Canada] is good for the job market because employers look for Canadian education. So, in both ways it was a better decision for me. Also, I always wanted to go out of India and learn new things, so I got admission in the program to get out of India.

Some students mentioned that expanding their career opportunities and learning in a multicultural environment, developing new social and professional networks, and gaining international perspectives influenced their decision to enrol in a Canadian college. But these aspects most often were secondary objectives, while gaining permanent status remained the primary objective. Many students often depend on recruitment agencies to collect information about college programmes, visa processing, and immigration process. For example, "G," who came from France and is currently studying Community Work at George Brown College, shared her experience with a recruitment agency:

> I contacted an agency to know about the programs. The agency told me about this [Community Work] program and how demanding it is in the job market. They helped with the visa process and provided me with a lot of information on employment opportunities. They made the process easy for me, otherwise it is difficult to know about the programs and compare the colleges. They did everything on behalf of me, filling the form and submitting papers. So, the process was not that hard.

However, "G" did not have any idea that the agency got a commission for ensuring her admission to the college. Since she did not pay any fee directly to the agency, she thought that the service was free.

Similarly, "J," who came from Chile and is studying in the same programme (Community Work) at George Brown College, did not have to pay any fee to the recruitment agency. So, she also thought that the agency helped her for free. These students are completely unaware that they paid the agencies via the college.

On the other hand, "H" who came from India had to pay a fee directly to the agency. According to "H":

> I paid a fee to the agency and the agency helped me with the paperwork. It was less time consuming this way. They also provided me with a lot of information about the college, the surrounding community, and work opportunities in Canada.

The varied experiences shared by the participants in this study suggest that recruitment agencies operate differently across countries. Unlike agencies in France and Chile, those in India often charge a fee from prospective students in addition to receiving a commission from the colleges. India is considered a profitable market for these agencies, which may provide misleading information to exploit potential students, as depicted in the documentary *Sold a Lie*. As a result, many Indian students who aspire to study and immigrate to Canada are deceived by the false promises of such recruitment agencies.

Academic Adjustment: The Effect of Financial Difficulties

International students face a multitude of challenges upon arrival on Canadian campuses, including linguistic, cultural, financial, and mental health challenges. In addition to high tuition fees, international students also face difficulties in balancing school and work, finding accommodation, and dealing with culture shock and homesickness. Integration into a new university or college and unfamiliar society can be difficult. Many international students, both in colleges and universities, struggle to fit in among their peers and have less than desirable social interactions with Canadian-born students (Scott et al. 2015). Furthermore, many international students receive lower grades due to a lack of diverse perspectives in the curriculum, teacher biases, or a lack of cultural awareness in disciplinary decisions (Adeyemi 2017; Dehaas 2013). While most faculty members respect the increasing diversity among students, they are often unprepared and inadequately trained to deal with the diverse identities and views of international students (Bartell 2003).

Confirming previous studies, many student participants in this study describe how they find it challenging to adapt to the academic culture in Canada. This includes aspects such as understanding and following the

norms of political correctness, effective communication with professors and peers, and dealing with the West-centric curriculum. However, the students in this study also highlighted that their primary academic challenge is financial pressure. Unlike universities, colleges provide little to no financial support in the form of scholarships and bursaries, resulting in severe financial difficulties for most international students in Toronto. To cover the high cost of tuition fees, rent, and bills, many students are forced to work one to two part-time jobs, leaving them with very little time to focus on their studies and develop relationships with their classmates. A student, "P," studying Marketing Management at Seneca College explains his daily routine as such:

> I wake up very early in the morning at 4 am and then go to Walmart to do my morning job [moving boxes from storage to the mall] for three hours, from 5–8 am, then I go to my second job in a grocery store and work there until 3 pm. … My classes start after 4 pm, most of my classes take place in the evening. So, I attend the classes till 8/9 pm. By then, I am really tired. … I go home and eat something. Most of the days I do assignments. I woke up early in the morning the next day again for the Walmart job. So, you see, I have no time even to sleep. I sleep for two hours, maximum three hours. … I do not get to socialize, not with classmates, not with anyone else. I feel like I am alone, and no one understands my situation and cares about me.

Like "P," most students feel isolated despite studying, working, and living in Toronto. Some students point towards the high international tuition fees as the main reason why most college students struggle to pay attention to their studies. According to "J," who studies Community Work at George Brown College, international students in the college feel depressed about paying three/four times higher tuition fees than their domestic counterparts because they do not get much help and support with their studies at the college.

> We do not know why we are paying so much, we go to the same class, learn the same thing, do the same assignment. There is nothing extra for us to help us with our assignments. I have learned everything by myself. … The college treats us in the same way so why do they ask us to pay more?

Several international college students who had previously earned a bachelor's or master's degree from their home country have expressed their concern that the high tuition fees in Canadian colleges are not justified by the quality of education provided. These students often find the curriculum to be relatively easy compared to their previous educational experiences. Justifying the high tuition fees is particularly difficult for them. For instance, "O," who holds a bachelor's degree in Engineering from Iran and is currently studying Software Programming at Humber College, believes that she is paying too much to

learn a programme that she already studied in her bachelor's programme in Iran. She also believes that high tuition fees force many college students to work long hours, which can adversely affect their academic performance.

> I already know how this software works. We learned this in the 2nd year of our program in Iran. … I understand the colleges are making money from us. Even if we learn it for the first time, still we do not need to pay that much. Canadian students and international students are learning the same software, but one group is paying four times more. … No way students can afford that so they work for long hours, so they often fail in the exam!!

International students often face financial challenges due to a lack of accurate information about the cost of college education and housing in Toronto, which is often obtained from recruitment agencies (as discussed earlier). Additionally, many students, particularly from India, borrow money from banks or relatives to obtain visas and pay tuition fees. Upon arriving in Canada, they are required to work not only to pay tuition fees but also to repay the borrowed money, leading to multiple financial pressures that affect their academic adjustment.

Employment: Temporary Status Matters

International students often struggle to find suitable employment both during and after their studies, despite having Canadian education, language proficiency, and familiarity with Canadian culture. Recent research by the Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE) found that 43 percent of international students were having difficulties finding paid employment, largely due to their lack of understanding of Canadian employers' expectations and employers' unfamiliarity with regulations for hiring international students (CBIE 2021; ICEF Monitor 2018). Many of the international graduates who participated in the Post-Graduation Work Permit programme worked only part-time and/or for a low income (ICMPD 2019). Moreover, Statistics Canada reports that former international students earn 20 percent less than their domestic counterparts in the first year after graduation and 9 percent less after five years (Choi, Hao, and Chan 2021). These studies confirm that many international students and graduates experience significantly larger obstacles than their domestic counterparts when trying to find appropriate employment commensurate with their education.

International students and graduates who were part of the study found college education to be beneficial in obtaining skills and training that are in high demand in the Canadian job market. Most colleges offer placement opportunities, allowing students to gain practical experience in their field of study. However, they are often disappointed as many employers do not hire them for long-term or full-time positions due to their temporary status.

"L," for instance, completed a one-year diploma program in Finance and Business Studies from Centennial College and earned a law degree from Uganda, yet she could not secure a full-time job in Toronto due to her temporary status:

> The first thing is that I have a temporary [PGWP] visa and it is only for a year. So, when I applied for jobs, employers were impressed by my CV, and they called me for interviews. But the first thing they asked me, "are you a Canadian PR or citizen?". And I knew immediately, I will not get the job. So, there is this misunderstanding, I thought I will get a job easily because of my Canadian education but my visa is not working in my favour, it is working against me.

Based on the experiences of many international students and graduates, a significant barrier to their career prospects is the lack of knowledge among employers about the Post-Graduation Work Permit (PGWP) program. Many employers are not aware that they can hire international graduates, which limits their job opportunities. Additionally, the short length of the PGWP adds to the challenges faced by college graduates. As most college programmes are only one to two years long, graduates only receive a PGWP for the same duration, which is often not enough time to find a full-time job in their field of study. "H," an Indian student studying Finance and Marketing at George Brown College, further highlights this issue.

> I am already worried to think that after completing this program, I must find a job, a good one within one year! It takes time even to understand the job market, to develop networks and create personal connections with the employers. One year is not enough time at all. ... I didn't realize this before coming to Toronto. ... Now, I am thinking of enrolling in another one-year program, so then, I will get two years of PGWP to look for a job.

Several students also highlight the limitation of the one-time PGWP. A Bangladeshi student ("F") who is studying Business Management at George Brown College states:

> After my study, if I cannot find a job immediately, then I must leave Canada after one year. The work permit is not eligible to be renewed, like this type of restriction should be removed. It [PGWP] should come with an option to be renewed so that we get a chance to prove our skills in Canada.

Many students were unaware that the duration of their work permit would be determined by the duration of their programme. As a result, some regretted enrolling in a one-year programme. However, not everyone can afford to

pursue another year of study, leaving them feeling helpless in terms of finding employment, particularly when they lack the time to establish professional networks and connections. A student from the Philippines attending George Brown College ("Y") stresses the lack of access to career-related networks and support both on and off campus:

> We are new in the city and in the job market. We do not know which employers are hiring and what kind of job we can apply for. How we can prepare ourselves for the job interviews. Some employers want employees to do a task in a certain way. … Many jobs are not even advertised because employers like to hire someone that they know, or their friends know. So, networking is very important. My friends told me you can only find a job here if you know someone in the sector … the colleges do not provide information. … They have some employment services but there is a long waiting time to get their advice.

The temporary status also limits students' access to employment services. Particularly, those who graduated from the college programme stress the absence of employment support for them after graduation. "T," who came from Honduras and completed a diploma in Graphic Design from Humber College, found a part-time job in the Information Technology sector after graduation but failed to secure a full-time position. He explains how the lack of support has affected his job search:

> After graduation, I was on my own. I knew that there was a demand for my degree in the job market but that was not enough. I could not show the employer that I know people in this field. Employers often do not trust us, the migrants. I had no one to talk to or explain my challenges. … I paid my tuition fees, I pay tax, I obey the rules, I do everything that a permanent resident does but I do not have any access to social services. This is strange. … So, after graduation, it is about luck, you find your way [in the job market], no one will help you.

The narratives of the current and former international college students suggest that despite getting education and training that are in demand in the job market, they face numerous challenges to obtain a job due to their temporary status, the short length of their PGWP, systemic barriers, and lack of career development and networking opportunities.

Immigration: Beyond a College Degree

International college students are more likely than university students to plan to stay in Canada (CBIE 2021), but their transition rate is lower than their university counterparts. Comparing outcomes between students in the 2010 and 2016 cohorts in college/certificate and master's degree programmes, a

recent report by Dennler (2022) shows that there is a large gap between intent and opportunity for getting permanent status among students at the college/certificate level and this gap is increasing. The report concludes that "international students in college/certificate programmes either take longer to become permanent residents or are less likely than Master's degree students to be eligible for permanent residency" (Dennler 2022, 10).

Most students who pursued college admission in Canada with the objective of getting permanent residency eventually realised that their study does not guarantee permanent residency. Initially, many students and graduates thought that the immigration process would be easy after completing their college degree as they would get more points in the Comprehensive Ranking System for their Canadian education and experience. As "L" who received a diploma in Finance and Business Studies from Centennial College states:

> Immigration system values Canadian education. I thought I will get a higher score for the college degree, then I will do better in the English Language test. Of course, after studying here, my English will be better. And I have work experience, so it sounds easy, doesn't it? I did not know before coming that getting PR would be so difficult. I didn't know that I needed to get a very good job to qualify for Express Entry … the job market is so difficult; nobody wants to give migrants a good job!.

Like "L," many participants thought that a degree from a college would guarantee their permanent residency in Canada. However, when they learned that they need one-year work experience in a skilled occupation and a high language score to be qualified for Express Entry's Canadian Experience Class,[4] they felt depressed and heartbroken. They usually get only one to two years after graduation to gather work experience and language scores which are often unrealistic given the labour market barriers they face (discussed in the previous section). "A," who recently received a diploma in Community and Social Services from Seneca College, explains her immigration barriers as such:

> Before coming from Mexico, I did not know about the whole process of application. I did not know about the Express Entry and how it works. After coming to the college, I talked to a staff member at the International Student Office, and she told me that I need work experience to apply for PR. It is not just any work; I need a good job and a full-time job … the job market is difficult for us. … So, getting a job and getting the experience and then applying and then waiting for the result, it won't happen in just one year!! So, the system is not helping us, the system is made to make PR difficult for us, the college students.

Besides the time limitation related to their work permit, the competitive nature of the permanent residency application process also affects their transition

experience. Some of the international college students highlight how getting a high score through the CRS is challenging as they have to compete with other university and college graduates as well as many temporary foreign workers. Some students are considering other options, such as Provincial Nominee Programs and Atlantic Migration Programs, to apply for permanent status. However, they do not have clear information about the application requirements and processes for these programmes. An information gap related to the immigration process is evident in their narratives. For example, "C," a Humber College student, explains:

> I know now that I have several options, I can apply through the PNP from here [Ontario], or I can change the province and go to Saskatchewan or Nova Scotia, where the competition is low. But then I need to get a job offer for PNP, I think, but I do not know anyone there, so getting a job offer would be hard. … I am collecting information but navigating the [IRCC] website is not easy. You get a lot of information, but nothing is still clear.

Most students who shared their experiences are uncertain about getting permanent residency, but they do not have any alternate plan as immigration was their main objective for college admission. They also do not receive much support with their immigration process from the college or other service providers. Often, they receive a very general orientation on the immigration process at the college, but the general guidelines often do not answer their specific questions. So, while colleges often promise a pathway to immigration, they do not provide services to facilitate the transition.

Social Integration: Lack of Community Connection and Support

International students' social integration is significantly affected by their experience of isolation, discrimination, and mental health issues. Many international students face discrimination in post-secondary institutions as well as in the labour market. In 2013, a survey of 1,509 international students indicated that 23 percent had experienced racial discrimination at school and one-fourth had experienced racial discrimination when interacting with people off campus (Ortiz & Choudaha 2014). Another study in Ontario conducted in 2015 revealed that international students faced discriminatory behaviours from employers on racial, religious, and ethnic grounds (Scott et al. 2015). International students' experience of loneliness and isolation is also reported by Irwin-Robinson (2002).

Often, many international students feel integrated with the college but not in the community where they live or in the workplace in which they work. Experiences of overt and covert racism at the workplace, crowded and unhealthy living conditions, constant financial pressure, the stress of study, work, and uncertain immigration outcomes affect their mental health. An

Egyptian student ("E") of Durham College, who suffered from mental health issues in Canada, explains his experience:

> You need to understand what we go through when we come here [Toronto], this is a new place for us and we learn about racism, we experience it for the first time. But I cannot say anything to my employer because I need the job to survive. … Then there are expectations of family back home. I tell them I am happy here; all is well, I do not tell them my financial situation. Then there is uncertainty about getting PR and we do not get time to make friends. We share a home with many people that we do not know. … Basically, we face many challenges all alone. … I felt that I have no power to change my life and that's how I got depressed!!

Like "E," many students mention that they feel isolated and disconnected from the surrounding community. Having institutional help and support is essential for them to deal with such experiences. A study of Chinese students conducted by Liu (2016) revealed that many students who suffer from culture shock, isolation, and mental health issues do not receive effective support from campus services as most university staff who provide services to international students lack the necessary training. These studies point towards the urgent need for services and support to help students deal with discrimination and mental health issues.

When international students seek mental health support, most often they fail to access it. Student participants who faced mental health challenges often did not get much support from the colleges. Some of them, however, mention that there is support at the colleges, but the waiting period is long, and that the support is very limited compared to the number of students. "J" who studies Community Work at George Brown College describes how she was unsuccessful in getting support for her mental health issues at the college:

> I received an email from the college office about mental health support. They asked us to fill in a form and email them and they will contact us. So, I filled out the form and emailed them, but they did not respond. So, after two weeks, I emailed again and got no response. … I did not call because there wasn't any phone number. They only provided the email address. So, there was no way to communicate with them.

Most students agree that the colleges have very limited capacity to provide mental health services. As a result, students often rely on community organisations for help and support. An Indian student at Sheridan College ("Z") describes how a Punjabi community organisation helps international college students to deal with mental health and drug-related issues:

> The organization reaches out to students suffering from mental health challenges. Often when students feel depressed, they get involved in

> drugs and underground crimes. So, they need help, and they get the help through community trust ... students feel comfortable to share their anxiety with the community workers. So, the program is working because the community workers are very committed, they really want to help the students.

While some community organisations provide services to international students, they have very limited funding to deliver a wide range of services students need. Services provided by different organisations are often fragmented, inconsistent, and marked by a lack of training (Joseph 2019). Students often have little information on these off-campus services. Moreover, these services are not sufficient to serve a large number of the international student population in Ontario.

Discussion and Conclusion

After reviewing the interview narratives and published literature, it is evident that the issues faced by international students in the public college sector in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) are deeply rooted in the broader structural system. While the Canadian government promotes the education migration pathway to attract and retain global talent, funding for higher education has been steadily reduced. Consequently, colleges have become increasingly reliant on international tuition fees for revenue and have adopted a profit-oriented model that partners with recruitment agencies, particularly those targeting Indian students. Agencies operating outside Canada generate profits by providing false information and promises related to employment and immigration to prospective students. In this systemic loop, international students struggle to obtain reliable information, comprehend their challenges in Canada, and access services.

Interviews of international college students and graduates suggest that they face various challenges related to academic and social integration, labour market integration, transitioning to permanent status, discrimination, and mental health issues. However, they receive little support from colleges. As temporary migrants, international students (and PGWP holders) do not have access to federally funded services, as the federal government lacks a comprehensive plan to provide such services. Within the neoliberal political context, international students are expected to obtain Canadian education and experience, successfully integrate into the labour market, and become permanent residents without any federally funded services. While there are limited provincial programmes that provide services to international students through settlement and community organisations, the scope of these services is limited. For example, in Ontario, only 20 percent of settlement services are funded by the province, while 80 percent are funded by the federal government (Roach 2011). However, the Ontario government has made some significant investments in recent years to deliver

services to international students through various settlement and community organisations, such as COSTI, Indus Community Services, and Punjabi Community Health Services. Nonetheless, services provided by different organisations are often fragmented, inconsistent, and marked by a lack of training (Joseph 2019).

Public colleges have a legal obligation to provide services to meet the needs of students and maintain their status as Designated Learning Institutions under provincial regulations. However, they often fail to invest adequate resources in designing and delivering these services. As a result, many international college students and graduates struggle to thrive in Canada, facing limited social and labour rights due to their temporary status. Some even experience mental health issues, depression, and suicide (*Sold a Lie,* 2022). This cycle can harm the reputation of Canadian colleges and the education sector as a whole. Given the knowledge and technology-based economy of today, where most OECD countries are competing for global talent, Canada risks losing in the global talent market if it does not address these systemic issues.

A few weeks before the release of this report, publicly funded colleges in Ontario announced the implementation of new rules to safeguard and support international students. These new regulations will consist of a range of initiatives, from programme marketing and admission to requiring recruiters to complete recognised training programmes, as well as offering comprehensive orientation and post-graduation services to aid in international students' employment and settlement (Keung 2023). While the specifics of these initiatives and their outcomes are yet to be seen, this is a positive development after a long period of waiting and despair. The current federal government aims to maintain high levels of immigration to address labour shortages, and the international student strategy aims to make them a major source of talent in Canada. Supporting the integration and transition of international college students is not only beneficial for Canada, but it is also essential for preserving Canada's reputation as one of the world's top destinations for higher education.

Acknowledgement

This study is supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) and the Intergovernmental Committee for Economic and Labour Force Development (ICE).

Notes

1. Post Graduate Work Permit (PGWP), which started in 2003 as a pilot programme in selected provinces and expanded nationwide in 2005, allows international students to stay and work in Canada for up to three years with an open work permit after graduation (Government of Canada 2022).
2. The CRS is a point-based system that is used to assess and score an applicant's profile and rank it in the Express Entry pool based on the applicant's skills, education, language ability, work experience, and other factors (Government of Canada 2022).

3 Introduced in 2015, Express Entry (EE) provides a pathway to permanent residence for skilled workers in Canada or overseas. The system assigns points for skills, work experience, language ability, education, and other factors, and high-ranking candidates are selected for immigration. An application can be submitted under three programmes: the Federal Skilled Worker Program, the Federal Skilled Trades Program, and the Canadian Experience Class. In addition, provinces can also recruit candidates from EE through their Provincial Nominee Programs (PNPs) (IRCC 2020).

4 Since 2008, the Canadian Experience Class (CEC) has offered a major pathway for candidates who have worked in Canada and want to transition to permanent residence. The CEC is a prominent option for temporary foreign workers and international graduates who go on to gain Canadian work experience. The CEC is among the three programmes managed under Canada's Express Entry system (Sweetman, A. and Warman, C. 2010).

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8 Navigating an Education through the Pandemic

The (Im)mobilities of Aspiration among Student Migrants of Kerala

Aparna Eswaran and C Chinchu

The COVID-19 pandemic affected the aspirations of mobility for a vast section of students in Kerala in unexpected and different ways. There was a deferring of attaining achievements of a carefully planned future, a limbo state of uncertainty, and a temporary freezing of future dreams. There were multiple reports of students being stranded, faced with the impossibility of return as well as the uncertainties of health risks. At the same time, many aspiring students were frozen within different stages of the admission process, with severe psycho-social repercussions. The returning students had to battle the immobilities of a return they were severely unprepared for. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic thus led to a plethora of restrictions on movement curtailing not just physical movements but also the 'aspirational mobility' of the students. However, adapting to the uncertainties, the student migrants as well as those aspiring to be student migrants negotiated different strategies of mobility showing marks of resilience. In this chapter, we wish to show how 'aspiration' 'marks an intersection of personal, collective and normative dimensions' (Carling & Collins, 2018) framed by socio-political circumstances and how the formation of aspiration of mobility as well as its realisation has been severely hampered by the pandemic. The chapter specifically focused on the repercussions of the first wave of the pandemic, excruciating in the uncertainties it produced, by analysing how the respondents reflected on this earlier period of the pandemic as well as formulated strategies of survival in its aftermath, with most of the uncertainties following them into the second wave of the pandemic.

Methodology

We conducted in-depth interviews with 15 student return migrants of Kerala as well as students attempting to migrate abroad after the easing of travel restrictions to understand the challenges of navigating an education at a time of the pandemic during 2020–21. We identified the respondents, consisting of eight men and seven women, through snowball sampling. We also took efforts to speak to students coming from different socio-economic situations to gauge the differential impact of the pandemic. We also explored the possibilities of digital ethnography and conducted online Zoom interviews with

DOI: 10.4324/9781003490234-8

students who were stranded abroad as well as analysed their public social media posts to trace the virtual student support groups which were formed during this time. We have also conducted telephonic interviews with educational immigration agencies and members of the families of the return student migrants to include both the institutional and emotional effects of the return on student migrants.

Deferred dreams, Uncertain futures – (Im)mobilities of Aspiration

The student return migrants we interviewed first were students of medicine belonging to the 2000-strong Malayali student migrant community in China. All of them had secured admission through educational agencies and had chosen their respective universities, taking into consideration the quality of the education (references were made about the world university rankings) as well as it being financially viable. The quality of education was also ascertained by talking to students from Kerala who were already studying there. All our respondents had returned to Kerala in January 2020 before the first case of COVID was reported in Kerala. However, as the number of cases rose, all of them talked of how their return from China was seen with apprehension in their neighbourhood. At the time of the study, they were all still unable to go back and their aspirations of a holistic medical education being severely hampered. Their classes had shifted online and were app-based, severely compromising their grasp of the practical side of medicine. They were deprived of clinical experiences and reported severe anxiety regarding their professional proficiency being compromised. The Government of China which had suspended the visa process and flights from India had not provided any information to the students awaiting return for the past one and a half years. As of December 2021, while China had hinted towards permitting the return of students from ASEAN countries, the foreign ministry has been vague in its responses to allow the 23,000 Indian students awaiting a return to their studies. The students expressed their disappointment with the lack of transparency and communication from the side of the authorities in China. Students mobilised among themselves and had been petitioning the Chinese authorities from the start of the year and have formed social media accounts to garner support like the Instagram group ‘Take us back to China’. The sustained pressure from the student community had resulted in India’s Ambassador to China, Vikram Misri, conveying his concerns about the student return migrants at the Track II Dialogue on India–China relations in September 2021, but to no avail.

In our second round of interviews, the students expressed continued disappointment, but they had found ways to make up for the lack of practical classes, such as approaching private hospitals in Kerala to let them observe the clinical practice of doctors. The private hospitals charge an amount while enlisting their services in a non-official way. This way of circumventing the difficulties of online education, however, was not accessible to all students

equally. Social capital that the return migrants enjoyed before the migration is important in that it helped them navigate the return and helped in the lack of preparedness for the return (Cassarino, 2004). Hence, the respondent whose family had links with doctors practising in hospitals run by her religious community had access to clinical experience, while many of her counterparts struggled with such access. There was uncertainty over the validity of their professional certificates obtained online without sufficient laboratory and clinical experience. The National Medical Council of India does not recognise online courses, but they have given final-year students a reprieve by allowing them to upload provisional pass certificates instead of the original certificates for them to appear for the Foreign Medical Graduates Examination, which will allow them to register and practice in India. The lack of clinical experience would make the students unemployable, which would increase their debt. All of our respondents who went to China had taken hefty student loans which they were hoping to pay back after entering medical practice.

Financial trouble and increased uncertainties for their financial future were also reported in the narratives of Malayali students who were stranded abroad during the pandemic. This was expressively conveyed in the student respondents who had stayed back in the US and European countries during the pandemic. Nikhil[1] who is an undergraduate student at the University of Massachusetts talked of the housing crisis that Indian students including him faced. The students had to vacate college dorms and had to find housing amid the pandemic placing a heavy burden on their financial situation. Some respondents reported restrictions on working because of student visa restrictions, while others mentioned a decrease in getting shifts during the crisis. One respondent conveyed how his friends who had booked one-way return tickets in March 2020 lost the money as India went into an international travel ban soon after. Many students from Kerala took to social media to express their worries about losing out on work permits they had meticulously obtained when US Immigrations and Customs Enforcement announced a new rule that said students must leave the country if their universities do not offer in-person classes or turn to the hybrid model.

At the same time, we traced that in the aftermath of the vaccination drives in different countries, the students either were already preparing to go back or had already left. Here the category of 'student' is in flux with a significant number of the return migrants to Kerala, who had to return following the loss of employment, exploring the possibilities of entry into other emerging corridors of migration as students. Education here has underlying currents of other aspirations, which is reflected in the choice of the places of migration as well as the courses of study. In our interviews with education consultants and agents, we were told that France, UK and Canada were preferred destinations for such migration, while in the case of Ukraine, which was already a preferred destination for student migrants from Kerala wanting to pursue medicine, there was an increase in this preference because of the

uncertainty regarding China. New Zealand was another preferred site for student migrants from India because of the adept and humane way in which the government addressed the challenges of the pandemic, while the US was still preferred, but rising apprehension was reported among students regarding the increasing restrictions on migration and a rise in xenophobia, which interestingly has been on an increase worldwide during the pandemic (IOM, 2021).

Students who were preparing for the admission process in 2020 expressed the agonising uncertainty and being helpless in the face of an extended deferral of their aspirations. This had an adverse effect on the student as well as the family of the student. In the case of Arvind from Kayamkulam, his aspiration to migrate to the UK for an MSc in International Business started in 2018, and he had to work hard on his IELTS preparation as he was not very confident about his English language proficiency. He obtained a favourable score in January 2019, but he had a very bad experience with repeated delays in communication from the agent's side, at the end of which he managed to secure admission by December 2019 and paid the admission fee. When the pandemic delayed his travel to the UK, the university offered an arrangement by which he could take six months of online classes in Kerala and complete the rest of the course on the university campus. He did not take up this offer as he believed that it would compromise the quality of the experience of an education abroad. What he had not anticipated was the delay of more than a year for him to start the course. During this period his IELTS score – which is only valid for a year – also expired and the university demanded that he take the exam again. This gave him severe anxiety as preparing for the exam was not an easy task for him in the first place. His sister in our conversation with her conveyed the stress the entire family went through as they had spent a lot of money on the agency as well on the admission. It was difficult for the family to see Arvind dejected and especially difficult to battle their feeling of helplessness. Two weeks before he had to leave, the family tested positive for COVID-19, after which he had to rebook the tickets. In the whole saga of dejection and difficulties, Arvind recalls the support of the Students Union of his university to whom he had written about his difficulties. They negotiated with the university and waived the requirement for a fresh IELTS score. Arvind's bad experience is, however, not exceptional; most of the respondents who were at the beginning of their academic journey in 2020 had to experience this uncertain deferring of their aspirations.

The experience of being quarantined or in a lockdown in a foreign land was also exceptionally challenging. Anupama, who was a school teacher in Kottayam, had gone to Canada on a student visa in hopes of attaining the status of permanent resident and slowly progressing towards citizenship. Canada has more points in the comprehensive ranking system in their express entry immigration system for those who have completed a Canadian post-secondary credential. Canada is a preferred place for student migration for Indians with its exemplary quick visa processing through the Study Direct

Scheme. The private career colleges which do not receive government funds are advertised aggressively in the eduschemes of agencies to students in India citing the prospects of permanent residency, to eventual citizenship (Ghosh, 2021). Anupama's family was in huge financial debt because of various failed businesses of her husband and she had planned on bringing her husband and child after she attained permanent residency. She described her quarantine experience in Canada after one of her apartment-mates contracted the virus as harrowing as her room was in the basement with hardly any ventilation. The experience she described as being unnerving where she felt like a complicated mess caught in an unending spool of 'desertion and loneliness'. She travelled back to India to meet her daughter as soon as the travel restrictions were eased even though it cost her double the normal expense. Her narrative shows how important emotions are in decisions to return during the pandemic (Boccagni & Baldassar, 2015). Another respondent also shared how her parents with comorbidities contracted COVID-19 in 2020 and she was stranded in Italy, worried out of her mind. The excruciating journey of return of Malayali students including a pregnant student from Milan to Kerala in March 2020 was reported extensively in the media (Indian Express, 2020). The reports suggested that the worry for the loved ones back home was one of the reasons for the students' decision to return.

Gendered Experience of Migration and Return

Though this cannot be generalised, in the interviews, we conducted we traced aspiration working collectively for women students who were migrating for an education. Rose Anne, a former engineering lecturer from Thrissur who moved to Germany in early 2021, when asked about her aspiration to study in Germany, said that though she always wanted to pursue a PhD in Engineering, the choice of going to Germany wasn't hers. Her colleague and friend in a private engineering college wanted to migrate as soon as possible and she applied for 'koottinnuvendi' (to give company). This idea of 'koottu' or companionship recurred within other interviews as well. Interestingly in Rose's case, the friendship was also based on the common feeling of alienation and frustration experienced as unmarried women in their thirties facing repeated questions and scrutiny over their marital status from family and relatives. This was coupled with a deep dissatisfaction with the routine work in a private engineering college where the teaching staff is burdened with administrative duties and continuous evaluation systems. Hence they applied for a management course together in Germany (even though they were not interested in an education in management); their visas came through in March 2020 and they were supposed to fly out in April 2020 when the international ban on air travel was announced. They were both deeply frustrated with their carefully laid plans being foiled. To add to the grief and confusion of being without a job while also unable to join the course, Rose's friend's marriage got fixed amid the pandemic and she dropped her plans of going abroad or

pursuing the course. Research has shown how 'Life events' are a determining factor in actual mobility or immobility even when there is a desire to move (De Groot et al., 2011).

In our second interview with Rose, she had travelled to Germany after attending online classes for one semester. She described the lightness of being in a strange land away from the prying questions of neighbours and fellow worshippers in her local church in Thrissur. Interestingly, Rose navigated her way to Germany through a local church prayer group on WhatsApp meant exclusively for unmarried women above 30. She befriended the pastor leading the prayer group who subsequently invited her to join church activities meant for providing mentorship to teenagers during the pandemic. In organising one of the sessions, she established contacts with a pastor in Germany who later helped her find accommodation and a job when she arrived in Germany in 2021. While Rose is emblematic of the countless student migrants from India who travelled abroad as soon as travel restrictions eased to pursue their aspirations, her friend's and her ambitions were halted indefinitely because of the pandemic. The friend declined to talk to us telling Rose that it will reopen wounds that she is trying to forget.

Similarly, Khatija, a fourth-year medical student at Sichuan Medical University, also referred to companionship while travelling abroad. She decided to pursue medicine in China along with five of her school friends from Ernakulam. She said how delightful and exciting the whole process of applying, securing admission and travelling as a group to China was. There is a robust Malayalee community within the university which meant that there was less nostalgia. The companionship here helps get parental approval for young women aspiring to study abroad. When she travelled back from China in January, there were talks of a virus doing the rounds, but the university was closing for the winter vacation and she had seen it as an opportunity for some more time to spend with her family. However, as the pandemic progressed, she was increasingly frustrated with the lost opportunity of a wholesome medical education. Also, she comes from a remote village in Kerala, where the news of a return from China meant increasing suspicion and ostracisation in a period of uncertainty. Gushing over the freedom in the university, she refers to missing the companionship of her friends. However, she quickly checks herself saying she doesn't approve of such levels of 'unchecked freedom'. We read this as self-policing, which makes sense if one reads it along with the moral policing of youth within Kerala's public and private spheres. The return back is a return back to familiar worlds of morality as well. We found the difference in tone in Rose's interview where she owned the lightness of the freedom that a foreign land gives a woman. Even in narratives of female respondents who did not navigate an education abroad as part of a collective aspiration, we see the lament for the lack of 'koottu'. For example, the respondent who had applied for a degree in bioenvironmental engineering in South Korea referred to how she regretted her decision not to join friends who applied in Europe as they all have joined back their courses or

have completed them. Her desire to join the course was a result of a long interest in the culture and music of South Korea coupled with the niche area of interest where the research adviser in the university she shortlisted had expertise. She had learned the Korean language out of her interest in migrating to this foreign land of her desire, which she describes as a dream from her school days. The respondent conveyed her moments of self-doubt regarding this aspiration for her saying if she had chosen a university outside of South Korea, she would have had a degree in hand. But she quickly corrects herself and says how much this desire is part of the person she is. The pandemic has resulted in spatial (im)mobility (Marzi, 2015) which she hadn't imagined for herself as her parents were very supportive of her decision to join a foreign university that was not chosen by her peers. The limbo within a lost opportunity to education thus signifies more than the content and quality of the education. It signifies the loss of opportunities to form meaningful companionship, the loss of imagined as well as real selves imbued with, among other traits, independence and freedom denied within spaces of familiarity such as home and 'naadu'.

Caste-ing Mobility

Mohan is a Dalit poet hailing from Thiruvananthapuram who secured admission to the MA programme in creative writing at the University of East Anglia. He applied for the State Overseas Scholarship, which is a scheme of the Government of Kerala to provide scholarships to SC/ST as well as Backward classes. The University of East Anglia provided him with a nominal India fellowship which would cover the entire tuition fee and the scholarship provided by the Department of Scheduled Caste Development was to supplement the university scholarship. Mohan was optimistic about receiving the scholarship but was deeply disappointed with the bureaucratic red tapism. 'They raise a thousand hurdles and expect you to trip and fall'. He refers to a rigid gatekeeping by the casteist bureaucracy that is deeply uncomfortable in dispensing scholarships for Dalit students. He parallels this discomfort to the discomfort and heartburn that upper castes experienced during the land reforms. The delay in dispensing the scholarship resulted in a delay in his joining the course and the University deferred his admission by one year as the rest of the batch had joined resulting in his missing classes. This delay in dispensing funds is not peculiar to the period of the pandemic as Kerala has witnessed the case of deferred admission in the case of Bineesh Balan and Hafeesha T.B.

Mohan's case is interesting in that in the moment of desperation faced with apathy from bureaucracy, he turned to Crowdfund to raise the rest of the amount. Crowd-funding has emerged as an avenue for students from marginalised backgrounds to raise funds for education abroad, especially during the pandemic. The reasons to turn to crowd-funding reveal the skewed nature of the National Overseas Scholarship, which has a history of under-utilised

funds. In the year 2020–21, only 90 out of 596 Scheduled Caste (SC) students studying in universities abroad, who applied for the National Overseas Scholarships, were awarded the scholarship.[2] Most students are denied scholarships based on family income when the conflation of caste with class has been shown to be erroneous by so many social scientists. When traditional modes of accessing mobility through hard-won state schemes fail them, newer modes of accessing education are being sought especially by first-generation learners.

During the pandemic, Western universities also cut back on financial support. In this context, the online community has responded in multiple cases by now to garner financial assistance, sometimes in a period of hours as seen in #SumittoOxford, to help students who have gained admission to prestigious institutions abroad. We read this as a mark of resilience. When we examine the narratives of students from marginalised castes, we can delineate an aspiration to gain education as being intricately tied to a denial of knowledge for them within the rigid caste system in India which seeps into the Indian academia as well. Aspiration in the narratives of our respondents coming from marginalised caste backgrounds is tied intricately to the dignity of the community. Mohan and another Dalit student respondent, who joined the University of London on a Kerala Government scholarship, were the only ones who talked of aspiration in community terms and saw the opportunity to study abroad as a step towards broadening the support system for more Dalit students who might aspire to go abroad in the future. As Jørgen Carling and Francis Collins in their influential introduction to the special issue on aspiration in migration avers, ‘An aspiration to migrate reflects the transformative potential of migration and implies that this imagined transformation is not only viewed positively by the prospective migrant but is also institutionally embedded’(Carling & Collins, 2018). The narratives of the Dalit student migrants show how within the context of Kerala, it is embedded within aspirational mobility and the transformative potential for the caste-community.

Conclusion

Migration is one of the ‘time-space’ strategies available along with staying, waiting, and returning (Rajan, 2022). In the narratives of student migrants, we can trace how the pandemic produced different types of mobilities and immobilities. While actual movement across borders gets more attention in studies on migration, in this chapter we can see how there are mobilities and immobilities effected on aspiration. We have tried to put forward the emergence of the concept of ‘aspirational mobility’ in its inchoateness and tentativeness within the narratives of student migrants. The meaning of return, leaving behind a land of education, and leaving back to the country of desire are not monolithic and differ according to the different stages of education the students are in, the countries of their educational aspiration, as well as

their social positionalities before and after migration. However, the chapter has its limitations in the specificity of the period it looked at. Indian medical students have returned to China after a long two-year wait amid a stringent Zero-COVID policy; the Russia–Ukraine war highlighted the plight of stranded Indian students making us also wonder about the educational agencies which concentrated on that region; massive deskilling is happening along with students opting to take huge student loans to migrate. It will be interesting to reassess how the aspirations of students have changed and evolved and the role of different agents that at times are even involved in artificially manufacturing aspirations.

Notes

1 All names have been changed for privacy and confidentiality.
2 Response of Union Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment, Virendra Kumar, to the question by Villupuram MP Ravikumar in Parliament.

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9 Motivations among Indian Students to Study Medicine in Eastern European Countries

H. Arokkiaraj and S. Irudaya Rajan

Introduction

Research exploring determinants of international mobility of students has a prominent position among various streams of empirical and theoretical international research (Cebolla-Boado, 2018). 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 (Pande, 2017). It is estimated that around 444,553 Indian students are studying in foreign countries (Ministry of External Affairs, 2022). Some of the existing scholarship on international student migration (ISM) from India to Anglophone countries traced the motivations of Indian students to study abroad, including destination choices, gender dimensions, and a comparative analysis of Indian and United Kingdom (UK) student's reasons and experience of studying abroad (Sondhi and King, 2018).

The extensive research over two decades on the ISM of Indian students to Anglophone countries such as the United States of America (USA), the UK, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand indicates that migration of students is routed to these developed countries for better career pathways after completion of their education (Awasthi and Chandra, 1994; Voigt-Graf and Khoo, 2004; Baas, 2006; Singh and Cabraal, 2010; Rafi and Lewis, 2013; She and Wotherspoon, 2013; Hawthorne, 2014; Rutten and Verstappen, 2014; Joseph, 2016; Pande and Yan, 2016; Thomas, 2017; Kim and Kwak, 2019; Rajan, 2022). However, very little research focuses on the ISM from India to non-Anglophone countries in South Asia like China and Eastern European countries like Russia and Ukraine, except for the limited statistics available showing the trend of student mobility.

India is a major source country for sending international students to both Anglophone and non-Anglophone countries.

It is interesting to note that the concentration of Indian students in non-Anglophone countries pursue educational programmes taught in local languages like Russian, German, Chinese, Ukrainian, etc. India is also the leading place of origin in terms of sending students to non-Anglophone countries to undertake medical degrees. India currently tops the list of sending countries in international students enrolled in medicine in Russia

DOI: 10.4324/9781003490234-9

Table 9.1 Indian students in Ukraine and China

Country	*Statistics and Year*	*Rank*
Ukraine	14,958 (2018)	India is ranked 1st by international students by country of origin
China	16,694 (2015) 23,198 (2018)	India is ranked 5th (2015) and 4th (2018) by international students by country of origin

Sources: Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine (2019), Ministry of Education, China (2019).

(Institute of International Education, 2014). On the other hand, in the UK, the number of students undertaking a professional degree in the field of health is very less when compared to the number of Indian medical students' enrolment in Russia. The data in Table 9.1 shows the figure for Indian students in Ukraine and China. The proliferation of private medical colleges in India also may be aimed at an export-oriented market, and the large rise in the number of medical schools may be motivated by the financial rewards offered by the high demand for medical education coupled with high tuition fees. Demand for medical education is so high that Indian citizens are attending medical school in Russia and, more recently, China (Supe and Burdick, 2006). With this background, this chapter is focused on one key research question: What are the motivations for Indian students that lead to study medicine in Russia and Ukraine?

This research is set to contribute to the scholarship on Indian students' international migration by exploring the case of Indian medical students across universities in Eastern European (EE) countries. According to the United Nations (2017), the EE region consists of ten nations, including Russia and Ukraine. As per Government of India data (Government of India, 2013; 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017; 2018), Indian medical graduates from foreign countries who appeared and passed the Foreign Medical Graduates Examination[1]-screening test mostly graduated from Russia and Ukraine (2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, and 2017). In Russia, among the international students, those from Transcaucasia and India were observed to be mostly enrolled for medicine (Aref'ev, 2005). In a recent interview, Elena Barman, Head of the Education Section, Russian Centre for Science and Culture (2019), stated that 'Russia witnesses the influx of nearly 6,000 Indian students every year with around 70% of them opting to study medicine'. In the case of Ukraine, Indian students are the largest section in their cohort of international students and most of them are enrolled in medical universities (Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, 2019). Sadly, in India, no data is maintained on the number of Indian students going abroad every year to pursue medical education (Live Mint, 2022). This chapter uses primary and secondary data to broaden the understanding of motivations among the Indian medical students' mobility to Ukraine and Russia.

Research Methodology

There are two types of mobility found among international students: credit mobility and degree mobility. Credit mobility entails

> a period abroad of up to one year (a summer school, a semester, or a junior year abroad), the key feature of which is that the students then return to his or her 'home' university to complete the education programme, and bring back the 'credit' for the time spent abroad (course credit, grades, etc.).

In degree mobility (sometimes referred to as diploma mobility), 'a student goes abroad for the entire degree programme – typically a bachelor's, master's, or doctoral qualification – and stays abroad for a minimum of one year (e.g., on a one-year master's), but usually longer' (King, 2013, 26). This research only looks into the degree of mobility of Indian medical students to EE countries of Russia and Ukraine. This chapter follows King and Sondhi's (2018) working definition for ISM, wherein international students are understood to be those undertaking 'degree mobility' and in the context of this chapter findings are limited to those enrolled in an entire medical degree programme, i.e., undergraduate medical students (MBBS) in Ukraine and Russia.

Respondents for the interview were contacted through different channels. The president of the Indian Student's Association at a particular medical university in Russia helped to reach Indian students in Russia as well as provided details regarding Indian students in Ukraine. Due to the research project timeline, only 20 interviews were conducted, but these were very in-depth. This chapter uses the pseudonyms of the respondents to protect their identities. Focused interviews were conducted mainly through online telecommunication applications such as Skype. The interviews were carried out in either Tamil or English, according to the language choice of the students. Under different thematic sections, open-ended questions were used to gather information from the participants. The demographic and economic profiles of the respondents are presented in Table 9.2. This research is limited in offering a representative sample of Indian medical students in Ukraine and Russia, but instead, it provided insights into new geographies of ISM from India and

Table 9.2 Demographic and economic details of the interviewed students

Origin State in India		*Country of Study*		*Gender*		*Parent Occupation*	
Tamil Nadu	12	Russia	11	Male	14	Business	8
Kerala	4	Ukraine	9	Female	6	Private employee	6
Haryana	2					Government employee	6
Gujarat	2						

Source: Authors' primary data 2019–2020.

factors that motivate students to take up this decision. The following sections discuss the themes that emerged from the interviews with the students.

Findings

Factors That Motivated the Study of Medicine

The interviews yielded robust data on the respondent's motivation to select medicine for their higher education. Putting aside the consideration of school background, the family was the strongest motivating factor in the respondent's decision to study medicine. Respondents were highly motivated by their parents, especially if they had doctors in their family, real-life incidents, and childhood dreams. In some cases, there were multiple motivating factors. First and foremost, the majority of the respondents believed that they were average or above-average students at school and, except for a few, most of them considered studying higher education courses related to science. A respondent, Ramesh, pointed out that his father motivated him to study medicine. Beginning of his interview, he expressed his interest in sports and informed me that his father encouraged him to apply for medicine, so he immediately decided to study medicine. Similarly, in the case of Prabhu and Sreeja, because of their parents, they decided to choose medicine:

Ramesh: In my 10th standard, I was interested in sports; however, by the motivation of my father, I decided to study medicine, although I am just an average student at school.

Prabhu: I like to study B.A. in Tamil literature, I also applied to two colleges for this course … in between my parents made a decision to put me in a medical course.

Sreeja: I was interested to study biotechnology. My parents felt that even after taking biology why should I study biotechnology, they prefer medicine and asked me about it. I cannot say no when they asked.

Other respondents expressed that while they chose to pursue pure science in their higher secondary schooling, it was their parents' desire that they become a doctor. For example, Neetu described her father's role in her pursuing medicine:

Neetu: Like I was so good in sports, I never usually thought of it (medicine), like people think of it for a long time. … I could say that the most important role played … and studying medicine is only because of my father.

These findings clearly demonstrated that parents immensely influence the respondents in their choice of career and higher education. Some of the respondents stated that real-life incidents had led them to pursue medicine.

For instance, one male respondent (Nallan) reported that his motivation to study medicine had come from an experience in his own life:

Nallan: I underwent appendix surgery, that time I was in my 11th standard (school). Those days along with my family members I met Dr Kumar for my medical check-up … he is a gastrologist specialist … he was my inspiration because he was friendly and very much caring as well … when Dr Kumar came to know that I am in my 11th standard he gave special care to me. So, he was my inspiration to select medicine. But, during my childhood days, I had the passion to become a scientist.

Another respondent, Arun from Kerala eagerly asserted that his motivation to study came from his life experience. A doctor saved his life when his mother had a complicated childbirth, which inspired Arun to become a doctor and save people. Further, he reported that he had always had a mentality of wanting to serve people and that this had also helped him follow through on his decision to study medicine. Both Nallan and Arun were motivated by their personal experiences and real-life incidents.

Indeed, it is significant that the incidents the respondents referred to were related to medical practice – yet some of the students were keen to state that it was their own desire that propelled them to study medicine. However, most of the respondents felt that their parents were the strongest motivating force behind their decisions.

The 'Parent' Factor and Economic Background

The meticulous planning by parents in designing their children's educational trajectories could be seen as a natural way (among the respondents' parents) for them to attain their fullest motivation for their children to pursue a medical education and eventually attain a prestigious career in the medical field. Additionally, the interviewed students tended to come from advantaged economic backgrounds – the financial potential and the opportunity to provide for their children to study medicine in EE countries run parallel. For example, Prabhu, a respondent from Tamil Nadu and the eldest son in his family, explained:

Interviewer: Any reasons for your parents to put you in medical course?

Prabhu: Because it is my father's desire to make his son as a medical doctor. No other specific reasons, I am typical 90s kid, so I had no other choices.

Interviewer: Whether your father had aspirations to become a medical doctor?

Prabhu: My father is not well educated, but my father used to tell me that his father, my grandfather, died when my father was very young. So, my father used to feel very much that he would have studied if his father

lived for some more years. So, my father always tells me that if my grandfather lived for more years then my father would have studied … my father had desire to study any higher education in any field of studies.

This quote illustrates that some respondents may have been willing to make compromises to fulfil their parents' wishes, and they were prepared to give up their preferred choices of higher education to do so. Farooq stated that he felt motivated to study medicine because of his mother. The respondent shared the following:

Farooq: In those days, girls are not allowed to study, but my mother always tell me that she had the desire to study medicine … the main reason (to study medicine) is to fulfil my mother's wish … she is my main motivation.

Another male respondent, Arun, articulated his experience as well as how his parents' educational backgrounds shaped his motivation, as follows:

Arun: There is a personal reason also, as both of my parents have not pursued that much of education and they both belong to lower background of the society … although my parents are from the lower strata of the society, I can still be a doctor.

The data also showed that some respondents were motivated by their parents' efforts to have their children understand that one of the benefits of becoming a doctor is a higher status in society. Most of the respondents, however, did not mention this factor, even though it would likely have been one of their parents' main considerations. Only a few respondents explicitly expressed an experience of this. One female respondent, Neetu, was very direct:

Neetu: My father … he made me understand the respect one gets after being a doctor. And he only made me understand the worth of the degree. He made me realise that I should go for medicine.

For this study, we first considered why the respondents chose to study medicine, and our focused interviews brought up one significant factor: the economic backgrounds of the parents. With regard to economic background, the respondents reported that they were either from 'middle-class' or 'upper-middle-class' families. Furthermore, the parents' occupations were generally in the areas of government jobs, private jobs, or business. Hence, the discussion around this topic led us to assume that relatively less affluent families could better afford for their children to pursue international study for a medical career by obtaining a degree from the selected countries. For instance, Neetu described her father's career as follows: 'I belong from an upper-middle class family. My financial conditions are quite good, my father

is serving in Gujarat State Finance Commission. He is a state government employee'. Neetu's report supports the idea that the parents' financial potential is relatively important for motivating their children to study medicine in the selected (sampled) countries. Another respondent, Prabhu, noted that 'my father is doing transport business'; the occupational status of the parents still seemed to matter while arranging the resources to support studying abroad. It was found that if students were not from an affluent family background, the opportunity to study medicine abroad was a viable option and that even students from middle- and upper-middle-class families could afford an overseas education, depending on the choice of destination country such as EE countries.

Role of Social Networks in Students' Motivation

Our data showed that social networks played a vital role in providing information and advice to respondents and their parents when considering studying medicine abroad. This information was obtained while parents were exploring alternate options for their children to study medicine, or while deciding on the destination choice for studying medicine abroad. The respondents reported that they sought help within their social networks, which included their relatives, their parents' colleagues and friends, and family friends. The respondents reported that discussions with those in their social networks often brought up the option to study overseas as well as the benefits of overseas medical study. Therefore, social networks influenced the decision to migrate, mainly by providing access to information about the option to study medicine abroad and about the experiences of those who had already chosen to migrate.

One of the interviewed respondents, named Sudha, mentioned that her father had learned about the option of studying medicine abroad from his colleague whose daughter had studied medicine in Russia. Those who had sought information from their social networks were also often referred to educational consultancies in India for obtaining admission to study abroad. Sudha felt that the initial conversation with her father's colleague and her daughter was a strong influence on her decision; she even recalled that she was told that the particular university the daughter was studying at was good, it had many Indian students as well as students from other countries, and that the country (Russia) was safe. After hearing this, Sreeja's parents decided to send her to Russia for her studies. In her own words:

Sreeja: My father colleague daughter studied here (at the same university in Russia). He only informed to my father about this and then we went to meet them. Then I thought why I should waste one year … Then my father told me that you can join in this university. … Not only for this country but for selecting this university it is only because of my

father's colleague. … So, we did not try other options apart from this. … Therefore, we settle down with this option.

In the case of Prabhu, whose father was not well educated but had the desire that his son become a doctor, the father sought information from their neighbour. When the following question was asked to Prabhu, can you talk about your neighbour who informed your parents about this option? He replied as follows:

Prabhu: They are my family friends (neighbour), they informed my parents that one of their relatives' sons was doing medicine in Russia at that time, and that's how my neighbour passed this option to my parents. The same neighbour also gave a few mobile numbers of parents whose son was doing MBBS in Armenia and also in Russia. … The same neighbour only recommended us this consultancy. … Then my parents contacted them, and we decided Russia to study.

Another respondent who was interviewed, Neetu, indicated that it was not only the existing social networks that provided information; although her older sister was already studying in Russia and she, therefore, had easy access to basic knowledge regarding studying in Russia and how the university there works, she still did detailed research on the university she was considering by calling other students who were studying at the university to learn about their experience. In the case of Farooq and Neetu, medical students in Ukraine and Russia explained when asked how did they decide to study abroad. This was illustrated by Neetu and Farooq below in their own words:

Farooq: My father has more contacts, that's how my father knows a person who was in his sixth year of MBBS at this same University in Ukraine. That person talked to me; he told me about the scope … he said that I can get more knowledge by studying here. … He told me if I wish then I can come. He was helpful. He did everything for us. Even in the university, he got admission for me.

Neetu: My older sister was studying here, and she knows the base, she also knows how the university works. … But I called the students who were actually studying here and how are their experiences and how their teachers are teaching them. I did a detailed study. …. And at last, I found my university to be appropriate and then I decided to get in here.

This shows the value of new social networks when seeking information about a particular university before selecting it, and it indicates how the experiences of other students can influence the decisions of potential students. One respondent (Nallan) noted that a television advertisement was their first exposure to the idea of studying medicine abroad, after which they contacted one of their relatives who had studied medicine in Russia. These interactions

were enough for Nallan's parents to consider studying abroad as a viable option. He finally chose to study medicine in Russia:

Interviewer: How in 11th standard itself you started looking for medicine abroad?

Nallan: We talked with people who have already completed medicine in Russia. … Even we went to their home and discussed doing medicine abroad. … Like we met a doctor nearby who is also my relative who completed MBBS/MD from the university I am studying. So, this university is visible to us. Therefore, we selected this University.

Almost all of the respondents stated that their close social networks had played a role in their choice to study abroad, with some firmly stating that their relatives had insisted on choosing a particular country in which to pursue medicine.

Because of the high donation requirements at private medical colleges in India, it was much too expensive for the parents of another respondent, Ramesh, to study in India. They learned about the option of studying in Ukraine through his cousin who was, himself, preparing to go there to study medicine. Though none of the respondents mentioned the absence of or influence of social networks in their choice to study abroad. These narrations show that close social networks, such as those including relatives like an uncle or a cousin, played a solid role in the respondents' choices to study abroad – indeed, the respondents' parents provided them with information through their close social networks, which can be a driving force. Through this process, parents ensured that their children would be attending the most appropriate university at the ideal destination.

Discussion

This chapter is aimed to explore the motivations among the students to move to EE countries to attain medical degrees. The respondents were influenced by multiple factors and motivated in different ways to study medicine. They also highlighted the influence of an eagerness to help society by becoming a doctor. Also, the respondents reported the concrete family hierarchy, with parents at the top, not only as a motivating factor but also as a major disadvantage in the respondent's process of choosing their path to higher education. Respondents often had other choices than medicine as their first preference. As pointed out by the respondents, on occasion, they were not able to choose their higher education independently. Although parents played a major role, the respondents felt the need to fulfil their parents' wishes, as the respondents were also happy and grateful for the opportunity to study medicine. These findings indicate the gesture of esteem and a sense of belonging with their parents and in this vein, it could be said that the respondents viewed studying medicine as a chance to make changes in their lives and their families as well. There is a gap in the

comparative research focusing on destination choices and the role of social networks in ISM. Taking inspiration from Manchin and Orazbayev (2018), this chapter examined the influence of close social networks (composed of family and friends) on the decision to study medicine abroad as well as on the selection of a destination in EE countries. To further understand the role of social networks, it was further classified to close social networks which provide information to study abroad. This classification enables us to understand which social network channels influenced the respondent's decision to migrate. Put simply, the input and information gained from their close social networks, and this information, combined with their pre-existing desire to become doctors, resulted in their decision to pursue medical education abroad. This demonstrates that respondents were not only supported by their families but also by their social networks in their choice to study abroad; the decision-making process was a collective one – both their parents and their close networks were heavily involved. It is clear that social networks acted as a chain, connecting potential migrant students to the information they needed to make the decision to study medicine abroad. Thus, the role of social networks is observed in overseas migration for higher education. The social networks of previously migrated students and their experiences are also key contributors to the respondents' and their parents' decisions to migrate to EE countries. Therefore, neither the students themselves nor their parents were the sole influences for the decision to study medicine abroad. In summary, it could be considered that close social networks led to motivating mobility choices.

Conclusion

As was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, our research question was answered through the robust data gathered from the students, and the data gathered here will contribute to more articles in the future. By focusing closely on these questions, this article demonstrated the new geographies of students' migration from India to selected EE countries to study medicine. The data that were gathered also stress the importance of course-based research in ISM. The purpose of this discussion was to examine the underlying factors that motivated the students to study medicine and their choice to study medicine abroad rather than in India. The students' parents also played a vital role in generating human capital by fulfilling their responsibilities to provide higher education for their children, which leads to higher potential and growing demand in the job market for the health sector.

Note

1 Foreign Medical Graduate Examination (FMGE) is a licensure exam, which aims to sift the charlatans from those who have acquired their medical degrees from another country but are knowledgeable and skilled enough to bolster the country's physician workforce.

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10 The Mental Health Struggles of Indian International Students

Yasir Khan and Shivajan Sivapalan

Indian students face several challenges both before departure for their studies and after they arrive in Canada (more details, see Sivapalan and Khan in this volume). The cultural, financial, language, and geographical barriers all create numerous difficulties for these students. These barriers also can manifest with significant mental health burdens; this chapter will further explore the mental health challenges which these students face including current incidences of mental health conditions, causative factors, and barriers to accessing care, existing supports, and future directions for improving mental health care for these students.

Prevalence of Mental Health Concerns

To have an understanding of the mental health challenges which international students face, it's important to consider the existing research in establishing the prevalence of various conditions in this population, especially in comparison to baseline rates of similar conditions in the wider student population.

As part of their International College Student Health project, the WHO administered a number of questionnaires to incoming post-secondary students at a number of colleges and universities across eight different countries (Auerbach et al., 2018). These questionnaires were used by the WHO in establishing both the lifetime and 1-year prevalence of a number of mental health conditions as defined by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 4th edition (DSM-IV). These conditions included major depression, generalised anxiety, panic disorder, bipolar disorder, alcohol use disorder, and substance use disorder. In total, the WHO garnered approximately 14,000 responses from full-time students. Of these respondents, 35 percent screened positive for at least one disorder in their lifetime and 31 percent screened positive for one disorder in the preceding 12 months. This study helps in establishing the impact of mental health in this population and its significance. To have almost one-third of students screened positive for a major mental health condition in the preceding 12 months helps underlie the importance and relevance of this issue in the post-secondary student population. The study did look at some demographic factors, including, age, gender, and religion among others, but, unfortunately, data was not provided on

DOI: 10.4324/9781003490234-10

the demographic distribution according to country of origin or international students in comparison to domestic students. While this study helps establish the larger picture of post-secondary student mental health, the further context of international students is still essential in understanding the challenges which Indian students may face.

One of the earliest studies to focus on student mental health specifically examined the mental health needs and counselling used by international graduate students (Hyun et al., 2007). This study looked at survey responses from 551 international graduate students of which 50.8 percent fell into the "Asian" category. The results from this study indicated that 44 percent of international graduate students had experienced a significant emotional or stress-related problem over the preceding year, compared to 46 percent of domestic students. Of significance, only 33 percent of these international students had considered seeking help, compared to 56 percent of their domestic counterparts. Furthermore, only 61 percent of international students were aware of campus resources for counselling services, compared to 78 percent of their domestic counterparts. Unfortunately, one of the limitations of this study and many similar studies is that the "Asian" category is a large catch-all group and does not allow further analysis of distinct sub-cultures of South Asia and East Asia. However, this study was useful in establishing that despite similarly reported rates of mental health at that time in 2007, international students were far behind their domestic counterparts in both their awareness of campus resources and also their willingness to seek help for those issues.

Some of these findings have since been replicated, including in a 2018 study that compared the health and well-being of international students compared to domestic students in Tasmania, Australia (Skromanis et al., 2018). This study surveyed 382 international students and 1013 domestic students. Of the international student group, 6.8 percent were from India. Unfortunately researchers did not do a sub-analysis of their data specifically for Indian students, so we are looking at conclusions from a larger group which included a substantial Chinese and Malaysian student population. Key findings from this study included that international students, in particular male international students, were more likely to have adverse health outcomes related to mental health while also being much less likely to seek help for mental health problems. In fact, only 17.1 percent of international students in this study would seek help for a mental health problem, compared to 51.4 percent of domestic students. From even a small number of studies we are starting to see a pattern, where even with similar rates of mental health issues, international students are much less likely to seek out help for these problems. This becomes an important finding as we delve deeper into this topic and start considering how to overcome some of the barriers which Indian students face in addressing mental health concerns.

Another study that focused on this issue looked specifically at the prevalence of mental health symptoms among international students at American

colleges in comparison to domestic students (Yeung et al., 2022). In this study, over 2400 international students were surveyed, along with over 42,000 domestic students. Approximately 44.8 percent of the international students surveyed were classified as Asian. Again, these students were not further classified beyond the “Asian” category, which does limit the overall applicability to Indian students but still allows us to observe some trends. This study found that international students were less likely to report psychiatric diagnoses such as depression and/or anxiety but were more likely to be suffering from overwhelming depression and were also more likely to have attempted suicide. These findings indicate a gap in care for the international student population. The fact that these students are less likely to report diagnoses does not seem to reflect a lower prevalence. Given the higher suicide attempt rates, it raises a larger question of whether these students are being screened appropriately and whether they have access to the culturally appropriate resources they may need in order to access help.

One large-scale study tracked trends in mental health for various ethnic groups studying in American post-secondary settings over an 8-year period from 2013 to 2021 (Lipson et al., 2022). This study collected data from over 350,000 students at 373 College and university campuses. Within this study, students were classified based on their ethnic backgrounds; in total, there were approximately 30,000 students in the ADPI category (Asian, Desi-American, and Pacific Islander). Within this group, approximately 35 percent were classified as first-generation within the United States. This study further assessed the incidence of symptoms of various mental health conditions within these ethnic groups as well as trends in seeking help. Within the ADPI group, from 2013 to 2021, the study found significant increases in symptoms of depression, anxiety, eating disorders, and suicidal ideation. There was also a corresponding decrease over that same period in students from the ADPI group who were considered to be “flourishing” – from 46.3 to 34 percent. The trends in help-seeking also provide very valuable information for the ADPI group. In particular, in the most recent year analysed (2021), the ADPI group ranked the lowest among all ethnicities in all categories of help-seeking, including in the rate of treatment in the past year, therapy in the past year, medication in the past year, and lifetime diagnosis. Although there are limitations with this data as this study focused on ethnic background rather than domestic or international status, it supports some of the other patterns noted in relevant research. The numbers from this study help highlight recent trends among all post-secondary students as well as those from an Asian/Desi group, as these students have shown significant increases in a variety of mental health symptoms over the past decade. However, perhaps the more significant and troubling sign from this study was the low rate of help-seeking among the Asian, Desi-American, and Pacific Islander student groups. This group ranked the lowest in all measures of help-seeking, illustrating a larger issue; despite the increases in symptoms, these students are not seeking out help.

Overall, there are a number of common themes from current existing literature on the topic of mental health of International and Indian/Asian students. Research has established the significant mental health burden among all college student populations and has also shown increased incidences of symptoms of anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation among Indian student populations. At the same time and of significant concern, research has also shown low rates of help-seeking among Asian and Desi student populations, as well as lower rates of disclosure of psychiatric illness but higher rates of attempted suicide, especially among male students. One of the largest limitations of existing research is that international students are often categorised into large subgroups, which limits the ability to generalise findings across specific ethnicities. For example, much of the existing literature on this topic will group Indian students into a large "Asian" student group. As such, this would also include a significant population of East Asian students, making it more difficult to specify the findings to Indian students alone. It would be helpful for future research to focus more specifically on the Indian student subgroup or to do further analysis on subgroups within the larger "Asian" categorisation, to help identify different trends in mental health within the numerous cultural groups that can fall under the Asian umbrella.

Contributing Factors to the Mental Health Burdens of Indian Students

A number of stressors can affect the mental health of international students, and some of these stressors may be in place even prior to a student's arrival in Canada. One group of researchers looked at existing publications to determine the pre-departure, post-arrival, and post-study challenges which international students from a variety of backgrounds may face in different countries (Khanal & Gaulee, 2019). Among their early findings was the lack of published data on common pre-departure challenges; the vast majority of published research focused on the challenges these students face after arrival in their country of study. However, in assessing the available literature, researchers here noted that one common pre-departure stressor for an Indian student was financial challenges. Researchers noted that financial problems were becoming a more common theme among Indian international students, as most students were being self-financed for their studies through private loans. These financial stressors can often increase after arrival in Canada due to the high cost of living, which many students are not prepared for. These challenges can add up for international students, as outlined in a recent article by the *Globe and Mail*: "they arrive with few supports, discover that well-paying work is hard to get, struggle in school because of language skills, and cram into substandard housing because it's all they can afford" (Bascaramurty et al., 2021).

In addressing these contributors to mental health, which begin to take shape prior to the student's departure from their home country, it is absolutely essential to better prepare students for the realities of what they may

face and to equip them with the knowledge and supports to be aware when they may be struggling and how to access the appropriate resources. Part of the challenge is that recruiting agencies often paint a rosy picture to students without disclosing the challenges they will face:

> They promise a new life, jobs, houses and prosperity and a chance at the ultimate prize: Canadian citizenship … bringing Indian students to Canada has become a lucrative business spanning two continents. In India, there are language schools, recruiters, immigration consultants and lenders, all of whom have profited handsomely from the study-abroad craze. Once students arrive in Canada, postsecondary institutions, landlords, immigration consultant, and employers profit from their growing presence.
>
> (Bascaramurty et al., 2021)

Recruiting these students has become a huge financial industry. In order to give these students the best chance to succeed, an equal amount of energy must be incorporated to educate and inform these students before they arrive in Canada.

Another study found the significant impacts that discrimination can have on the mental health of international students (Maliku et al., 2022). In this study, researchers surveyed 103 international students, of whom approximately 10 percent were from India. The results from this study found that discrimination was significantly associated with increased loneliness, which in turn was associated with increased anxiety and depressive symptoms. Similarly, a study at an American University surveyed 121 international students, of whom 20 were from India (Sherry et al., 2010). The researchers in this study were attempting to identify some of the challenges which international students faced while studying in America. Financial difficulties, trouble adapting to a new culture, and difficulty with the English language were among the common themes of challenges identified by the surveyed students. Of interest in this study was the fact that students identified spoken language as a larger barrier than written language.

Many students also felt that formalised programmes to increase interactions with domestic students would be of great benefit in terms of strengthening their English language skills and also allowing them to get accustomed to slang terminology which is commonly used. Students felt well supported by the University as far as receiving written language support through various programmes but felt that spoken language could be a key area of improvement. Similarly, students identified acculturative stress as a key factor affecting their mental health, with difficulty adapting to the American lifestyle. Many students reported feeling isolated and lonely initially upon arrival due to the overwhelming nature of trying to get accustomed to American culture. The majority of students surveyed in this study reported experiencing some level of financial stress, which some attributed to a lack of clarity regarding

fees for the programmes as well as unexpected costs such as the high cost of health insurance. The lack of existing financial aid and scholarships for international students was also noted as something which could help alleviate this stressor for some students.

While these studies provide some great insight, the vast majority of research looks at international students as a singular group, within which Indian students typically account for a minority subset. One study conducted through the University of Pennsylvania focused specifically on the mental health of Indian international students, surveying 141 Indian college students to identify issues contributing to their mental health (Wasil et al., 2022). Using thematic analysis, researchers identified key academic and social stressors at play. Academic stressors included high levels of coursework as well as the competitive nature of college academics. Students noted that these issues played a key role in increasing stress and anxiety. Social stressors included a number of factors, such as a lack of community or sense of belongingness as well as a culture of partying and substance use. In commenting on the lack of community, students noted that the student population was splintered by social and political values, with intolerance by some of those who held different political beliefs. Students also noted that the culture around partying and substance use could contribute to students feeling peer pressure to partake. Of note, the Indian students surveyed in this study also provided opinions on things the university could do to improve student mental health. Key recommendations included increasing the number of counsellors and allowing for academic accommodations for affected students. When asked what the students themselves could do, they noted promoting literacy on mental health through workshops, establishing peer-support programmes and community-building events. One of the key messages from this study was that solutions need to come from multiple levels, including the institutions, but also the student body, to ensure that solutions are informed by the population being served.

In the Canadian context, the Peel region in Toronto is home to a very large population of Indian youth, including international students. In fact, nearly half the population of Brampton is of South Asian origin; its abundance of post-secondary institutions as well as basement apartments has made it a stronghold of migration for international students from India (Bascaramurty et al., 2021)· Research with South Asian youth in Peel can help inform many key messages about mental health in this population. One particular study interviewed South Asian youth in Peel in assessing key factors which impacted their mental health (Islam et al., 2017). It should be noted that there was a limited sample of only ten students in this qualitative study; however, common themes still emerged, including cultural conflicts, academic stress, and financial stress as well as interpersonal and family stressors. These are consistent themes that we have seen across many studies. One of the key messages from this study was that many youths were not even aware of the resources which were available to them and did not feel well-informed about existing resources.

Further key insight regarding causative factors for poor mental health can also be taken from the providers who work with these students and youth. One Canadian research study involved conducting qualitative interviews with 22 mental health-care providers who worked with South Asian youth in the Peel region of Toronto (Islam et al., 2022). Workers noted a number of factors that were often unique to South Asian youth in Canada; these included a number of stressors related to discrimination, religion, family dynamics, culture, and migration. Interestingly, workers noted that due to the high prevalence of South Asian youth in the Peel region, their clients often felt they were more impacted by class, caste, and skin shade discrimination ("shadeism") rather than overt racism. There were also a number of factors within this population that can contribute to poor mental health, including beliefs around mental health, and willingness to seek help for mental illnesses. Beliefs around mental health which had an impact included the belief that marriage would solve mental illness as well as a general distrust of psychiatry and psychiatric medications. There would often also be a lack of parental support for youth who did seek mental help, through the dismissal of diagnoses or through a general lack of mental health literacy. It is important to consider these unique factors when considering the mental health of Indian youth.

In summary, there are a wide number of factors that have an effect on the mental health burdens which Indian international students will face. One of the most common factors across research was that of financial stressors, starting prior to departure for studies and continuing during their time in other countries. Cultural adaptation, difficulties with language, and social stressors also were noted as common themes; students noted difficulties with spoken language, in particular slang terminology that is commonly used conversationally by students. In regard to cultural adaptation, students often struggled with a sense of a lack of community both on and off campus and feeling isolated. Another stressor for Indian international students was the challenging nature of navigating the culture of partying and substance use, which is more common in North American college and university campuses. Students also struggled with differing social and political values. On top of these financial and acculturative stresses, students also dealt with academic stressors related to post-secondary learning. Finally, one of the more concerning and common factors which had an effect on the mental health of these students was the lack of awareness of existing resources and supports. In some cases, students did not know how to navigate or access these supports, while in other cases, lack of mental health literacy may have factored into students not availing of the supports available to them.

Substance Use

In consideration of the factors affecting the mental health of Indian international students, substance use is an issue that must be considered. Research in

this area is quite limited, but the research which does exist may help provide some insight into the mental health challenges which these students face. One study surveyed 3081 undergraduate students, including 534 international students (Guo et al., 2022). In this study, domestic students reported drinking an average of 3.15 drinks per day, compared to 1.65 for international students. Research findings were consistent with the hypothesis that international students drink less frequently and in smaller quantities than domestic students. These findings of lower substance use by international students had also been established by British researchers who studied drug and alcohol use patterns among international students compared to domestic students. Researchers surveyed 827 students, of whom 123 were identified as international (Vivancos et al., 2009). Of this group, 17 were identified as Asian, with no further sub-categorisation. Significant findings included that international students were less likely to ever have drunk alcohol or used drugs.

In relating some of these findings to mental health, an American study looked at the impact of acculturative stress as a moderator for alcohol use behaviours in international students (Hunt et al., 2017). Acculturative stress is used by the researchers here in reference to the culture shock which international students face when arriving in a new country, as the result of the intersection of two differing cultures. Researchers in this study gathered survey data from 175 international students, of which approximately 11 percent were from India. Researchers found that there was a stronger relationship between alcohol use and its related consequences in international students with higher levels of acculturative stress. Although there was no significant correlation between acculturative stress and drinks per week, there was a positive correlation between drinks per week and alcohol use consequences, as well as acculturative stress and alcohol use consequences. These findings indicate that higher levels of culture shock in international students were associated with a strong relationship between alcohol use and its consequences.

In summary, there is limited research currently on substance use in Indian international students. However, existing research does seem to indicate that initially, international students drink and consume drugs less than their domestic counterparts. In addition, there also seems to be a positive link between higher levels of culture shock and alcohol use–related consequences among international students. In addressing these issues moving forward, it is essential to provide appropriate support for international students in dealing with substance use and in recognising that their patterns of use will often differ from those of domestic students.

Suicide

As international student populations in Canada have rapidly grown over the past decade, the topic of suicide has inevitably gone hand in hand with any considerations of the mental health of these students. As we have established

in earlier sections of this chapter, international students often suffer from mental health conditions at similar or higher rates than their domestic counterparts but are often less likely to seek help for these issues for a number of reasons. Furthermore, there has also been the troubling association that even though international students may be less likely to report their symptoms, they have been found to be at higher risk of attempting suicide.

An in-depth analysis by the *Globe and Mail* on recruiting practices for Indian students being brought to Canadian post-secondary institutions helped to bring attention to this issue: "a local funeral home has called what it's seen lately a crisis: It handles four to five international student deaths each month – almost all of them suspected suicides or overdoses" (Bascaramurty et al., 2021). This statement is a reality check for all North American institutions who are recruiting Indian students, in that these institutions should pause and ask themselves whether they are providing these students with the resources and support they need to succeed.

Existing data on actual suicides is limited. As noted in the quote above, many of these deaths may be suspected suicides, but this is not always confirmed. While this data is limited, there is some existing research on suicidal ideation in international students that we can use as a guide. One study, conducted at Queen's University in Canada, looked specifically at mental health and academic outcomes between international and domestic students (King et al., 2021). This study surveyed 2991 students including 2694 domestic students and 297 international students. While rates of significant mental health diagnoses were similar between the two groups, international students were more likely to report having attempted suicide than domestic students. The results indicated that 17 percent of surveyed international male students reported suicidal ideation and 6 percent had attempted suicide, compared to 21.3 percent and 2.75 percent, respectively, in their male domestic counterparts. For female students, 31 percent of international students reported having experienced suicidal ideation and 8.3 percent reported having attempted suicide, compared to 29 percent and 6.3 percent, respectively, of their domestic female counterparts.

Another study looked at factors that could have an impact on suicidal ideation in international students, including the factors of a sense of campus belonging and family belonging (Servaty-Seib et al., 2016). This study surveyed 254 undergraduate students, of which 46 were identified as international students. Of these 46 students, 9 were from India and 4 were from Malaysia. This provides a relatively small sample that cannot be extrapolated a great deal. However, researchers did find a strong correlation between international students in their sense of belonging on campus with their risk of suicidal ideation: the less the international students felt like they belonged on campus, the more likely they were to have reported suicidal ideation. Again, although the small sample size and other limitations in this study restrict our ability to generalise these findings, it provides one potential clue for why suicide and suicidal ideation may be a problem among the international student

population: lack of a sense of belonging, which may contribute to isolation and deteriorating mental health.

Another study aimed to delineate more of the underlying factors which can be associated with emotional distress and suicidal thoughts in the international student population (Taliaferro et al., 2020). In this study, online surveys were administered to 435 international students at 2 mid-western and 2 south-western universities in the United States. In total, 62 percent of these international students were identified as "Asian," but unfortunately there was no further sub-categorisation. In their analysis, researchers found that there were a number of factors that were associated with a higher level of emotional distress, including ethnic discrimination, unmet interpersonal needs, and feelings of high levels of entrapment. However, unmet interpersonal needs were the only factor that was significantly associated with an increased risk of suicidal ideation.

Considering the relevant research in this section, we can see that while rates of suicidal ideation may be similar between international and domestic students, there does seem to be a higher risk for suicide attempts in the international student population, especially on the male side. One key underlying factor for this is the unmet interpersonal needs of international students. This underlies an essential point of focus in suicide prevention for this population; in developing appropriate support for these students, institutions need to ensure they are providing avenues for meeting the interpersonal needs of these students and their overall feeling of belonging to the communities where they live.

Summary and Future Directions

In determining how to better support Indian international students, a number of key lessons can be found from existing research that has identified the common stressors and barriers that Indian students face. First and foremost, it's clear that mental health challenges are a common issue in this population. It's also likely that the prevalence numbers may be under-reported, as some research has shown that while international students were less likely to report a psychiatric diagnosis, they were also more likely to be suffering from overwhelming depression and suicidal ideation. Providers should strongly consider screening all Indian international students to assess any mental health concerns they may be dealing with. This is especially important considering the consistent research findings of low help-seeking and lack of awareness of available resources among international students. Screening and education are essential to combat these barriers.

In educating Indian students regarding mental health and resources, this journey should begin even prior to students departing India. The educational institutions that collect significant tuition revenues from these students have a duty to prepare these students for the realities they will face upon arrival in Canada. This should not be meant to discourage students but rather to educate

them. This can include an educational module that would be required for students to complete prior to leaving India, with the basic teaching of some of the common financial and cultural challenges which Indian students may face. This could also include specific teaching on what exactly mental health is and common presentations of different types of mental health challenges. This teaching can be tailored to specific institutions so that students can be informed of where they can go to seek help and what specific resources are available to them at their schools upon arrival in Canada. Even a short but mandatory pre-departure educational module could help better inform and educate students so they feel prepared to deal with some of the challenges they may face in adapting to a new country. Research findings indicate that low rates of help-seeking as well as a lack of awareness about help resources are common among international student populations; as such, it is essential to have a focused education campaign to help better inform students and enable them to succeed.

While existing research on substance use in this population is limited, research has shown that international students drink alcohol and consume recreational drugs less than domestic students. With that being said, there has also been a positive link shown between culture shock and alcohol use–related consequences among international students. This highlights that in the absence of appropriate mental health support, international students may be at higher risk of alcohol abuse. It's important for health providers to recognise this, and also to understand that because both their rates and amounts of substance use are lower, international students with substance problems may not present the same way as domestic students. Providers should keep this information in mind when screening Indian students for substance use.

Research regarding the theme "Suicide in the International Student Population" shows that while suicide rates may be similar to those of domestic students, there are some key differences. For one, rates of suicide attempts seem to be higher among international students and this difference is more pronounced in male international students in comparison to their domestic counterparts. One of the recurrent themes in regard to factors that contributed to increased suicidal thoughts was unmet personal needs. This reflected international students' lack of a sense of belonging or community. This is indicative of the challenges many Indian students face in adapting to a culture that can be vastly different from that of their home country. This can easily lead to isolation, which further impacts this sensation of not belonging and increases the risks of suicidal ideation. To address this issue, institutions should aim to create more opportunities for international students to engage with their communities, including the college/university communities, and the larger communities where these students live. This can be through social and sports programmes which target the interests of the international student population. Promoting peer-led programmes for engagement can also help facilitate this. By helping these students to feel like they belong we can address one of the major risk factors for suicide in this group.

It is also important to consider the perspectives of the students themselves in improving the mental health services provided to them. In the previously mentioned study from the University of Pennsylvania, which specifically focused on Indian international students, a number of recommendations were made by the surveyed students. This included increasing the number of counsellors, establishing student-led peer-support programmes, promoting academic accommodations for students, and organising events to build a sense of community. These echoed many of the other themes noted in similar studies which emphasised the key role that academic, financial, and acculturative stressors played in the mental health of these international students. Given the nature of their lived experiences in dealing with these challenges, there would be a benefit in having more peer-support programmes which are run by Indian students; these peer-support programmes would be uniquely positioned to help incoming students by pairing them with peers who have already experienced these challenges. Funding these programmes at an institutional level would likely yield positive outcomes for most institutions.

While it is tremendously important to have mental health supports in place for Indian international students, those supports should also be culturally appropriate, such that students would actually utilise them. This may include having mental health workers on campus who speak different languages and come from different ethnic backgrounds or having translation services readily available where appropriate. Supporting this population through the right programmes is essential, and while it may not be immediately feasible for the providers of such support to be exclusively representative of the populations being served, having this representation does make a difference, especially if students have options to speak with a provider in a language they may be more comfortable with. Even where this is not feasible, it's important that providers are also educated on the relevant cultural contexts of Indian students so that they can be better equipped to provide culturally competent care; for example, Indian students may under-report on their mental health and that male Indian students may be at a higher risk for suicide attempts. Even understanding that there are common triggers such as financial stressors, culture shock, and social isolation can help prepare providers in screening and cultivating appropriate resources to support Indian students.

Indian international students are an integral part of the Canadian workforce, and supporting their success is in the interests of post-secondary institutions and the government alike. A key part of ensuring this success should revolve around providing education to students about mental health as well as funding culturally appropriate on-campus mental health services. As Indian students migrate to Canada for post-secondary opportunities in increasing numbers, it is becoming increasingly important to support those students in succeeding. They are essential contributors to the Canadian economy and workforce and it is time for us as a society to give back to them by providing them with the education and support they need to help address some of the common mental health challenges they may face upon arrival in Canada.

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11 Recruitment Experiences of International Indian Students

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Introduction

An individual's decision of pursuing higher education often comes with a lot of complex decision-making; this tends to intensify if the individual wants to move away from home for the sake of education. The internal and international movement for the pursuit of education has been an integral part of Indian student life due to the education structure in India. Students from smaller towns often have to relocate to bigger cities where most of the premier universities of the country are located. Simultaneously there is also a large outflow of students from India to different parts of the world in hopes of exposure to a new culture, quality education, better employment possibilities and upskilling (Andrade, 2006). The aspirations of students from developing countries such as India to study in universities located in the Global North have been widely discussed in academic literature, wherein a wide range of push–pull factors have been established. India's colonial history and the medium of instruction in the majority of education courses being in English have led to the creation of a student migration corridor with the UK (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002). The development level of the host and the home country is another important dimension with regard to migration decisions (King & Raghuram, 2013; King and Sondhi, 2018). However, there are very few studies that look at the demand for overseas education being created by the Global North, which is equally important as they are eager to attract international students bringing in immense economic contributions to countries such as the US, the UK and Canada (Kahlon, 2023). In 2016, data from the US Department of Commerce revealed that international students contributed $39.4 billion to the US economy. These countries are also in constant lookout to source talent from around the world. UK's 'high potential individual' visa launched earlier this year guarantees a two- to three-year work visa for those who have attained a degree from one of the top 50 non-UK universities.

The mobility of students and young minds between countries of the Global North and South is often dictated and shaped by the demands and needs of the more economically superior and powerful countries of the former (Findlay, 2011). This makes for a difficult space to raise conversations regarding issues and challenges faced by international students, especially

DOI: 10.4324/9781003490234-11

those from the Global South (Sondhi & King, 2017*)*. This is an important point of discussion when factoring in the changing social and economic profiles of students migrating from the Global South in the last two decades. The year 2022 saw a drastic increase of up to more than 750,000 Indian students studying abroad. RBI data has revealed that educational loans have registered a 17 per cent surge towards the end of this financial year, March 2023. The rising middle class of India through accessible student loans are able to make large 'investments' for the sake of their child's education and career. The drastic increase of Indian international students over the last few years has given rise to a very powerful stakeholder in the overseas education market, the consulting/recruitment agencies. These agencies have over time become the one-stop solution for students dreaming of attaining a foreign education, offering a range of services including the selection of university and course to visa and assistance in the admission process. With the addition of new stakeholders, the evolution of ISM from India and the vulnerability of these students going from the Global South, it is important that the recruitment experiences of Indian students be explored to shed light on how it has shaped their migration journey.

This chapter dwells deeper into the perspectives of the students in terms of their experience with recruitment agencies and their student life in the destination country including the major challenges faced. Primary data collected through in-depth interviews with 20 Indian students studying in Canada, the UK and the US helped in structuring the core arguments of this chapter, including how recruitment and consulting agencies effectively use the 'push' and 'pull' factors to shape the migration decisions of their clients, young impressionable student minds and their enthusiastic parents with huge aspirations. Tracing the academic literature and news articles over the past decade has also helped in putting forth the importance of regulations to be placed on the agencies handling overseas education.

Recruitment Agencies in India

Consulting and recruitment agencies in India play a crucial role in the migration journey of a majority of Indian students aspiring to attain a foreign education. There has been a monumental rise in the number of such agencies and they are mainly located in the various urban cities of the country. Universities abroad subcontract such agencies to recruit students on behalf of these colleges with an understanding of a commission being taken by the recruiter for each student that enrols in a foreign university. Large expos and education fairs are organised by these agencies in luxury hotels, to catch the attention of young students and their families looking for higher education options, and free consultations are offered to further ease them into the world of overseas education. It is this extensive networking and market knowledge of recruiters that make them very appealing to foreign universities and guarantee them

to fill up their seats. Based on the universities they have collaborated with, most of the recruiters aggressively promote that particular city that the university belongs to as the next big thing (Rajan & Cherian, 2022). Although one might think that with the advent of social media, there is easier access to information, the goodwill and trust built by these recruiters give them a larger say in influencing the decisions of students (Kahlon, 2023). This is especially true in the case of students coming from smaller towns in India, who are largely dependent on these agents to help them through the admission process due to the limited exposure they possess. However, apart from rules and guidelines overseeing the opening of these agencies, there is limited governance over the recruitment process and partnerships these recruiters have with their partner overseas universities (Kahlon, 2023).

The Ministry of Education (MoE) is responsible for regulating overseas education consultancies in India. A Foreign Education Institution (FEI) Licence and registration with the Association of Indian Universities (AIU) are a must to represent foreign educational institutes in India. This is followed by certain state-specific approvals. Apart from rules on licences and registration, there is an absence of strict guidelines regarding the functioning of such consultancies or agencies. Recent census in the UK lists Indian students as the largest group of international students and the same applies to Canada which has almost 226,450 Indian international students (The Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)). Along with these rising numbers, news related to scams and deceit faced by Indian students in the hands of recruiters has also plummeted. 700 Indian students in Canada were at the brim of deportation earlier this year when their college acceptance letters were found to be fake. Many universities in the UK and Australia have restricted entry of Indian students from certain states that are observed to have indulged in such dodgy practices. For sure, overseas education is no longer a step towards the pursuit of knowledge but rather a pathway for migration for many of the young students from the Global South. Irregularity in student migration brought on by the booming business of education consultants and recruiters fails to secure this guarantee for students who are kept in the dark about the realities of being an international student and later an immigrant worker in the destination country.

Methodology

The qualitative study has used primary data through semi-structured in-depth interviews of 20 Indian students who were either pursuing or have completed their overseas education. Ten of the respondents were from the UK, five were from Canada and the other five were from Australia. All the interviews were conducted online in languages comfortable for the respondents. Snowball sampling was used to recruit participants for the study. Twelve of the respondents were pursuing their master's, 5 of them were enrolled in undergraduate courses and the remaining 3 were in search of jobs after having completed

their courses. Thirteen of our respondents identified as male and others as females. One-on-one interviews with the respondents aimed at understanding the primary focus of this chapter, which was regarding their recruitment experience. An extensive review of the literature including journal articles, newspaper reports and other secondary data sources such as the census data was used to further support the findings from the primary data. The chapter has tried to analyse the push–pull factors influencing the migration decisions of Indian students and then tried corroborating this with the perception of students about their recruiters and consultants. The aim was to understand if these recruiters are directly (in-person interactions) or indirectly (marketing and expos) making use of these push–pull factors to only highlight the merits attached to overseas education. Another important question the study aims to answer is if the respondents were able to make informed decisions about their migration, having received guidance from recruiters. In short, how effective was the role of recruiters in the migration journey of the respondents and how did they shape important decisions regarding the overseas education of the migrants?

Findings

Push and Pull Factors

Lee's (1966) theory of migration broadly categorises the major four factors of migration which are the factors associated with place of origin, place of destination, intervening and obstacles and personal factors into 'push' and 'pull' factors. For the youth of India, rising unemployment and limited opportunities are large push factors that make life in the origin country difficult (Sharma, 2022). And this tends to further highlight the pull factors in the destination country like better exposure and job possibilities. As Lee (1966) points out, migrants have a definite understanding of the negatives in the origin country forcing them to migrate but are mostly only partially aware of the positives of the destination country, especially prior to their arrival at the destination country. Words such as freedom and independence were repeatedly used by the respondents when they were asked about their motivation to migrate to another country. This 'over evaluation' of positive factors and 'under evaluation' of negative factors can be compromised further with an added variable in the form of an agent or a recruiter who holds great power in influencing the decisions of students who want to migrate.

Education in India features in the concurrent list that requires the focus of both the state and the central government. Apart from a few central institutions that receive central funds, the responsibility of the larger section of the universities lies with the respective states. Central institutes account for less than 5 per cent of the total college-going students in India but have a larger fund at their disposal as compared to other universities dependent on state funding and are often found to be understaffed, lack diversity of courses and have poor infrastructure. These irregularities and compromised quality of

higher education also seep into the employment opportunities available to the youth later. Mehrotra and Parida (2021) found that youth unemployment in India was above 30 per cent for those with post-secondary education, with a greater proportion being females. Internships and diverse courses are a major pull for Indian students to pursue their education overseas (Perez et al., 2021). The following excerpts from the interviews point towards the lack of diversity in courses available, the difficulty level of entrance exams and limited job opportunities in India to be major reasons why Indian students were seeking greener pastures abroad.

> I want to do Masters in banking and finance and there are not many Universities in India that offer the option. So I came to UK.
>
> I went to the UK in January 2020. I personally had a bad experience with my bachelors. So I felt if I could leave India and the way masters or bachelors were taught in India, and get exposed to a new culture and education system. I felt I would do better , that was one reason I chose the UK.

The extremely rich–poor division in the country also plays into the education system, wherein the children from economically well-off families are able to afford quality education and coaching classes that prepare them for difficult entrances and other qualifying tests. On the other hand, children from poor families find it extremely hard to afford the coaching required to crack the entrances for the most pristine universities in the country offering subsidised higher education (Agarwal, 2008). Although the Indian government has constantly worked on making access to education for all sections of society through schemes like mid-day meals and the Right to Education, there still lies a wider scope in improving higher education in the country. The structural limitations of the education system in India make it extremely difficult for students belonging to lower economic or social sections to push forward in terms of economic and social mobility (Water, 2006). The growing youth population with exposure to the wider world through social media looks at an education overseas and opportunities associated with it as a practical solution to the challenges they face at home and a safer bet in terms of failure as compared to the highly competitive environment in India.

Most of the respondents preferred Anglophone countries such as the UK, the US, Canada and Australia due to their large Indian diaspora. The one-year master's programme in the UK was also observed to be an appealing factor for young graduates from India hoping to shift bases.

Recruitment Experiences

The main focus of this particular study was to understand the role of recruitment agents in the larger structure of overseas education in India. Rajan and Cherian's (2022) study on recruitment agencies in India establishes how

these agencies undermine the autonomy of both the students and parents approaching them. They elaborate on how the aspirations of a better future and the ethic of self-responsibility of students are used by such agents to make studying abroad increasingly appealing. There are most definitely other important factors that influence the decision-making of students, especially the role of the family in the South Asian context (Hercog & Laar, 2017). Although students and their parents take up the decision to pursue education overseas, the principal decisions were often found to be left with these agents including vital decisions like that of course and university. Shyam is a typical example of a student in a small town reaching out to a consultant to seek guidance for pursuing his education abroad. Currently completing his course in Canada, Shyam summed up his recruitment process as the following.

> I am studying MSc IBM (International Business Management). I applied through an agency having an office in Aleppey. I am from Aleppey and I was having an office near to home. I went there and enquired about the course etc. I was not aware of this course, but I had an interest in Business Management. So, they guided me and suggested me this course called IBM at this university and said that this would be good for my career growth. So, I preferred this course and came to this country.

Agencies often tend to navigate the choices to the extent of making choices for the students in accordance with the partnerships of these agencies and have less to do with the interest areas of these students. As discussed, most of the recruiters in India operate in partnership with foreign universities that are keen to fill their seats with international students and are not necessarily invested in the long-term dreams of these students. This especially holds true with the rise of substandard universities recruiting from India, with most of them not even having a proper campus or reliable infrastructure. Most of the students who are often confused about their higher education courses are misguided by these agents. The lack of research done by the students due to many reasons including lack of awareness and sources of authentic information are exploited by agents by establishing a bond with them guaranteeing that they have the student's best interests at heart. Some of the excerpts from our interviews clearly portray the confusion and coerciveness faced by students at the hands of recruiters.

> There are students, who literally have no idea about what they are studying, what they are, why they are using the course, just because of what agency says, and they will blindly believe them. And they will take the course which really will land them to a very bad situation.
>
> I feel they should provide more awareness regarding the realities here. They should inform us regarding all the paperwork and regulations here, for instance was not aware of PSW when I arrived here and I had to work to earn to pay for my PSW visa. They just paint this

> illusion of life in the UK being really easy and exciting. They use these false promises to try and entice us into going abroad.
>
> I have considered many universities in UK for the course that I was looking for, because I have studied hospitality and management. My first consultancy was were forcing me to apply for Masters in Canada rather than going for it in the UK.

The familiarity and bond created by these agencies through effective marketing and training emphasise only the success stories of a foreign degree and a bright future using self-funding such as loans or credits, highlighting the accessibility for the increasing middle class of India. In the lure of promises of breaking social and economic hierarchies at home, the crucial challenges of pursuing an education in a foreign country are sometimes very much underplayed. The notion of independence and freedom attached to living overseas is a given, but it also comes with heavy responsibilities for which one has to be prepared beforehand. Misinformation and false promises made by agents prior to the student's migration go on to drastically impact the lives of these students once they reach the destination country. A common theme that surfaced in our study was the difficulty reported by the respondents in finding a part-time job once they reached the destination country. Most of the respondents had admitted to their financial challenges and were heavily dependent on part-time jobs to pay back the loans they had taken and to sustain their lives abroad. Most of them were promised by agents to find work and achieve an independent lifestyle. The following responses from the interview are reflective of the fake promises made by recruiters at the time of migration.

> They did not tell me the fact that the best option would be loan. It's not FD, but the loan will be accurate and easier. Certain agencies just hide the fact that it is not easy to get a part-time job.
>
> There were opportunities mentioned by them regarding part-time job opportunities, facilities, and guidance in the university which were all non-existent in reality.

> They told me that there were opportunities to get a salary of around 2 lakhs per month at these jobs. But when I got here, I found that all of that was wrong.

Challenges in the Migration Journey

Financial challenges were observed to be a major constraint among all the respondents. Some agents provided the service of aiding students in receiving loans for higher education abroad. However, this help did not continue once these students reached the destination country. These students were kept in the dark about the seriousness of the situation and the heavy burden of taking a loan. Part-time jobs were an absolute necessity for these students

to manage their expenses as well as to pay back the loan. However, the saturated job market in the destination countries and the lack of availability of part-time jobs were not conveyed to any of the respondents by their agents.

> Financial challenges were the primary challenges before migration. Had to take loans.
>
> The challenge that I faced was financial in nature with regard to the delay in processing and receiving the loan.
>
> My main challenge was on the financial front as my family couldn't afford the course fee. Therefore, I applied for a student loan and went ahead with my admission process. Midway, the loan was rejected (because there was no driveway towards my house). Since my admission was confirmed and all other processes were done, I financed by mortgaging some gold and through borrowings.

Another important challenge faced by most of the respondents was related to academics. Although they were aware that the education system in a new country would most definitely be different, they lacked the understanding that this required training and the acquisition of new skills. There were instances wherein respondents reported that they had been flagged for plagiarism, not because they mindlessly copied a work but because they did not know any better and replicated what they practised back home. The intense time requirement of these courses, mostly focusing on the self-study principle can be observed to have been really challenging for the Indian students overseas. Vital information about the academic requirements was not passed down to these students by any of their agents. Others complained about the substandard quality of the universities they were enrolled in which had inadequate infrastructure and felt stuck in a foreign country with limited choices ahead.

> Yes, I struggled with the system here a lot. A lot of the learning here is independent, and the lecturers help, but not beyond a point. I couldn't manage the coursework, so I took help from my roommates. But I was flagged for plagiarism.
>
> There is no teaching here. If we have to study, we have to do it by ourselves. It seems the fees we have paid are just for the certificate.

Added to these struggles of grappling with a new education system, these students were also weighed down by the financial burden of high living expenses and expensive education loans. Some of them had to dedicate more time to work and shift focus from academics to even out their financial requirements.

> First I went to a warehouse that my friend suggested. But, it was a 12-hour shift which I was not used to. Moreover, it was hard labour, which I found very difficult. In my first semester, it was fine, because I

> had class only 3 days a week. But in my second semester, I had classes 5 days a week, which meant I could only work on Saturday and Sunday, which was inconvenient. Yes, because of my finances and the fees due, I had to focus more on my job than my academics.
>
> Economically it was very hard to sustain. In the first year, it took a couple of months to figure out a job to manage the expenses. As per the guidance of the agency, we were to get jobs easily, but those were false promises, In the following years, I had to undertake more than two jobs to cover my tuition and living expenses.

Pursuing one's education overseas, especially if they are financially constrained comes with a complex set of challenges which are often not clearly communicated by agents aiding the migration journey of these students. Racism in the workplace and other public spaces are not stories of the last century as they are very much prevalent in today's time (Lee & Rice, 2007). Thomas and Chui's (2010) study emphasises that international students largely face spoken language barriers, more than written language problems and seek better English language skills to better integrate into the destination country. Agents involved in overseas education must ensure that the students they engage with are mindful of all these challenges and are making informed decisions. There is a clear lack of any form of infrastructure to help and guide students once they reach the destination country. Studies over the years on the experiences of international students have established a series of challenges ranging from language barriers to financial and academic difficulties, alienation and discrimination that require a systematic approach on an institutional level (Yeh & Inose, 2003).

Conclusion

Student migration is bound to surge in the coming years and the rising number of universities requires an international student cohort to ensure the flow of revenue and human capital. Post Brexit, the UK is to increase its international student intake up to 600,000 by 2030. Indians constitute 40 per cent of the international students taking up the two-year post-study work visa in the UK (Office for National Statistics 2022). Many ageing countries in the Global North such as Japan, the US, Australia and Germany face labour shortages and seek external labour. The youth population of the Global South, especially countries such as India that enjoys a demographic dividend, can look at migration as an alternative option as compared to the structural unemployment issues in the home country. But this opportunity should be explored in a systematic manner that ensures that those who migrate for education and later work are assisted in an organised manner wherein the vulnerable section, especially young students, who want to engage in international mobility are protected from deceits and misinformation as seen from the findings above. The study observes that conversations of education and

advancement in a career overseas have shifted to view admission to a foreign university as a pathway to migration and not necessarily quality education. Students from developing countries are found to demonstrate high stay rates in the destination country upon the completion of their course (Waters et al., 2021).

Recruitment agencies too are tapping into this new demand that has shaped over the past two decades wherein students from the Global South aspire to have lives like their Global North counterparts. However, the misinformation or the lack of information that is conveyed to these students that markets a foreign degree as a definite entry card to high-paying jobs and careers needs to be reassessed. For example, in Australia, recent news reports have discussed international students taking up vocational courses, which come at a much lower cost as compared to reputable courses to gain access to the jobs market. Although this ensures the students a relatively cheaper educational degree, most of them are unaware that such vocational degrees render them ineligible for permanent residency. Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, Australia, reports a heavy enrolment of Indian students in vocational courses such as cooking and hospitality since 2021.

Education overseas is not easy but it becomes extremely difficult when the person has to go in with half-baked information and a limited network in a completely new country. The recruitment agencies do facilitate and help build the dreams of millions of students from India, but, at the same time, the thousands of stories of those whose dreams remain unfulfilled must not be forgotten. For these students reintegrating back into the Indian workforce and having an international degree may cause another set of problems. In fact, our interviewer also helped to bring forth cases wherein students could not complete their degrees and were struggling to pay back their loans.

This chapter is definitely limited in its understanding with regard to the specific challenges and exploitations of recruitment agencies when layered out through different student identities. This includes exploring the differences of experience among students pursuing different courses in arts and science and exploring deeper into the various identities of the students in terms of their gender, religion, caste and class. We also did not dwell deeper into the impact of the pandemic since most of the respondents felt that the pandemic did not impact their migration decision. Nevertheless, the study aims to provide an overview of the working of a recruitment agency in India and the various nuances of overseas Indian students' experiences who have received recruitment services. The findings indicate the challenging journey of a student migrant and how their life at their destination is severely impacted by the lack of information they had received from their recruiters. Financial constraints and difficulty in sustaining student life in terms of academics and balancing a part-time job can be observed to have been the biggest challenges Indian international students are facing. The conclusion of this study advocates that there has to be a much-needed focus on the regulation of recruitment agencies to ensure a much smoother migration

of the Indian youth who aspire to pursue their education overseas. Rather than merely choosing the course and university, the recruiters should also be held responsible for the student's life once he or she reaches the destination country. These agencies should not be hiding behind a few of their success stories but should take accountability for students who trust them with one of the most important decisions in their lives. The need to maintain continuous communication channels and dissemination of timely and accurate information can help a great deal in aiding students in making informed decisions. Lastly, the following excerpt from one of our interviews with a student pursuing his masters in the UK sums up the central discussion point of this chapter.

> In my opinion, they shouldn't give too many promises to students because many agencies guarantee accommodation facilities, jobs post course completion, etc. which are often not kept. Many students suffer in finding employment and accommodation. Rather these agencies should be true and transparent with respect to their offers and refrain from cheating students.

Acknowledgements

This chapter is prepared as part of DemiKnow, an international collaboration among four migration research centres: ECU TRACS Migration Research Network, Edith Cowan University, Australia; Canada Excellence Research Chair (CERC) in Migration & Integration, Toronto Metropolitan University, Canada; National Research Centre for Resettlement, Hohai University, China; and International Institute of Migration and Development, India, funded by Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, Canada. This chapter also appeared earlier as IIMAD Working Paper no.10.

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12 Brothers in the Kitchen

A Multidisciplinary Look at Migration through *Live*-Documentary

Cyrus Sundar Singh

Invocation

In the belly of the cargo ship we held,
Our breath, our noses, and each other.
In the belly of the cargo ship.

A village born of need and circumstance,
Not earth nor roots where we used to stand.

Floating to the lure of the Promised land—Montréal,
in three to four days.
In the belly of the cargo ship.

In the belly of the cargo ship we held,
Our breath, our noses, and each other.
In the belly of the cargo ship.

The Promise: We'd reach Canada in 3 or 4 days.
For twelve we sat in fear huddled together - all strangers.
On the 12th day or 13th or 14th we lost count …
we were set adrift in two lifeboats on the open sea
Strangers united in hope 155 or 156 strangers.

The Promise: We'd reach Montreal in a few hours
For 2 days or 3, we drifted in our lifeboats with no food or water.
We were lost, cold and hungry…
No land, no help, no hope.

We constantly invoked the names of our Gods and
hoped that our faith would carry us to shore.

No land, no help, no hope.
In the belly of the cargo ship

DOI: 10.4324/9781003490234-12

Introduction

On April 19, 2023, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) News Exclusive broke the investigative story about a failed human smuggling operation onboard a sinking ship illegally bound to Canada from Myanmar. According to the CBC investigative report,[1] the Myanmar-flagged fishing vessel named MV *Lady 3*, which "was barely seaworthy, with no sleeping quarters, just two toilets and little food" (Gatehouse et al., CBC News 2023), left Myanmar on October 10, 2023, with a human cargo of 303 Tamil Sri Lankan men, women, and children illegally bound for Canada. The ship's engine frequently broke down and "the pumps in the hold could no longer keep up with the water streaming through the growing cracks and holes" (2023); the crew abandoned the human cargo and fled in the middle of the night on another boat. After 30 days at sea on the vast Pacific Ocean, the Tamil Sri Lankans were rescued by the Japanese cargo ship *Helios Leader* on November 10, 2023. "The Tamil migrants were then transferred to a Vietnamese Coast Guard vessel and sent to refugee camps in and around the coastal city of Vũng Tàu, in southern Vietnam" (2023).

The ship had only covered a fifth of the distance from Myanmar to the west coast of Canada. The migrants were promised by the smugglers that they would travel onboard a cruise ship and arrive in Canada in comfort. "I think this testifies to the attractiveness of Canada," stated Anna Triandafyllidou, the Canada Excellence in Research Chair[2] (CERC) in Migration and Integration at Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU). In contextualising this failed attempt by those who view Canada as a Promised Land for migrants seeking political and/or economic asylum, "[p]eople know it's not just a place where they can find the future for themselves and their children. It's also a safe country. It's a democratic country. It's a place where human rights are respected" (2023). This narrative that Canada is a safe haven for people fleeing hardship is rooted in a long history that can be traced back a thousand years.

From Vikings in ships to enslaved Africans on the Underground Railroad to Tamils and Vietnamese in boats to the Syrians and Ukrainians, Canada has a protracted history of people lured by the promise of new beginnings and bright hope, and those seeking refuge. Likewise, the circumstances and the welcome—or unwelcome—of new arrivals have fluctuated dramatically over the years. What changed between 1986 and 2015 that led to such a different reception of the Syrians and the Tamils? This change is only one part of what allowed me to successfully direct, produce, and premiere the *live*-documentary, *Brothers in the Kitchen*, in a Toronto restaurant as part of Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival in May 2016. But it took almost as long as the time between the arrival of the Tamils and the arrival of the Syrians described above, for me to create this documentary. Why was that?

***Brothers in the Kitchen* (2016)**

On May 4, 2016, *Brothers in the Kitchen* premiered at the Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival (Hot Docs).[3] The ephemeral premiere opened to a sold-out audience gathered inside the Centre for Social Innovation (CSI) Annex Café[4] located in downtown Toronto and served as my Major Research Project (MRP), which capped a two-year Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in Documentary Media at Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU). The MFA was an exciting opportunity in which my ongoing documentary practice was fully immersed in theoretical studies that underpinned the documentary canon. Enriched by scholarship and mentorship, I took creative risks, free from broadcaster-imposed restrictions, and produced a Hot Docs world premiere. This inaugural site-specific *live*-documentary was located within a single site and unfolded live to an audience of festival attendees, including members from the Indian and Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora in Toronto together with deans, faculty, and classmates from the MFA programme. Other than the fact that the audience had purchased their tickets for something new at Hot Docs titled DocX Performance: *Brothers in the Kitchen*, they did not know what they were about to experience, see, or witness but seemed ready and willing to engage with whatever was about to transpire in the space and in their presence. On arrival, each audience member was directed to pick up a small silver-coloured square cardboard box from the bar. Each box contained an edible trilogy of three specific vegetarian snacks: a triangular *samosa*,[5] a circular *vadai*[6] (doughnut-shaped, like a life preserver), and a spherical sweet *ladoo*.[7]

As the audience found their seats and opened their containers filled with these snacks, an air of excitement and anticipation for the unexpected filled the café; a shared sense of bearing witness to and being a part of something new was palpable. The trio of snacks was symbolic of the trilogy that was about to unfold in the *live*-documentary *Brothers in the Kitchen: the Uprising*, *Exodus*, and *Survival of a Tamil Minority*. The premiere began with the following scripted performative introduction by the festival's Director of Programming, Shane Smith:

> Welcome everyone. If you thought you were coming to see a movie tonight, you are in for a delicious surprise. Tonight, you will experience something innovative, and genre-bending created by Director, Cyrus Sundar Singh. This means you are part of a one-night only, live documentary, performed right here with subjects, experts, narrators, musicians, cooks, and food.
>
> (Sundar Singh, Brothers in the Kitchen, script 2016, p. 2)

Then, Smith ad-libbed, "after all, you're part of history in the making and you can't make history without dropping a few samosas."[8] This garnered much laughter from the audience and set the informal and interactive tone for

this unique, *live*-documentary experience—a first for Hot Docs, a first for the festival audience, and a first for this author/artist. On that night, 13 subjects of the documentary ranging from a septuagenarian to vicenarians, amateurs to professionals, authors, journalists, and seasoned politicians all told their stories live and direct to an audience seated in and around them within the same space. With few traditional filters to mediate the documentary, such as an edited and packaged film, the two-dimensionality of a movie screen, and the passage of time, it remained a direct face-to-face relationship between the storytellers and their audience, where "each interview subject recount their story live as part of an interactive, multimedia tapestry" (Mintz 2016).

Constructed in three chapters, the story of the Tamil Sri Lankans was told within the live setting stretched across three decades and multiple continents. Titled "Uprising," the first chapter captured the socio-political and historical contexts for the initial tensions between the Tamil and Sinhalese people of Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon) from colonial rule to pre-independence to the ethnic cleansing riots of Black July in 1983. This segment was crucial in anchoring the story and engaging the audience in the reasons behind the mass exodus of Tamils from the island nation. The second chapter titled "Exodus" was anchored on the arrival and dramatic rescue of 155 Tamil refugees found adrift in two lifeboats off the coast of Newfoundland in August 1983. Persuasive first-hand testimonies from former castaways in those lifeboats as well as other subjects who shared their life and death stories of fleeing the civil war over time brought the story alive immediately and added "documentary value" to the experience. "Survival," the final chapter, moved forward from 1883 to the present and explored the many ways that the Tamil Sri Lankan diaspora has maintained their humanity, exercised their culture, and over a generation has become part of the Canadian fabric, including the election of multiple Tamil-Canadians as City Councillors, Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP), and Member of Parliament (MP).

From the opening percussive invocation that welcomed the dancers, through the painful first-person accounts to the closing recital of the poem *Happy Fish*,[9] *Brothers in the Kitchen* unfolded in real time. *NOW Magazine*'s film critic Radheyan Simonpillai described the experience:

> At the intimate and interactive gathering, speakers shared traumatic memories, with support from video installations, a live band and dancers whose fluid Bharatanatyam movements channeled the show's poetry, and on occasion, horror. A few technical glitches during the experimental production were welcomed as part of the collaborative process, and the audience was sometimes called on to read archival newspaper clippings aloud. [...] The sheer breadth and depth of the show was astounding. It offered an immersive history on Tamil migration, the memories, music and art all informing a search for what the Tamil-Canadian identity has become, or is becoming.[10]

Simonpillai's use of the term "immersive history" is very apropos within the context of this inaugural and subsequent production of a *live*-documentary. The word *history*, which traces its roots from the Greek word *historia* meaning *a tale* or *a story*,[11] frames our varied stories of identities—a marker of our individual and communal positionality whether ascribed, self-proclaimed, visible, asserted, or subjugated, remains the traumatised thread that binds these communities of refuge in the act of performing their narratives. "Communities of refuge" is a term I ascribe to the ethnocultural communities who are displaced because of civil war, religious intolerance, or systemic racism such as the former Tamil refugees from Sri Lanka and members of the former Africville community who were displaced within their own country of citizenship. The term also encompasses segregated neighbourhoods such as St. James Town, Regent Park, and Thorncliffe Park located in Toronto, Ontario, and Africville, Uniacke Square, and Mulgrave Park located in Halifax, Nova Scotia. In addition to engaging the senses, the immersive nature of the storytelling creates an emotional and immediate bond with the audience. The live production also included actors, singers, dancers, musicians, sound technicians, props, and production assistants all connected by a 32-page script, which was used to successfully guide, curate, and shape the feature documentary through its 90 minutes of story, action, and audience engagement.

Site

The interior of the CSI Annex Café[12] was sparsely decorated with an intimate and cosy feel and a range of seating options that faced in all directions. Tables and chairs, sofas and church pews, stools and benches, and high tables and coffee tables were all dispersed across the space. Save for a few adjustments here and there, the arrangement of the furniture was left untouched for live production. On the far end of the café known as The Garage, three seasoned musicians brought together for this premiere, performed the improvised musical score on an elevated stage. This impromptu handpicked collective with whom I have collaborated individually and collectively on past musical projects included Ian de Souza, band leader and bass guitarist; Jeetu Prakash, bansuri (bamboo flute) player; and Santosh Naidu, multi-percussionist. Just to one side of the musicians, inside The Garage and visible to most of the audience, stood a small makeshift vertical projection screen, put together using a white saree with red borders folded over a steel coat rack that belonged to the CSI Annex Café. This saree screen was used for a scene in which the narrator, Anand Rajaram, stood behind this screen and performed a verbatim monologue as Anonymous in silhouette. Three vintage lifejackets, two circular life preservers, one classic yellow raincoat, and one flashlight were added to the site as props. Away from The Garage and deeper into the main space was a large open kitchen with an attached beer/wine bar situated along the north side of the space. The kitchen was

abuzz with activity. Also present within this site were two 80-inch television monitors, supplied by production, and one small flat-screen monitor that was already part of the space. These were not used as screens for viewing an edited documentary film, but from time to time, these screens came alive with images of archival footage, title sequences, act breaks, poetry, supers, and/or video introductions to specific subjects, interviews via Skype,[13] Google Earth[14] maps to help situate the odyssey geographically, and for the rolling credits at the end of the *live*-documentary. The screens were placed so that, with a little bit of head-turning and readjusting of the seated position, at least one screen was visible to any member of the audience.

These television monitors also served as studio monitors to broadcast scenes from *Slice n Dice*,[15] a reality cooking show construct that was contained within the documentary in which the two *sisters in the kitchen*—two professional cooks in the restaurant-café's open kitchen, made and served fresh food to all present in the space, thereby, engaging all five senses: sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch (Glassman, IDA 2016; Simonpillai, *Now Magazine* 2016; Mintz, *TVO* 2016). Placed between acts two and three, the same documentary audience thus became a television studio audience of a reality cooking show. This cooking activity not only infused the site with the fragrant scent of spices engaging the audience's olfactory systems, together with the tasty snacks all five senses were engaged and entertained by the live documentary. Throughout this *metacinema*,[16] a small crew of cinematographers and technicians busily *documented the documentary* with lights, camera, and sound, which proved difficult for some members of the audience and subjects to grasp. This *filming* vs *live* event confusion prompted the following tweets by two of the documentary subjects: Bob Rae, former politician: "At the filming of #Brothersintthekitchen, a live documentary about the Tamil experience—looking forward to it!" (@BobRae48, 5:06 PM May 4, 2016); and Manjula Selvarajah, journalist, producer, and syndicated tech columnist for CBC Radio: "Bob Rae doing his bit at the live filming of the doc *Brothers in the Kitchen* #bitk2016 #HotDocs16 #tamil" (@manjulaselva 6:43 PM May 4, 2016).

This was not the *filming* of the documentary but the actual documentary unfolding live. The *live*-documentary methodology simply facilitates the gathering of spectators around the conceptual fire and creates an ephemeral storytelling experience between the storyteller(s) and the listeners. In this context, the energy or frisson created by the live gathering is the fire and the unfolding narrative is the ephemeral experience co-created between the tellers, listeners, musicians, narrator(s), and the chorus. The form is designed to be delivered without the use of projected film, video images, or digital files, and without the need for electronic or digital technology. However, the methodology is fully capable of including all manner of tactile, analogue, and digital multimedia in enhancing the documentary experience. Similar to "the camera and microphone brandished by Tele Geto's 'cameramen' [which] are obviously fake props fashioned from scrap materials" (Rangan 2017, 61),

the presence of the cameras and crew were used primarily as a visible aid of authenticity signalling to the audience that they are indeed part of a live documentary experience at a documentary festival.

Script but Not Scripted

The 32-page script served as a roadmap for the 90-minute live documentary experience and allowed me the freedom to map out the documentary. This script encompassed all the conventional tools of documentary filmmaking: story; subject(s), setting, narration, montage, maps, archival materials interviews, reenactment, framing, lighting, musical score, and sound design. The script framed the story and was key in allowing action to flow from one scene/subject to the next. It is important to note, however, that the script was not shared with the documentary subjects, who were pre-interviewed on camera, and the verbatim transcriptions of their telling were used as a placeholder in the script for my own timing and planning. Moreover, the process of writing 28 drafts of the script was akin to editing a conventional documentary film for weeks in the edit suite. Thus, the script enabled me to confidently direct the flow of story and action during the live unfolding of the narrative. Though the script was a valuable tool, it was only shared between me, the production crew, and the professional cast that included the narrator, the chorus, and the musicians. Even though we all followed the script, which included transcribed lines from the subjects as placeholders, I could not and by design did not control how the subjects spoke, how they told their stories, or how they performed during their individual scenes. In fact, when one or more of the subjects spoke, I allowed them to tell their story fully without interruption if they took more than their allotted time or the number of lines in the script to tell the story. Their stories were not truncated or edited in the moment but where needed, I adjusted other portions of the script. This method of not cutting or editing a subject's narrative harkened back to the early technological breakthroughs with moving images when the dominant visual tool of documentary film was the actuality captured in front of the camera such as "whatever it captured became an attraction by virtue of being filmed" (Russell 1999, 51) and thus, paid homage to an early perception of documentary as the actuality captured in front of the camera or in this instance the actuality of the "social actors in the public world" (Chanan 2007, 61) who told their stories live in the presence of the audience.

Kattiyakkari-Gals | Tamil Chorus

I also employed a traditional Greek chorus—a theatrical convention whereby a group of characters in a collective voice comment on the dramatic action. Their role "allows the audience to perceive the chorus as both character and performer and in a moment of metatheatrical distancing, to simultaneously acknowledge this dual identity" (Rich 2012, 89). I was intrigued and inspired by the performative possibilities of employing the chorus as a storytelling

device and thus incorporated the chorus into the script. I drew my inspiration from the 1965 Western/comedy film *Cat Ballou*, in which along with the main characters of the narrative, Nat King Cole and Stubby Kaye appear throughout the film in the form of travelling minstrels or troubadours as a kind of musical Greek chorus and framing device. The duo sang, played banjo and guitar, and narrated the story through ongoing verses of *The Ballad of Cat Ballou*. Nat King Cole also appears as the piano player in the brothel scene (Viney's Blog. "Cat Ballou," March 29, 2002). I was really awestruck by this singing duet, their abrupt appearances along the literal and figurative narrative road towards a destination, and their memorable performance. It was an effective device in keeping the narrative moving along and holding my interest in the story being told. A similar theatrical convention of the chorus exists in street theatre in Southern India and in Northern Sri Lanka through the character known as a Kattiyakkaran. The name is a composite Tamil word, *Katti:* to tie, and *Karan:* man. So, a Kattiyak-karan is *he who ties it all together*—the one who weaves together a story's disparate threads, so it all makes sense. This character or device is allowed to break the conceptual *fourth wall*, address the audience directly, offer opinions, and elicit commentary. The following observation by British dramatist and author Jonathan Myerson allows a contemporary glimpse into the tradition of the Kattiyakkaran within South Indian street theatre as witnessed by him during a visit to Kanchipuram, India:

> we came across a street Kathakali performance [...] performed at the junction of the town's two main roads. Their stage was marked only by a collage of threadbare rugs and a telegraph pole at each corner. These travelling players didn't have half a day to spare for make-up: a small tent behind the stage passed for the dressing room. Actors squatted and struggled to prepare with hand-held mirrors. Children and men peeked through flaps in the cotton sheeting to watch this process of transformation, half-giggly, half-rapt. When the performers hit the stage, the effect was mesmerising. [...] But the story was merely the backdrop. This was about good and evil, about watching and being seen about getting involved. The audience surrounded the stage—some seated, some standing, some in trees, some on roofs. At the core of the show was a clown, the Kattiyakkaran, the only one not in the huge Kathakali make-up, goading the audience through the action.
>
> (Myerson, The Independent 2001)

The chorus or Kattiyakkaran opened up exciting opportunities to include a wider palette in creatively framing the narrative of the *live*-documentary. Hence, I flipped the male gender of the Kattiyakkaran with a female trio and coined the gender-specific Tamil-English moniker for my *Tamil chorus* as Kattiyakkari-Gals—a play on the English word "Gal" and the Tamil feminine plural form, Kattiyakkarigal. The trio were professionally trained as

actors, singers, and dancers fully versed in the South Indian classical dance form of Bharatanatyam.[17] The Kattiyakkari-Gals danced, sang songs, recited poetry, and provided context akin to B-Roll or cutaways in conventional documentary films. Their short, scripted performances helped to provide much-needed breaks from the subject interviews that were akin to the talking heads of traditional documentaries. The following instructions appeared in the *Brothers in the Kitchen* script[18] as we followed the action from the bottom of page three to page four, and onto page five:

00:00 PRETITLE

The cameras pull back and on the cue of a musical note [Cue Music 1] (Bass) the TV MONITORS come alive with the sights and sounds of flames emanating from a cooking grill. A moment later, BROTHER begins to percussively "play" a pot, [Cue Music 2] which sets up an 8-bar beat. This gets picked up by the Dolak player and then by the CHORUS of 3 dancers Mira, Gabi and Dharshi. They enter the Café—scat-singing TaKaDiMi: Gabi enters from Stage Left. Mira enters from Stage Right. Dharshi enters from the Kitchen. The camera-crew re-position to better cover the dancers. The dance ends with a percussive flourish. The CHORUS breakaway creating a space in the centre for the BROTHER who steps out from behind the kitchen counter, walks up the created space and addresses the audience:

BROTHER

Vanakam. Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the Happy Fish Café.
BROTHER pauses. The CHORUS from where they are standing:

CHORUS

(with an innocent quality)
Happyfish, happyfish where have you been?

***MONITORS**: Images of Tamil fishermen and catamarans are displayed on the MONITORS: [**Cue Music 3**]*

BROTHER

For a thousand years, Tamil fishermen have gone to sea using a Kattumaram, a Tamil word borrowed into English, now pronounced as: Catamaran.

While BROTHER talks, the CHORUS tie each other together with a saree, symbolically "tying the wood."

It's a composite word—Kattu, meaning "Tied", and Maram, meaning "Wood." So, a Catamaran is really two logs tied together to make a boat. Similarly, Tamil Street Theatre uses a character with a composite name, Kattiyakkaran. "Katti"—to tie—and "Kkaran"—man. So, Kattiyakkaran is "he who ties it all together"—the one who weaves

together a story's disparate threads so it all makes sense; like a Greek Chorus.

The CHORUS moves towards and around BROTHER.
CHORUS

So, we are the Chorus; the Kattiyakkari-Gals—

They dance another jiggy, jaggy, ta-ka-di-mi stylee. The BROTHER returns to the kitchen to cook:

And with our Brothers and Sisters, Aunties and Uncles, Poets, Musicians, and all of you, we are Performing the Documentary together ***live!***

How cool is that?
How cool is that?
How cool is that?

The Lure of the Promised Land

Six months earlier, on December 10, 2015, just before the end of the fall semester, I presented an interim proof of concept for my thesis project titled *Brothers in the Kitchen* to a classroom filled with faculty and my MFA cohort. That day proved most auspicious. It was also the day that 150 Syrian refugees arrived in Canada and were greeted in person by then newly elected Prime Minister Justin Trudeau at Toronto's Pearson International. The *Toronto Star* ran the following front-page headline:

> As 150 [Syrian] refugees land at Pearson today—among the first of 25,000—on behalf of the Star and our readers, we say: WELCOME TO CANADA.

Below the headline a translation of the phrase "Welcome to Canada" was written in Arabic script. Below that headline, the photograph of a young boy, clad in shorts, sneakers, and a Stetson gleefully running with a Canadian flag waving above his head. Just below the photograph was the transliterated Arabic phrase "*Ahlan wa sahlan*" followed by the English translation in the copy that echoed "You're with family now." The article welcomed the Syrian refugees with the following invitation filled with seasonal salutations and goodwill:

> And your presence among us makes our Christmas season of peace and joy just that much brighter [...] It's been a long trek, but you are no longer refugees [...] Your days of being strangers in a strange land are over.

Ironically, almost 30 years earlier the same *Toronto Star* newspaper ran the following headline, on August 12, 1986:

> More than 150 Sri Lankan men, women and children, found adrift off the coast of Newfoundland in crammed open lifeboats yesterday, arrived safely in port here this morning after being rescued by Canadian fishermen. As startled immigration officials here and in Ottawa pondered what to do with this unprecedented load of alleged refugees, the 152 castaways claimed they are Tamils fleeing persecution in strife-torn Sri Lanka.[19]

The words "alleged," "claimed," "startled," and "unprecedented" are notable and markedly different from the tone of the 2015 *Toronto Star* headline welcoming the Syrian refugees. By contrast, the Tamil refugees in 1986 received significant negative media backlash. In a commemorative article published on the 30th Anniversary of that dramatic rescue, Selva Ponnuchamy, former President of Elam Tamil Association of Quebec and a leading member of the Tamil community in Canada, recalled that many people

> wrote letters in leading newspapers in favour and against the Canadian government's decision to allow the Tamils to stay in Canada. The main slogan of those who opposed the decision was to send the Tamils back to where they came from.

Furthermore, Ponnuchamy also remembers that in a letter to the *Toronto Sun* newspaper from that time, a reader suggested that "the Canadian government should have sunken the life-boats."[20]

The original idea for this story goes back to 2001 when I pitched it to the National Film Board of Canada (NFB) for development as my follow-up project to *Film Club* (2001). The NFB turned down my pitch. Subsequently, despite some progress in developing the project independently, I encountered serious problems from other producers, broadcasters, and potential documentary subjects. For many, the topic was taboo. There was much fear and mistrust in the air. Most of the potential subjects were highly reticent to tell their stories on camera. The civil war in Sri Lanka raged throughout the 2000s and people in Toronto feared for their lives and the safety of loved ones back home. Other potential subjects were afraid of being deported for entering Canada illegally. Still, others feared repercussions from the Tamil Tigers, a political and military group fighting for Tamil independence, with representatives living and fundraising in both Sri Lanka and Canada. Some subjects agreed to do interviews but then denied permission for me to use them afterwards. Others agreed only to audio interviews so their faces would never appear. I even learned that some doubted my genuineness with allegations that I could be a spy working for the Indian army. After several years of independent research and development, I shelved the project. Fourteen years

later, the arrival of the Syrian refugees to Canada in 2015 as well as the ongoing migrant crisis in Europe helped validate the arrival of the Tamil refugees 30 years earlier. The valuable outcome of this synchronicity strengthened my resolve to keep moving forward. Moreover, the protracted war in Sri Lanka had ended in May 2009 and enough time had passed since the events of Black July in 1983[21] that people were finally ready to address this topic. Academically, professionally, and creatively, I was at the right time and the right place to seize this opportunity.

I pitched *Brothers in the Kitchen* as a live, site-specific performative documentary to the Director of Programming at Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival and received the official "greenlight" in mid-February. The methodology of the *live*-documentary was innovative, and the documentary industry and the academy were interested in seeing a proof of concept. I got my chance. Though receiving the greenlight was a personal dream come true (my first documentary at Hot Docs), it signalled the start of determined and detailed work that over the subsequent four months kept me fully engaged in an intense period of pre-production; research; scouting locations; finding potential subjects; scheduling first round interviews with potential subjects; conceiving the live performance; engaging the professional actors, dancers, choreographer, and musicians; securing professional production personal such as a live sound tech; camera operators; production assistants; rehearsals; run-throughs; securing actual Tamil cooks to work the kitchen for the premiere; drafting the script; building a budget; securing the funding; etc.

In addition to financing the budget, engaging the subjects, and securing a festival world premiere, it took a small village of midwives and 20 copies of the script to help birth this ephemeral live documentary. In addition to the festival audience, which included two Toronto film critics and a group of dedicated Hot Docs Film Festival volunteers who handled the tickets and festival-related materials at the entrance, a total of 39 persons encompassing subject and crew were involved in the *live*-documentary production. They included the following: 13 "on-camera" documentary subjects, 4 professional production technicians (sound/lighting/prop, etc.), 4 professional actors (3 in the Tamil chorus plus 1 narrator), 4 professional musicians, 4 production volunteers from my MFA cohort, 3 professional camera operators, 2 professional cooks, 1 choreographer, 1 photographer, 1 festival director, 1 co-producer, and 1 documentary writer and director.

The audience heard testimonies directly from the subjects seated among them in real time. These first-person accounts stretched across six decades of lived history in Sri Lanka and in Canada: little sparks of ethno-political unrest in the 1950s that cumulatively fuelled the bloody uprisings in Northern Sri Lanka; the deadly riots of *Black July* in 1983 in the capital city of Colombo, which "amounted to acts of genocide" (Alston et al. 1983, 24); the mass exodus of Tamil refugees who fled the island nation by any means necessary; the dramatic arrival and rescue of 155 Tamil refugees found adrift in two

lifeboats in 1986 off the coast of Newfoundland, Canada; and the unprecedented large scale cross-country protest by Canada's Tamil diaspora against the continued brutality unleashed by the Sri Lankan Army. In Toronto, the "Gardiner Expressway came to a standstill for almost five hours when 2,000 Tamil protesters stormed onto the highway and ramps, blocking all lanes Sunday night" (*Toronto Star* May 10, 2009). Even to this day the phrase "I was on the Gardiner" resonates powerfully within the Canadian–Tamil diaspora; and a British Journalist's recounting of the brutal end of the civil war on a small strip of beach in Mullaivaikkal, a small seaside village located in Mullaitivu district in north-eastern Sri Lanka eight days after the protests on Toronto's Gardiner Expressway.

The audience also saw and heard stories of resilience, courage, and determination from those who struggled and made a life in the promised land of Canada. As the history of their exodus dates back three decades, there were young Tamil-Canadians born in Canada who would not be alive were it not for the war. This was the case with Mirabella and Gabriella, two of the trio of the Kattiyakkari-Gals, both under 30 years of age, who revealed in the final moments that their existence is directly related to their mother having fled Sri Lanka. A poignant revelation for some of the audience members present in the space.

From the opening slate to the closing credits, the live documentary unfolded as I had envisioned it, with only a few "dropped samosas" here and there. One such example happened towards the end of the survival chapter (Script p. 27) where British Journalist Frances Harrison would read a short passage from the introduction to her book *Still Counting the Dead* (2012) in a pre-taped Skype interview. The passage captured first-person accounts of the horror and brutality faced by the Tamils caught between Tamil Tigers rebel forces and the Sri Lankan Army on the final offensive on May 18, 2009. Just as the interview was to be broadcast the technology failed and the segment did not play. I quickly stepped in and read the verbatim transcript I had inserted into the script based on the pre-interview. The following is a shortened sample of that passage:

> That afternoon was pregnant with malice, the weather oppressive and sultry. A tropical storm hung in the air, waiting to explode above the tiny strip of golden beach at the north-eastern corner of the island of Sri Lanka. It was 18 May 2009 […] The stench of decomposing flesh and burning tires hung in the air, mixed with cordite, sweat and the tang of human fear. The gunfire had been relentless. For days the Tamil priests and the children—some as young as six—had been waiting for a lull in the fighting so that they could surrender. […] Injured fighters and civilians were all trapped together in this, the final killing field, just a few hundred square meters in size (Harrison 2012, 20).
>
> [**Cue Music 26**] CHORUS perform
> aggressive, militant dance (00:45)

Three pages later, the documentary concluded with the following scripted denouement:

The CHORUS/BROTHER make their way to mainstage and address the audience. The CHORUS invite the audience to participate in performing the Happy Fish poem. The audience is invited to ask the four questions, which are also displayed on the MONITORS. They conduct a trial run and then begin:
ALL PRESENT

happyfish, happyfish where have you been?
CHORUS/BROTHER
i've been to the bottom and i have been to the top
i have stood at the edge and i have turned back around
i have swum within darkness that is my soul
i've unlocked my demons hand in hand i have strolled
with my thoughts and my dreams mis-under-standing-ly it seems […]
happyfish, happyfish when will you live?

i am living,
i am living,
i am…
happyfish.

*[Cue Music 31] A moment later, BROTHER begins to percussively "play" a pot, which sets up an 8-bar beat. This gets picked up by the Dolak player and then by the CHORUS of 3 dancers Mira, Gabi and Dharshi. They enter the Caf*é *– scat-singing (TaKaDiMi): Gabi enters from Stage Left. Mira enters from Stage Right. Dharshi enters from the Kitchen. The camera-crew re-position to better cover the dancers. The dance ends with a percussive flourish.*

With that flourish, the inaugural site-specific *live*-documentary world premiere concluded. After a moment's silence of palatable sadness, a collective exhale was heard and felt inside the space. Then a wave of applause rang through the CSI Café as all subjects, cast, and crew took their bows. At this point, Sasi and Suseela—Sisters in the Kitchen—served *payasam* to everyone. *Payasam* is a warm sweet drinkable dessert, particular to Southern India that is made with tapioca, milk, and sugar all boiled together to produce this concoction. Sasi and Suseela began cooking this dish during the *Slice n Dice* live cooking show segment earlier in the script.

This "temporary community—implicit in the performance itself from the outset" (Etchells 2016, 22)—not only witnessed the story that unfolded in their presence but, by their presence, also contributed to its telling. As such, the ephemeral and experiential nature the of site-specific *live*-documentary

methodology competently served the need of the temporary community and embraced their active spectatorship. Etchells expands the context:

> the idea of an active spectator, in the sense not of obligation to take action during the performance but rather of invitation (even compulsion) to play an active role in imaginatively completing the work—reauthoring, speculating, connecting, and creating links among materials that have not been resolved
>
> (16).

Moreover, the subjects who shared their experiences "were no longer merely subjects, but collaborators and co-producers" (Fischer 2014, 137).

The Challenge

Just as the final applause and the kudos ended, I was approached by members of the audience who separately challenged me about two items in the documentary. One was the inclusion of a specific Tamil song performed within the documentary, and the other was the exclusion of a particular community group from the documentary. I was informed that the Tamil song performed by guest singer Mathusha was used in support of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam—commonly known as the LTTE or the Tamil Tigers. Hence, it was inappropriate to use it within a context that included community members who may not support the Tamil Tigers or their ideology. I was uncertain as to how I should deal with this challenge but thanked the person for bringing it to my attention and I filed it away for future contemplation and research.

Subsequently, I was approached by a young man who immediately questioned me as to why I had not included Tamil Dalits (Lower Caste, Scheduled Caste, or Untouchable Caste) as subjects in the documentary. The young man proceeded to tell me that in fact members of the lower caste, which included an "uncle" in Montreal, were also on board the cargo ship *Aurigae* and subsequently on board the lifeboats, which bore the former Tamils refugees to Canada in 1986. Surprised by this information and shocked by its veiled accusation, I answered that any omission of communal inclusivity was unintentional. I followed up with the young man, but my attempts over time to connect with his "uncle" in Montreal were unanswered. However, I was most intrigued by the notion that systems of caste and social hierarchy would exist among a group of refugees, who fled a brutal civil war fought along ethnic lines and crossed the Atlantic Ocean in the belly of a cargo ship bound for illegal entry into a foreign country in search of freedom.

One year later, my ongoing research into the Tamil story took me to Sri Lanka where I spent three weeks travelling across the island nation in July 2017. This was my first time in Sri Lanka and I was at once thrilled and overwhelmed, but excited to walk into the specific sites of a documentary I had

researched, written, and produced. My travels took me to the following sites: Colombo, the capital city and site of the Black July riots in 1983; Candy, the city where Princy and Asanka met and secretly eloped; Mullivaikkal beach, the tiny strip of land in the northeast coast, where the Sri Lankan Army defeated the Tamil Tigers on May 18, 2009, with a civilian death toll between 40,000 and 70,000[22]; Kilinochchi, once the seat of power for the Tamil Tigers and where I met and interviewed a group of women (Mothers of the Disappeared) on the 150th day of their continuous vigil on the grounds of a Hindu temple on the main highway. They were still awaiting the return of their children who were taken from them or "disappeared" since May 18, 2009; and Jaffna, in the far north of the country, which is home to the Tamil majority and the stronghold of the Tamil resistance during the brutal civil war, which raged for three decades.

In Jaffna, I visited the camp for Internally Displaced Persons (IDP)—a site-specific temporary community. This makeshift camp, built with corrugated metal, tins, and tarps was meant as a temporary measure to house Tamils who were displaced from their homes and villages during the long conflict. I met and interviewed several residents, some had lived in the camp for over 25 years. They could look over the horizon and see the places from where they had been displaced but could not return. It was here that I learned that even in this IDP camp, the temporary living quarters were assigned along caste lines. They were uprooted from their homes and transplanted about 20 kilometres away in a new place but retained their caste identity. I remembered the young man who questioned me a year before about the absence of Dalit (his use of the term) subjects in *Brothers in the Kitchen*.

Tamil Journeys '86

Since January 2016, while in pre-production towards the premiere of *Brothers in the Kitchen*, I was involved in both the planning and execution of an important reunion in Newfoundland, hosted by the Canadian–Tamil Congress, to mark the 30th anniversary of the arrival and rescue of the former Tamil refugees off the Avalon peninsula in August 1986. As part of a dedicated group of Tamil-Canadians, I was given exclusive access to document the process and as a member of the planning committee, I actively participated by sharing my research, ideas, connections, and know-how. In July 2016, as a result of my ongoing research, I located one of the two original lifeboats in which the Tamil refugees first arrived. I advocated for the lifeboat's inclusion in the reunion itinerary. And this lifeboat became the centrepiece of the reunion.

On August 11, 2016, I was on a chartered yellow school bus, which departed St. John's, Newfoundland, and headed southbound towards St. Mary's Bay, Newfoundland (NL) carrying an excited group of Tamil-Canadians from Toronto and Montreal. We were part of Tamil Journeys '86, a reunion that commemorated the 30th anniversary of the dramatic rescue

of the 155 Tamil Sri Lankan former refugees rescued by Captain Gus Dalton in 1986. Among our group were four Tamil-Canadians who were rescued from those lifeboats: Paul, Gandhi, Siva, and Baskaran. Enroute to Captain Dalton's home in Admiral's Beach, NL, we took a pre-negotiated detour into the small fishing village of Holyrood, NL, where in a site-specific, object-specific, live-documentary moment, the temporary community came face to face with one of the lifeboats that carried the four men to Canada.

Once reunited, Paul, Gandhi, Siva, and Baskaran climbed into the lifeboat; overcome with emotion, they broke down, cried, and consoled each other. "I was shocked at how moving it was [...] It was incredibly powerful. I'd never seen something quite like that" (Pricilla Hwang, quoting Aruliah, *CBC News* August 26, 2016). On the shores of this tiny fishing village, an impromptu site-specific *live*-documentary was in full swing. The four subjects, interviewed by multiple directors (journalists) with cinematographers in tow, shared their stories with the immediate live audience, which later that day would also be shared with a television audience. Every action by Paul, Gandhi, Siva, and Baskaran was captured and framed with the lifeboat placed somewhere in the frame. That powerful participatory documentary moment was witnessed not only by those present but also by thousands of virtual onlookers through tweets, blogs, and texts. At least 16 print media outlets from coast-to-coast, as well as national broadcasters CBC and CTV, covered the story.

A short time later, the entire entourage travelled farther south to St. Mary's Bay and reunited with retired fisherman Captain Gus Dalton, who had found and rescued the refugees on the same date back in 1986. After many tears, reminiscing, lunch, and cake, we returned to St. John's for a news conference on board the Canadian Coast Guard (CCG) ship *Leonard J. Cowley*, which had arrived in St. John's for refuelling. This was the same CCG ship that had picked up the refugees rescued by Captain Gus Dalton and had brought them to St. John's, Newfoundland in 1986. In addition, CCG Assistant Commissioner Wade Spurrell hosted the press conference and welcomed the refugees back to where they'd first made landfall 30 years ago. Thirty years ago, Spurrell was the chief officer of the *Leonard J. Cowley* and was onboard the ship the night they picked up the Tamil refugees. "Men and women of the Canadian Coast Guard often have a chance to help mariners and people in distress on the water," stated Spurrell, noting that only very rarely "do people come back to see us, so this is very remarkable for us."[23] My ongoing documentary practice and academic research connected me directly to the CCG and to the assistant commissioner, whom I met with a day earlier and planned the subsequent press conference.

My intervention led to the lifeboat being acquired by the Canadian–Tamil Congress and transported to Toronto, home of the world's largest Tamil Sri Lankan diaspora just in time for Tamilfest—the annual Tamil Street Festival in Scarborough.[24] The 30-foot fibreglass lifeboat, lost to history and memory for 30 years, instantly became the centrepiece of the event, and gained

mythical status. As an object of survival that had "a physical link with the remembered past" (MacDougal 1998, 233), it became a touchstone for the entire community. Celebrities, community leaders, and politicians across all levels of government came to witness an important object of Canadian history. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau,[25] MP John MacCallum, MP Gary Anandasangaree, Premiere Kathleen Wynn, and Mayors from many southern Ontario cities all posed for their selfies with the Tamil lifeboat. Throughout the festival, attended by 175,000[26] people, several original passengers kept vigil beside the lifeboat as proud ambassadors for the community.[27]

I also attended Tamilfest and was proud of my independent research, which located, retrieved, and repatriated the lifeboat. However, my name and my contributions to Canadian history and the Tamil diaspora were erased from the lifeboat's legacy. In a CBC Radio interview, which aired a few days earlier, a Tamil community member talked about the lifeboat as a focal point of both the reunion in Newfoundland and Tamilfest but never revealed how that lifeboat was found or my role in its repatriation. I was relegated to the role of a videographer, simply there to document the event rather than as an auteur, scholar, and a member of the community who had made a valuable contribution to the narrative of Tamil-Canadians. In the chapter titled "Film, Ritual, and Social Memory," MacDougall (1998) offered the following observation:

> Social memory in small communities is a matter of consensus, a version of the past accepted by various groups for reasons of convenience and solidarity. The particularities of social life prevent any one person from sharing precisely the same perspective or experience as others. Social memory is thus "social" in an active sense: negotiated, provisional, and indicative of relationships.
>
> (p. 242)

I sense that my visual identity as a brown man was pivotal in the negotiated and provisional nature of social memory in unmooring my connection to the lifeboat. As an Indian Canadian of Tamil heritage, I was neither an insider to the Tamil Sri Lankan communities nor a visually white Canadian outsider who could be embraced and acknowledged for repatriating the lifeboat, which saved the lives of many who have subsequently given life to a new generation.

Interestingly, there was a related story unfolding in real time involving the community, its leaders, and the storyteller. It was a delicate negotiation between what the community wanted to show, what the leaders wanted to shape, and what this storyteller wanted to reveal. In a way, this condition is what MacDougall posited in his essay "Films of Memory" (1998) that "objects that survive from the past are not the same objects that they were in the past, and they can thus stand for the memory of themselves only obliquely" (MacDougall in *Transcultural Cinema* 1998, 232). It was then

that I understood that the story and the lifeboat were larger than me; the boat became a symbol that closed the circle and celebrated the community. Moreover, the Tamil-Canadian Sri Lankan leadership purchased the lifeboat and consciously or unconsciously used it as a tool to re-stage or re-tell history to legitimise the community's arrival narrative. This was beyond my control.

One could say that the story was manipulated or mediated to obtain the desired outcome, to serve the collective needs. Was this life imitating art? Was this at the expense of truth? Did the end justify the means? Maybe it did justify the means as the lifeboat has taken on new meaning for the Tamil Sri Lankan Canadian community and Canadians at large. Its "second coming" has given Canada a second chance to properly welcome the former Tamil refugees and embrace the community. With news about the lifeboat being broadcast nationally and the Premier and the Minister visiting the boat at Tamilfest, finally both the former refugees and the Sri Lankan Tamil community received the official Canadian welcome that they deserved, like the one received by the Syrians from the Prime Minister in 2015.

In August 2010, ten months after a Thai ship, the Ocean Lady had arrived on the west coast with 76 Tamil refugees on board, another Thai cargo ship named the *Sun Sea* appeared off the coast of Vancouver Island with 492 Sri Lankan Tamil refugees on board. Back in August 1986, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney offered comforting words, assistance, and ministerial permits to a similar group of refugees. Under the government of Prime Minister Stephen Harper, Canada's welcome to these asylum seekers was very different, as a Canadian Council for Refugees report on the two incidents notes:

> The passengers [of both ships] were subjected by the government to prolonged detention, intensive interrogation and energetic efforts to exclude them from the refugee process, or to contest their claim if they succeeded in entering the refugee process. Canada's immigration legislation was amended to give the government extraordinary new powers, many apparently unconstitutional, to detain people and deny them a wide range of rights. [. . .] There was loud and strident public messaging about the alleged dangers presented by the arrival of the passengers. Yet, few have been found to represent any kind of security concern and almost two-thirds of the passengers whose claims have been heard have been found to be refugees in need of Canada's protection.

The trend continued. Five years after the arrival of the Sun Sea, Canada had "dramatically closed its doors on refugees, breached its international human rights obligations, and lost its reputation as a world leader in refugee protection."[28] When I invited my anonymous confidant to join the other former passengers of the lifeboat at Tamilfest as a proud ambassador, or at least as a silent witness to the changing reception of the lifeboat, he declined, still too ashamed to come, for fear of revealing his origins as an illegal immigrant (as he described himself), or simply as a lowly boat person who ended up

in a kitchen. Anonymous, who worked in the kitchens of Toronto's many restaurants and still lives there, gave me the following reflection during his interview in a local coffee shop:

> Although it has been thirty years since we arrived, I still feel ashamed. If we had arrived by airplane, we would feel better. In the early days, the white people would shame us for arriving on a boat. They called us "boat people" and used it as a demeaning and subjugating term. I worked in kitchens as a prep cook and got into many arguments with the bosses about the condition of our arrival. I tried to tell them the story, but they did not want to hear it. They accused us of being so poor that we were opportunists who jumped the queue for a better life. We did not want to leave—we had to leave, or die!
>
> I'm the only one in my family that left Sri Lanka. I went back in 1994 to get married. Up till that time I was a supporter of the Tamil rebels, but what I witnessed in Jaffna during that time. I no longer support any side. Our Tamil people were used for the drama of the civil war, and we have paid a heavy price. I'm no longer interested in a fucking Tamil Eelam. This is my home now. I'll die in Canada. I got married, and we have two children. My children would like to visit Sri Lanka but not live there. Their lives are also in Canada. I am so grateful for the government of Brian Mulroney. He was good to us.[29]

"I still hate the term 'boat people,'" he added. "I do not want to be known by that name."

Coda: This Time the Lifeboat Will Carry Stories

In late June of 2017, in celebration of Canada's 150th of Confederation, the Canadian–Tamil Congress (CTC) launched the Tamil lifeboat on a mini tour across select Canadian cities towards its festive destination near Parliament Hill in Ottawa on Canada Day. Slightly ahead of that planned tour and with the assistance of many supportive players, I produced *Strange Cargo,* a one-day event/installation with the Tamil lifeboat commemorating World Refugee Day (June 20) at Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU). The *Strange Cargo* event/installation honoured the many who found asylum and the many who continue seeking asylum in boats across many perilous seas around the world. The lifeboat was mounted on a flatbed trailer, which was the perfect height for display as an outdoor installation. Spontaneous performances unfolded on the street in the shadow of the lifeboat, with live musicians, dancers, and poets.

On my invitation, two former refugees who arrived in lifeboats, Shanmuga Paul from Sri Lanka in 1986, and Timothy Dang from Vietnam in 1982 shared their stories from the makeshift pulpit next to the lifeboat installation. The final guest speaker was Selva Ponnuchami, past president of Elam Tamil

Association, who assisted the 155 Tamil Refugees back in 1986. Earlier that day, during a brief respite during set up, I stood across the road and stared pensively at the 30-foot fibreglass lifeboat. While I contemplated, its size, capacity, and value as an object of memory, I was joined by a man wearing a white apron and a chef's cap who stood beside me in a friendly manner and stared at the lifeboat. I took the opportunity to say hello and asked him for his thoughts. After a moment's reflection, he shared with me that he too arrived in 1986 in that same lifeboat. His name was Sanmugalingam and he worked in the University cafeteria—a *Brother in the Kitchen*.

1986–2023

In a stage twist of economic fate, the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, which provided asylum to 155 Tamil refugees back in 1986, is now looking to the Indian subcontinent for help. In a recent article the premiere of the province, Dr Andrew Furey, announced that 'Provincial Government is spearheading a mission to India to recruit internationally-educated registered nurses who can fill vacancies in Newfoundland and Labrador" (Hood. 2022). In the same article, the Minister of Immigration, Gerry Byrne, added that the province is "once again making Newfoundland and Labrador an immigration destination of choice" (Hood. 2022).

Notes

1 Desperate Canada-bound migrants abandoned to fate on sinking ship after crew fled | CBC News.
2 https://www.torontomu.ca/cerc-migration/about/
3 Home | Hot Docs
4 CSI Spadina—Centre for Social Innovation.
5 Samosa a triangular wheat-based fried or baked dish with a savoury filling, such as spiced potatoes, onions, lentils, or minced meat <http://qz.com/335836/a-short-history-of-the-samosa/>
6 Vadai is a south Indian fried savoury originating mainly from Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, traditionally prepared during festivals and weddings. This lentil-based item is often served along with breakfast items like idli, pongal, etc., or even good with any scrumptious meal. <http://www.spiceindiaonline.com/medhu_vadai/>
7 Ladoo is a sweet sugary ball made from deep fried pearls of besan flour (chick pea). http://indianexpress.com/article/lifestyle/food-wine/food-story-the-journey-of-ladoo-from-a-medicine-to-the-much-loved-indian-sweet/
8 Cyrus Sundar Singh, *Brothers in the Kitchen*, Documentary Performance May 4, 2016.
9 Appendix A: Script p. 30–31
10 Radheyan Simonpillai, "Brothers in the Kitchen Serves Up Moving Stories at Hot Docs: Interactive Hot Docs Festival show puts the Tamil immigrant issues on the menu" in *NOW MAGAZINE*, May 6 2016. https://nowtoronto.com/movies/hot-docs-2016/brothers-in-the-kitchen/
11 *Webster's Ninth New College Dictionary*, 9th ed (1987)., s.v. "history."
12 CSI Spadina—Centre for Social Innovation.

13 SKYPE is a branded video and audio conferencing protocol, https://www.skype.com/en/
14 https://www.google.com/earth/
15 *Slice n Dice* was a six-part cooking show produced and directed by Cyrus Sundar Singh. It was hosted by Sarah Elton and broadcast on BellMedia's FibeTV1 (2015). http://tv1.bell.ca/fibetv1/shows/slice_n_dice.html
16 Metacinema "is a device used to self-consciously and systematically draw attention to a work's status as an artifact." http://uwm-metacinema.blogspot.ca/2015/06/welcome-to-homebase-for-film-203380.html
17 http://www.cyberkerala.com/bharatanatyam/ "Bharatanatyam, also spelt Bharathanatyam, is a classical dance form of South India, said to be originated in Thanjavoor of Tamil Nadu. It was known as "Daasiyattam" since performed by Devadasies in temples of Tamil Nadu long ago. The name 'Bharatanatyam' is derived from three basic concepts of Bhava [expression], Raga [melody] and Thaala [rhythm]."
18 Appendix A: Brothers in the Kitchen_Final Script_May 4, 2016, p. 4.
19 Alan Story and Joseph Hall, "152 castaway paid thousands to flee to Canada", in Toronto Star, August 12, 1986, p. 1.
20 Selva Ponnuchami, (past president of Elam Tamil Association of Quebec—ETAQ), in *Monsson Journal,* July 2016. https://issuu.com/monsoonjournal/docs/mj_july_2016_web, p. 18–19.
21 "The events of July 1983 are poignant for the entire Tamil population around the world, including the 300,000 of them who call Canada home. The riots that occurred in Sri Lanka during July 24–26, 1983 systematically targeted Tamils and Tamils businesses throughout the entire island. Nearly every Tamil person, if not a victim or a survivor of the anti-Tamil pogrom, has friends and family who were [...] In the capital, all traffic was searched, and any Tamils found were killed, maimed, or burned alive by large, drunken mobs. These mobs were also led by people with voter registration lists in hand to torch Tamil homes and loot and destroy Tamil businesses. The many policemen who were deployed throughout the city after the outset tacitly stood and watched. In other parts of the island, Tamil political prisoners in high security prisons were killed by the inmates as the prison guards passively did nothing. In the North East, predominantly Tamil areas, scores of Tamils were shot dead by the Sri Lankan police and National Guard. In total, the deaths of 3,000 Tamils and billions of dollars in damage were the numerical result of this pogrom. Black July instantly became an unforgettable part of the collective Tamil consciousness." Canadian Tamil Congress, May 8, 2008, https://www.sangam.org/2008/05/Black_July.php
22 "Ten years on, there is still no accurate death toll due to the absence of a thorough and credible investigation process. While the UN has reported between 40,000 and 70,000 dead, other estimates put the number much higher—at 140,000" (Nirmanusan Balasundaram in *Aljazeera* 18m May 2019). https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2019/5/18/how-the-un-failed-tamil-civilians-in-2009
23 Quoted in "Tamil Refugees Revisit N.L. Rescuers 30 Years Later," The Telegram, August 11, 2016, http://www.thetelegram.com/news/local/tamil-refugees-revisit-nl-rescuers-30-years-later-127504/.
24 www.tamilfest.ca/
25 Scarborough's Tamil Fest draws praise from Justin Trudeau, John Tory | HamiltonNews.com.
26 TamilFest claims record for street festival attendance in Scarborough - ProQuest (torontomu.ca).
27 PHOTOS: Piece of Tamil-Canadian history unveiled at annual Tamilfest in Scarborough | HamiltonNews.com.

28 Canadian Council for Refugees, Sun Sea: Five Years Later, August 2015, https://ccrweb.ca/sites/ccrweb.ca/files/sun-sea-five-years-later.pdf, 1.
29 Transcribed interview notes from a conversation, in Tamil, with the author held in Toronto on April 4, 2016; here and elsewhere, all translations are my own.

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13 Role of Household Socio-economic Status in Determining the Impact of Remittances on Human Capital Investment

Anu Abraham

Introduction

One of the central ideas in the economics of migration is the existence of a migration-development nexus; that migration and the associated remittances lead to development in the migrant-sending regions. As is evidenced by the literature,[1] remittances contribute to local economic development and reduction in poverty and also affect the society at large through a change in prices, demonstration effect, and other inter-linkages. While the literature agrees that remittances reduce poverty in the developing world (Lokshin et al., 2010; Acosta et al; Adams & Page, 2005; Taylor et al., 2005; Yang & Martinez, 2006, among others), the literature diverges on the impact of remittances on income inequality. For example, many studies find that the Gini coefficient increases when remittance earnings are included in household income (Barham & Boucher, 1998; Rodriquez, 1998; Adams & Cuecuecha, 2010), while others find that income inequality reduces with the level of migration (Jones, 1998; McKenzie & Rapoport, 2006). If the remittance-receiving households are relatively higher income/wealthier households, it may lead to wider income gaps between migrant-sending and non-migrant-sending households and increase the inequality in both material well-being and human capital development (Adams, 1991; Zachariah et al., 2001; Adams & Cuecuecha, 2010).

This difference in the literature could be explained by the difference in the type of income remittance, which is perceived as – transitory, supplementary, or fungible income. Adams and Cuecuecha (2010) review the empirical literature on the three divergent views. They find that when remittances act as supplementary income, it is used primarily for consumption activities, resulting in increased domestic consumption. Treating remittances as transitory income leads to their use in 'productive activities' such as investment in human and physical capital leading to economic development in the receiving households and hence the source region. The third view finds support that remittances are treated as additional fungible income and do not alter the expenditure behaviour of the households.

The purpose of this chapter is to analyse the effect of remittance receipts on the expenditure pattern of households in Kerala. Much work has been done

DOI: 10.4324/9781003490234-13

on the impact of remittances on different micro- and macro-level variables in Kerala, and the overall development impacts have been discussed. The focus of this chapter is to understand how remittance income is treated in Kerala households by analysing if there is any difference in the expenditure pattern between remittance-receiving and non-receiving households. The marginal spending behaviour of the remittances-receiving and non-receiving households is compared using budget share analysis on four main components of household expenditure – food, durables, education, and health. Importantly, the focus is on examining if and how investment in health and education, the building blocks of human capital development, is affected by remittance receipt at the household level. Households are also compared within income groups and socio-religious groups to examine whether specific socio-economic or geographic positions entail differential usage of remittances.

Literature Review

The inflow of remittances to developing countries is much higher than the official aid (World Bank, 2016). The literature shows that different households use remittances differently as there is a wide variation in the frequency, regularity, amount, and duration of remittances being sent (Seshan et al., 2012; Chami et al., 2005). This section reviews in detail the three views on the type of income remittances – supplementary, transitory, or fungible income.

The prominent view is that remittances are supplementary income that significantly increases consumption expenditure (Chami et al., 2005; Zhu et al., 2014; Clement, 2011). These studies report that most of the remittance income goes into conspicuous consumption which is status-oriented, unproductive assets that do not stimulate the local economy and did not significantly affect their investment pattern (Chami et al., 2005; Zhu et al., 2014; Clement, 2011). The study on Tajikistan, one of the most remittance-dependent nations, finds that international remittances improve consumption expenditure, positively affect health expenditure, and have no significant impact on education and negatively impact investment (Clement, 2011).

The second view on remittance income is that they are transitory incomes, which affect the household's expenditure pattern and increase human and physical capital investments in receiving households (Adams, 1998; Cox-Edwards & Eureta, 2003; Castaldo & Reilly, 2007; Yang and Martinez, 2006). For example, Adams and Cuecuecha (2010) find that international remittances reduce the budget share allotted to food consumption but increase the budget share allocated to human capital investment – both in education and health in Guatemala. Yang (2008) in a similar analysis of the Philippines finds that the marginal expenditure on education and investment in capital is higher in remittance-receiving households. Osili (2004) finds that migrant-sending households invest more than non-migrants in housing in Nigeria. These studies contend that remittance-receiving households invest

more in both physical and human capital at the margin compared to households that do not receive remittances.

The third interpretation that remittances are fungible income – i.e., they are just another diversified source of income, finds that it does not significantly affect the expenditure pattern of the households). Brown and Leeves (2011) attribute the nature, duration, and intensity of migration from a region and the structure of the economy in the region as the reason for the difference in the use of remittance. Randazzo and Piraccha (2019) suggest that the difference in the income levels of the countries and the investment opportunities might be what explains the wide range of empirical findings on the use of remittances. Both these explanations seem plausible, as households that have low incomes might treat remittances as merely another fungible source of income and face only an outward shift of the budget line whereas if remittances are seen as transient incomes, they will be used for investment purposes.

Remittances in the Kerala Context

Kerala, which accounts for around 3% of India's population, receives half of all the remittance inflow to India, which is equivalent to about one-third of Kerala's state domestic product (Rajan & Zachariah, 2019). Studies claim that the inflow of remittances has helped in the reduction of poverty and unemployment and improved the living standards (Prakash, 1998; Harilal & Joseph, 2003; Kannan, 2005; Banerjee et al., 2002; Azzez & Begum, 2009). Remittances have raised household incomes and consumption levels and increased the acquisition of durable assets (Prakash, 1998; Gulati, et.al 1997). But the general understanding is that remittances in Kerala are used mainly for 'conspicuous consumption' such as constructing and renovating houses, purchasing of landed property, and meeting marriage-related expenses (Mathew & Nair, 1978; Kurian, 1979). On the other hand, recent studies have also found that remittances increased human capital investments and changed labour market outcomes in receiving households (Valatheeshwaran & Khan, 2016; Khan & Valatheeshwaran, 2018).

The literature on remittance use in Kerala indicates both an increase in conspicuous consumption and increased investments. This brings forth the question of whether there is a difference in the use of remittance income as compared to other sources of income. Identifying the type of income remittances to the receiving households will extend new evidence to this debate. Depending on whether remittance is considered transitory, supplementary, or fungible income, the expenditure pattern of remittance-receiving and non-remittance-receiving households can differ. This study also compares the remittance-receiving and non-remittance-receiving households across economic and social groups to understand whether the socio-economic characteristics of the households differently affect remittance income allocation.

Analytical Framework

This analysis is based on the Engel framework. The Engel function describes the Marshallian demand curve that depicts how a consumer's/household's expenditures on some goods and services are related to its total income (holding prices of all goods constant) (Lewbel, 2006). In other words, the quantity of a good consumed by the household is determined by its income. In this study, the variable remittance will be included in the Engel function whose effect will be statistically estimated. A set of control variables is also included in the model to avoid omitted variable bias.

The household's expenditure function is estimated for the four major categories – food, consumer durables, health, and education using the Working–Leser[2] specification of the Engel curve framework (Working, 1943; Leser, 1963). This model specification puts greater emphasis not on the goodness of fit but on its ability to satisfy the adding-up restriction, which is a property of demand applicable to a cross-sectional analysis. The model assumes that the budget share of certain commodities is a function of the logarithm of the total expenditures. This means that if the total income/expenditure increases, the budget share for commodities changes in some proportions. The adding-up restriction means that when the budget share of one commodity goes up, another's share has to be reduced because the household has a budget constraint to maintain. In essence, this model shows what commodities households consider to be relatively more important. This will help to determine whether remittances influence a household to say, invest more in human capital.

An empirical model employing the OLS method is specified as follows:

$$Y_{ij} = \alpha_i + \beta_i R_{ij} + \gamma_i LogpcExp_j + \delta_i X_j + \varepsilon_i \qquad (13.1)$$

where Y_{ij} is the marginal budget share for a category of expenditure i in the household j. The explanatory variable R_{ij}[3] is a dichotomous variable and takes the value 1 if the household received remittances from abroad and 0 otherwise. $Logpcexp_j$ is a continuous variable measuring the log of the household j's per capita expenditure and X_j represents a set of vectors related to covariates describing individual, household, community, and regional characteristics while ε_{ij} is the error term. In estimating the model, household expenditure is used and not household income data for several reasons. Expenditure data are more useful than income data as income data may be prone to under-reporting. Moreover, many respondents have chosen not to reveal their household income, which would reduce the sample size.

The main challenge while doing such a budget share analysis is the possible existence of endogeneity between receipt of remittances and household expenditure decisions because households make these decisions simultaneously. The characteristics that explain remittances may also affect expenditure decisions, most of which are unobservable (e.g., ability or risk aversion),

making it difficult to establish causality (McKenzie & Sasin, 2007). The estimated coefficients will be biased if the endogeneity problem is not addressed. The most common way of addressing endogeneity is through an IV approach (Acosta et al., 2007; Mansour et al., 2011; Mendola & Carletto, 2012). A good instrumental variable is correlated with the explanatory variable but uncorrelated with the outcome variable, except through the explanatory variable. This can eliminate many of the biases that arise from endogeneity, selection problems, and omitted variables. The remittance receipt is instrumented with a dummy variable 'taluk migration rate', which captures the presence of migration networks that are assumed to directly influence the remittance receipt of a household but not the expenditure behaviour. The existence of such a migration network would have a strong effect on the remittance decision but no direct effect on the investment decisions. This makes the variable valid for use as an instrument.

To check for the validity of the Instrument Variables, the study tests for the under-identification of instruments using the Kleibergen–Paap rk LM statistic under the null hypothesis that the equation is under-identified. To check the weak identification, Kleibergen–Paap rk *F*-statistic is used, the critical values for which are provided in Stock and Yogo (2002). Staiger and Stock's (1997) 'Rule of thumb' is applied, which says *F*-statistics should be at least 10 for rejecting the null hypothesis of a weak instrument problem. Furthermore, in order to ensure the appropriateness and confidence in the instruments used in the model, the Sargen–Hansen test can be done to check the over-identifying restrictions. Since the analysis has used a robust estimator, the Hansen *J* statistic is used instead of the Sargen–Hansen test.

Since the impact of remittances could vary according to the socio-economic conditions of the remittance-receiving households, the study estimates the results for various heterogeneous groups such as (i) the economic group – identified as households below and above the poverty line (using ration card status) and (ii) the socio-religious group, to which the household belongs. Such a disaggregated analysis based on the socio-economic profile of the receiving households has not been done before.

Data and Variables

Data

The empirical analysis in this chapter is undertaken using the latest round of the Kerala Migration Survey (KMS), 2018 (more details, see, Rajan and Zachariah, 2019). It has a sample of 15,000 households spread across the 14 districts of Kerala of which 20% are remittance-receiving households. According to Kerala Migration Survey 2018, remittance-receiving households are defined as households that received money or goods or gifts from their family members, who had migrated abroad, during the one year prior to the survey. Both formal and informal channels of remittance transfers are considered. Block 4 of Kerala Migration Survey – 2018 collects information

on household expenditure under four heads – food, consumer durables, education, and health for both remittance-receiving and non-remittance-receiving households. This information is used to compare the expenditure share of consumption and investment between remittance-receiving and non-remittance-receiving households.

Variables

Dependent Variables

The four variables are used to estimate the budget share analysis. The details of the different components included in the four categories are given in Table 13.1.

The survey provides monthly expenditure data on food and annual expenditure data for durables, education, and health. The data of the household expenditure and remittance receipts are also reported annually. Hence, the food expenditure has also been converted to annual value by multiplying the monthly expenditure by 12 to make it comparable.

Independent Variables

The log per capita expenditure of the household (*LogPCHHExp*) is taken as a dependent variable. The variable of interest in this analysis is whether the household receives international remittances. The other control variables used in the analysis are household characteristics such as gender of household head, employment status of household head, highest education level of household adult members, number of children in various age groups, and number of senior dependents, as well as socio-religious group, wealth quintile, and the location of the household. The description of these variables is given in Table 13.2.

The household heads generally have greater decision-making power as regards the allocation of resources within the household. The gender of the

Table 13.1 Categories of commodities used for budget share analysis

Category	*Description*
Food	All food items—processed and unprocessed
Durables and utilities	Durable goods and any household investment that does not generate future streams of income
Education	Tuition fee, books, school supplies, private tuition, hostel fees, and all other related expenses
Health	Doctor fees, cost of medicines, lab fees, hospitalisation, and prescription

Source: KMS (2018).

household head affects the household's investment decisions. For instance, Acosta (2011) finds that female-headed households place a greater priority on their children's education compared to their male counterparts. The employment status of the household head can also influence investment decisions. The employed household head can ensure a continual flow of income and enable the household to spend money on households' consumption expenditure thereby enabling the utilisation of the remittances for children's education, access to health care, and investing in physical capital. Based on the responses listed in the survey, a dummy variable is created for the employment status of the household head. If the household head is employed, the economic status is reported as a regular salary employee, self-employed, casual labour, and outside labour force..

The household member with the highest level of education will influence the household's perspective towards human capital investments (Acosta, 2011; Mueller & Shariff, 2011). The household size also impacts the budget share allocation along with the number of dependents in the family. Dependents are mainly of two types – children who are school-going age and elders above the age of 65 who are out of the labour market. The dependency ratio is expected to have a negative effect on investments as a greater

Table 13.2 Description of explanatory variables used in the analysis

Remittance_Receipt	*1 = if households received remittances from abroad during the last 365 days prior to the survey; 0 = otherwise*
LogPCHHExp	The log of the average per capita expenditure in the household
HH size	Number of members in the household
HHH gender	1 = if household head is female; 0 = otherwise
HHH regular salaried work	1 = if household head engaged in regular salary jobs; 0 = otherwise
HHH self-employment	1 = if household head is self-employed; 0 = otherwise
HHH casual labour	1 = if household head is casual labour; 0 = otherwise
HHH outside workforce	1 = if household head is outside the workforce; 0 = otherwise
HH highest education	Education level of maximum educated member of the household
Number of children	Number of children under the age of 14 years
Number of elders	Number of elderly persons above the age of 60 years
Wealth quintile	Household wealth index by quintiles
Socio-religious groups	1 = Others; 2 = OBC; 3 = OBC Muslims; 4 = SC/ST
Sector	Rural/urban
District	Districts of Kerala

Source: Compiled from literature.

number of dependents in the family lead to other kinds of consumption (Lu & Treiman, 2011; Hu, 2012).

A variable indicating the socio-religious group is included in the analysis that shows the differences in economic opportunities across the various communities (SC/ST, OBC, OBC Muslims, and Others), which will affect access to schooling, healthcare, and investment opportunities. In terms of household wealth, studies conducted in developing countries have shown that household wealth is positively associated with educational, health, and capital investments, which are constrained by the households' economic resources. Following the methodology described in McKenzie (2005) and Filmer and Scott (2012), this study employs a principal component analysis to create a household wealth index based on the type of house and possession of household assets such as refrigerator, computer, motor car, net connection, motorcycle, telephone, mobile phone, micro-oven, and taxi.Household wealth reflects a more permanent economic status than the household income level that changes according to current circumstances. Rural–urban variations and district-level variations are accounted for by including sector and district dummies.

Descriptive Statistics

The detailed descriptive statistics of the independent variables of both remittance-receiving and non-receiving households is reported in Table 13.3. The annual per capita expenditure of remittance-receiving households is higher than that of the non-remittance-receiving households but the variance also is higher, indicating a larger deviation from the average.

Household heads of remittance-receiving families are less likely to participate in employment activities (regular salary jobs, self-employment, and casual labour) compared to members from non-remittance-receiving households. The education attainment of household adult members indicates that remittance-receiving household members have higher average years of education compared to non-remittance-receiving household members. They have a slightly higher household size and are also more likely to have an elderly population and young children, indicating a high dependency on remittance income in the receiving households. This study used household asset position to compute an asset index that is a proxy for the wealth of the household. It shows that remittance-receiving households are wealthier than non-remittance-receiving households. Across the social groups, SC/STs are less likely to receive remittances and Muslims are more likely to receive remittances as compared to others.

Results and Discussion

Budget Shares for Each Expenditure Category by Remittance Status

The inflow of remittances is likely to affect the disposable income of the households and affect their expenditure pattern. First, the annual per capita expenditure share of remittance-receiving and non-remittance-receiving households on the different categories of expenditure is compared (Table 13.4).

Table 13.3 Characteristics of the households

Variables	*Remittance-receiving HHs*		*Non-remittance-receiving HHs*	
	Mean	*S.D.*	*Mean*	*S.D.*
LogPCHHExp	262.6	118.8	202.1	98.3
Household size	5.75	2.75	5.12	2.18
Female-headed households	0.43	0.49	0.21	0.41
Household head's occupation				
HHH regular salary work	0.05	0.21	0.10	0.30
HHH self-employment	0.14	0.35	0.17	0.38
HHH casual labour	0.12	0.32	0.35	0.48
HHH outside workforce	0.70	0.46	0.38	0.49
Highest education in HH	12.17	2.91	11.83	3.15
Number of children in the age group 0–4	0.69	0.90	0.36	0.65
Number of children in the age group 5–9	0.64	0.81	0.38	0.66
Number of children in the age group 10–14	0.46	0.76	0.40	0.69
Number of children in the age group 15–19	0.38	0.67	0.38	0.65
Number of seniors	0.55	0.70	0.49	0.67
Wealth quintiles				
Wealth quintile 1	0.06	0.24	0.23	0.42
Wealth quintile 2	0.13	0.33	0.22	0.41
Wealth quintile 3	0.20	0.40	0.21	0.40
Wealth quintile 4	0.31	0.46	0.17	0.37
Wealth quintile 5	0.31	0.46	0.17	0.38
Socio-religious groups				
Forward groups	0.24	0.43	0.33	0.47
OBC others	0.20	0.40	0.32	0.47
OBC Muslims	0.54	0.50	0.20	0.40
SC/ST	0.02	0.13	0.15	0.35
Proportion of households in urban area	0.20	0.40	0.22	0.42
Observations	2653		12347	

Source: Author's calculation based on KMS (2018).

The average annual per capita household expenditure share on the four major categories of expenditure – food, durables and utilities, education, and health – is computed separately for remittance-receiving and non-receiving households and tested for statistical significance using the standard *t*-test. The *t*-test is performed to examine whether there exist differences in the means of the budget share for each category between the different types of households. Remittance-receiving households are seen to spend a higher share on education and health and a lower share on food consumption relative to non-remittance-receiving households. The reported *p*-values indicate that the null hypothesis of equal means between recipient households versus those who are non-recipient has to be rejected for all categories (food, education, and

Table 13.4 Average budget shares for each commodity by remittance status

	Food	*Durables*	*Education*	*Health*
Non-remittance-receiving households	0.51	0.31	0.08	0.10
Remittance-receiving households	0.49	0.31	0.09	0.11
p-value	0.000***	0.624	0.000***	0.001***

Notes: *p*-values show the level of significance at which we can reject the hypothesis of equal means between the sample proportion of remittance-receiver and non-receiver households; $^{***}p < 0.01$, $^{**}p < 0.05$, $^{*}p < 0.1$.
Source: Author's calculation based on KMS (2018).

health) except durables. Remittance-recipient households spend less on food and more on education and health.

Impact of Remittance Receipt on Budget Share Allocation on All Households

This section presents the estimated results of the budget share analysis. Table 13.5 shows that the remittance-recipient households allocate a lower proportion of expenditure on food and increase their budget share on durables, education, and health. The household's budget share on food falls and other budget shares increase with an increase in *LogPCHHExp*, which is the expected outcome of an increase in income. The behaviour of households that receive remittance is similar to their behaviour in case of an increase in per capita household expenditure, as indicated by *LogPCHHExp*. This means that remittance may be considered as fungible income, an augmentation to income from an alternative source and not as a transient or temporary source.

Endogeneity Test Results

In the model specified, the Kleibergen–Paap rk LM test statistic reports a value of 922, thus rejecting the null hypothesis that the instruments are correlated with the endogenous regressors. Even after the null hypothesis is rejected in the under-identification test, the problem of weak instruments arises when excluded instruments are weakly correlated with the endogenous regressors (Staiger & Stock, 1997). The weak identification Kleibergen–Paap rk *F*-statistics are greater than 10, which rejects the null of weak instrument problem in the model, presented at the end of the table. Further, the Hansen *J* statistic shows that the value of the test statistic is zero and hence the equations are exactly identified. The joint null is that the instruments are valid instruments, i.e., uncorrelated with the error term, and that the excluded instruments are correctly excluded from the estimated equation. The results are robust and the instruments are valid.

Table 13.5 Household budget share estimates

	Food_ share	*Durables _ share*	*Education_ share*	*Health_ share*
Remittance (Ref: No remittance)				
Remittances receiving households	–0.102***	0.041***	0.010**	0.071***
	(0.016)	(0.015)	(0.012)	(0.014)
LogPCHHExp	–0.110***	0.024***	0.033***	0.054***
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Household size	–0.007***	–0.003***	0.001	0.009***
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Gender of HH head (Ref: Male)				
Female head	0.013***	–0.003	0.010***	–0.020***
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Occupation of HH head (Ref: Outside work force)				
Salaried employee	0.010***	0.001	0.003	–0.013***
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Self-employed	0.011***	–0.001	–0.006***	–0.003*
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Casual worker	0.014***	–0.008***	–0.016***	0.010***
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Highest education in HH	–0.002***	–0.001***	0.006***	–0.004***
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Wealth quintiles (Ref: quintile1)				
Wealth quintile 2	0.000	0.003*	0.002	–0.006***
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Wealth quintile 3	0.010***	0.008***	0.001	–0.019***
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Wealth quintile 4	0.014***	0.009***	0.006***	–0.029***
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.003)
Wealth quintile 5	0.006*	0.018***	0.023***	–0.047***
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.003)
Socio-religious grp ((Ref: Fwd)				
OBC Others	0.001	–0.000	–0.002**	0.001
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.001)
OBC Muslims	0.033***	–0.027***	–0.004*	–0.002
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.003)
SC/ST	0.018***	–0.003	–0.010***	–0.005**
	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
No. children in age grp 0–4	0.015***	0.011***	–0.014***	0.011***
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)

(*Continued*)

Table 13.5 (Continued)

	Food_ share	*Durables _ share*	*Education_ share*	*Health_ share*
No. children in age grp 5–9	0.004**	–0.006***	0.014***	–0.012***
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.002)
No. children in age grp 10–14	–0.002	–0.007***	0.022***	–0.014***
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
No. children in age grp 15–19	–0.015***	–0.007***	0.040***	–0.017***
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Number of seniors	–0.008***	–0.008***	–0.008***	0.024***
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Sector (Ref: Rural)				
Urban	0.008***	0.005***	–0.006***	–0.007***
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
District dummies#	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constant	1.384***	0.273***	–0.313***	–0.344***
	(0.014)	(0.013)	(0.011)	(0.013)
Observations	15000	15000	15000	15000
R^2	0.226	0.212	0.160	0.080
F-statistic	566	462.9	319.1	196.4
p-value	0	0	0	0
Kleibergen–Paap rk LM statistic	748.5	748.5	748.5	748.5
Kleibergen–Paap rk Wald *F*-statistic	757.8	757.8	757.8	757.8
Hansen *J* statistic	0	0	0	0

*** indicates significance at 1%, ** at 5%, and * at 10% level.
Standard errors are given in parenthesis.
#District dummies are used in the above analysis but not presented for convenience.
Data Source: KMS (2018).

Impact of Remittance on Household Expenditure in Health and Education

The remittance-receiving households' share of expenditure on education and health is statistically significant and positive as compared to non-receiving households. Thus remittances are improving human capital development in receiving households by reducing the income constraint. This indicates that households receiving remittances use it for expenditure on human capital investments, thereby being considered as transitory income. Such a finding is supported by the literature (Taylor & Mora, 2006; Adams & Cuecuecha, 2010; Musumba et al., 2015; Randazzo & Piraccha, 2019). This can have a positive effect on school enrolment, attendance, and completion rate in many developing regions, which could be the case in Kerala as well (Azizi, 2018; Bouoiyour & Miftah, 2016).

Household characteristics are seen to play a significant role in the budget share allocation on education and health. Households that have more

educated members tend to allocate a higher share of the budget on education and a lower share on all other expenditure categories. The higher expenditure on education by households that have higher educated members may be due to the higher returns on education witnessed or the better understanding regarding the future returns on education. This result is similar to that found by Acosta (2011). An increase in household size has a negative impact on the expenditure share on health and has no impact on the share on education. This result is similar to the results discussed by Lu and Treiman (2011) and Hu (2012). The gender of the household head also significantly affects the investment decisions of the household, with female-headed households allocating a higher budget share for education and consumption but less for health investments. The occupation of the household head is not a significant determinant of the budget allocation of the households.

Households with children in the school-going age have a significant and positive coefficient for the budget share for education, and the share increases in proportion to the age of the child. These households also see a reduction in the budget share allocated to all other categories. This can be due to the higher cost of education as children pursue higher levels of education. Households reporting the presence of seniors and children below the age of five have significantly higher budget shares for health expenditures and lower educational expenditures, which may be explained by the higher medical and care costs incurred.

Educational investments are significant and positive in the upper quintiles, while the budget allocation for health falls in the higher quintiles. Considering the socio-religious groups that the household belongs to and taking the forward group as the reference category, the OBCs (both Muslim and others) and the SC/STs have significant and negative coefficients in education's budget share compared to the forward groups, with the impact being more pronounced among SC/STs. It can be seen that the budget share for human capital is much lower among the already backward groups, showing a result similar to that of the income groups. Taking into account the location of the households, the result shows that while food and durable expenditure is higher in urban areas, human capital expenditure is lower.

Impact of Remittance on Household Expenditure in Food and Durables

Remittance receipt reduces the budget share allocated to food expenditure and increases the allocation to durables. Remittance-receiving households spending more on durables can be an indication that remittances are considered as supplementary income to the households.

Household characteristics also impact the share of the budget allocated to food and durables. Taking the lowest quintile as the reference category, the budget share allocation for food is found to be positive and significant only in the third and fourth quintile, while the budget allocation for durable goods is significant and higher in each subsequently higher wealth quintile.

Analysing according to social groups and taking the forward group as the reference category, food share allocation is significant and higher in Muslim and SC/ST households, while durable allocation is lower in these categories. Urban households spend a higher proportion on both food and durables. The characteristics of the members of the household also affect the budget share allocation on food and durables, for example, households with small children spend significantly more on food, while households with children of the school-going age spend more on durables and utilities.

Overall, remittances are seen to increase expenditure on human capital investment and expenditure on household durables but reduce expenditure on income, which is a predicted result of relaxing the income constraint. It is not very clear whether it is treated as transitory, supplementary, or simply fungible income.

Impacts on Household Expenditure across Income and Socio-economic Groups

Having seen that remittances have a significant positive impact on budget share allocation on human capital and durables and that the socio-economic status of the households also is significant in determining the budget allocation decisions of the households, it is imperative to study the impact of remittance receipt according to the socio-economic status of the households. Analysing whether remittances impact the budget allocation, especially the share of education, in households according to the difference in their economic status is important, as it could determine whether different income or social classes treat remittance income differently. It could also help determine whether remittances are increasing or decreasing the gap in human and physical capital accumulation and their subsequent benefits among different social and economic classes of the society. For example, when the impact of remittances on educational budget allocation is analysed according to wealth quintiles and it is found that remittance-receiving households in the lower quintiles have a significant, positive coefficient, then it can be concluded that remittances are enabling the poorest households to invest more in education than their counterparts. This would mean that remittances are relaxing their income constraints to invest in education that can improve their future earning potential. This could have a redistributive effect in the future. This section considers the heterogeneous impact of remittances on budget allocation according to the income quintile and the socio-religious group of the household. For the convenience of discussion, only the variable of interest is reported here.

According to Income

Table 13.6 presents the impact of remittance on budget share allocation according to the economic strata to which the households belong. In the lower wealth quintiles, households that receive remittances allocate a higher

Table 13.6 Impact of remittance on budget allocation according to income

	Food_ share	*Durable_ share*	*Education_ share*	*Health_ share*
BPL				
Remittances receipt	**–0.259*****	**0.098****	**0.155*****	**0.316*****
(Ref: non- receipt)	**(0.046)**	**(0.042)**	**(0.030)**	**(0.051)**
Observations	6468	6468	6468	6468
R^2	0.145	0.177	0.294	0.148
F-statistic	161.6	189.4	54.35	102.1
p-value	0	0	0	0
Kleibergen–Paap rk LM statistic	98.76	98.76	98.76	98.76
Kleibergen–Paap rk Wald *F*-statistic	100.4	100.4	100.4	100.4
Hansen *J* statistic	0	0	0	0
APL				
Remittances receipt	**–0.036****	**0.027**	**–0.010**	**0.019**
(Ref: non- receipt)	**(0.017)**	**(0.020)**	**(0.015)**	**(0.015)**
Observations	5664	5664	5664	5664
R^2	0.273	0.218	0.105	0.153
F-statistic	227.6	197.6	53.35	121.2
p-value	0	0	0	0
Kleibergen–Paap rk LM statistic	343	343	343	343
Kleibergen–Paap rk Wald *F*-statistic	388.5	388.5	388.5	388.5
Hansen *J* statistic	0	0	0	0

*** indicates significance at 1%, ** at 5% and * at 10% level.
Standard errors are given in parenthesis.
Control variables used in the above analysis is not presented for convenience.
Data Source: KMS (2018).

budget share in human capital expenditures (education and health) compared to households not receiving remittances. They also allocate a higher share to durable goods and utility, and the budget share of food is lower.

On the other hand, among the richer households, there is only a slightly lower allocation to food share and there is no significant difference in allocation to other items. This result shows that remittances act as a medium through which lower-income households are able to accumulate more human capital and durable assets. This could mean that remittances aid the catching-up effect of households belonging to lower quintiles.

According to Socio-religious Groups

The impact of remittance on budget share allocation in households belonging to different socio-religious groups is reported in Table 13.7.

The results are reported for Forward groups, OBC Muslims, OBCs (other than Muslims), and SC/STs. In all social groups, remittance-receiving

Table 13.7 Impact of remittance on budget allocation in socio-religious groups

	Food_ share		*Durables _ share*	*Education_ share*			*Health_ share*
Forward groups							
Remittances receipt	–0.059**		0.093**	–0.004			–0.030
	(0.029)		(0.036)	(0.030)			(0.028)
Observations	4554		4554	4554			4554
R^2	0.273		0.201	0.135			0.197
F-statistic	168.3		142.9	49.25			111.4
p-value	0		0	0			0
Kleibergen–Paap rk LM statistic	113		113	113			113
Kleibergen–Paap rk Wald *F*-statistic	130.3		130.3	130.3			130.3
Hansen *J* statistic	0		0	0			0
Muslims							
Remittances receipt		–0.135***	0.076***		0.079***	–0.020	
		(0.027)	(0.027)		(0.020)	(0.022)	
Observations		3518	3518		3518	3518	
R^2		0.125	0.143		0.086	0.088	
F-statistic		111.4	111.4		35.27	80.23	
p-value		0	0		0	0	
Kleibergen–Paap rk LM statistic		157.3	157.3		157.3	157.3	
Kleibergen–Paap rk Wald *F*-statistic		165.2	165.2		165.2	165.2	
Hansen *J* statistic		0	0		0	0	
OBCs							
Remittances Receipt		–0.086***	0.001		0.119***	0.204***	
		(0.028)	(0.030)		(0.021)	(0.031)	
Observations		5624	5624		5624	5624	

R^2	0.263	0.231	–0.025	0.065
F-statistic	213.5	210.4	52	92.16
p-value	0	0	0	0
Kleibergen–Paap rk LM statistic	194.5	194.5	194.5	194.5
Kleibergen–Paap rk Wald F-statistic	203.9	203.9	203.9	203.9
Hansen J statistic	0	0	0	0
SC/ST				
Remittances receipt	–0.225***	0.076	0.012*	0.137*
	(0.079)	(0.075)	(0.055)	(0.070)
Observations	1304	1304	1304	1304
R^2-squared	0.271	0.288	0.077	0.169
F-statistic	93.33	67.82	25.52	45.34
p-value	0	0	0	0
Kleibergen–Paap rk LM statistic	47.62	47.62	47.62	47.62
Kleibergen–Paap rk Wald F-statistic	45.22	45.22	45.22	45.22
Hansen J statistic	0	0	0	0

*** indicates significance at 1%, ** at 5%, and * at 10% level.
Standard errors are given in parenthesis.
Control variables used in the above analysis is not presented for convenience.
Data Source: KMS (2018).

households allocate a lower share of their budget to food expenditure compared to non-remittance-receiving households, while the other expenditure shares vary. OBC households that receive remittances allocate a significantly higher share to human capital expenditure (education and health) than their non-remittance-receiving counterparts, while in the case of Muslim households, this increased allocation is for durable goods and education. In the case of SC/ST households, remittances have a positive impact on human capital expenditure, though only weakly significant. Thus, it can be seen that remittances induce the allocation of income to human capital investments in households that are socially and economically disadvantaged, indicating that for these households, remittances act as transitory income. Thus, remittances, viewed as short-term income gains, are utilised to ensure investment in human capital for long-term improvement in living standards.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the impact of remittances on budget share allocation among households in Kerala. The Instrument Variable approach has been employed to address the endogeneity problem regarding remittance receipts. It was found that remittance leads to a reallocation of resources in the households. The budget share for food is lower in remittance-receiving households, while there is a significant positive effect on education and health expenditure shares. The effect of remittance receipts across economic and socio-religious groups is also examined to understand the heterogeneity in the impact. The study finds that the inflow of remittances is likely to improve human capital investment in lower-income groups as well as OBCs and Muslims in social groups. There is only a weak impact of remittance on human capital investments in the most socially disadvantaged groups, the SC/STs. The analysis reveals that when the income constraint is relaxed, socially and economically backward households invest in human capital, especially education. This also indicates that for these households, remittance acts as transitory income and is utilised to ensure investment in human capital for long-term improvement in living standards. Remittance impacts human capital expenditure, most significantly in education. The human capital investments can lead to improved skill stock in the economy, which can also increase productivity and increase income. Further analyses on the outcomes of increased household expenditure on human capital, especially education, can reveal whether it has translated into developmental impacts. A possible consequence of this differential allocation of remittances is that in the long run, it can have a positive effect of reducing both social and economic inequality.

Notes

1 Adams and Page (2005); Taylor et al. (2005); Yang and Martinez (2006); Adams, 2006a; Acosta et al. (2006); Loshin et al. (2010) among others.

2 The model was originally proposed by Working (1943) and further elaborated by Leser (1963). It has been utilised in similar studies, see Deaton and Muellbauer (1980), Adams (2006), and Adams and Cuecuecha (2010).
3 The use of binary measures for whether or not households receive remittances is justified by the fact that monetary values for remittances may be affected by measurement errors and is a common approach followed by Adams and Cuecuecha (2010), Castaldo and Reilly (2007), and Zarate-Hoyos (2004).

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14 COVID-19 and Return Migrant Construction Workers in Mumbai

Dhaval Monani, Sharadbala Joshi, Asima Sahu, and Anurita Bhatnagar

Introduction

Human beings have been on the move in search of new lands or in search of a better life. Migration, which is a global phenomenon and an important livelihood strategy for the poor, is also observed in India (WHO, 2008).

India, the second most populated country in the world, has about 18% of the world's population (World Bank, 2021) and its internal migration includes short-term, long-term, and seasonal migration. This includes inter-state and intra-state rural-to-urban migration. The most cited pull factors for inter-country or intra-country rural-to-urban migration are economic opportunities, better education and health facilities, higher wages, a higher standard of living, or the need to move away from situations of conflict or natural disasters. The push factors in rural areas are meagre employment opportunities, low wages, drought, lack of basic amenities, landlessness, and social factors.

As per the Census 2011, India had 456 million migrants in 2011 (38% of the population), out of which 210 million were rural–rural migrants (46%), 80 million were rural–urban migrants (17.5%), 80 million were urban–urban migrants (17.5%), and about 30 million (19%) were urban–rural migrants (Iyer, 2020).

Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, and Madhya Pradesh are the biggest source states, and Delhi, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, and Andhra Pradesh are the major destination states for inter-state migrants (Table 14.1).

Most of the migrants are daily-wage labourers who have travelled from other states in search of unskilled or semi-skilled jobs. Many migrants in urban areas are engaged as casual workers or are self-employed in informal activities or seasonal and temporary jobs. They are engaged as construction workers, plumbers, masons, vendors, hawkers, domestic servants, cooks, electricians, drivers, etc. (Jesline, 2021). As per estimates based on the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) 2016–17, there are over 74 million construction workers in the country (Saha Peer and Saha, 2021).

Migrants' Response to COVID-19-Related Lockdown

On the evening of 24 March 2020, the Government of India declared a nation-wide lockdown as a measure to contain the COVID-19 pandemic in the

DOI: 10.4324/9781003490234-14

Table 14.1 Share of migrant population by states of India

State	*Percentage of total population*
Uttar Pradesh	16.5
Maharashtra	9.3
Bihar	8.6
West Bengal	7.5
Andhra Pradesh	7.0
Madhya Pradesh	6.0
Tamil Nadu	6.0
Rajasthan	5.7
Karnataka	5.0
Gujarat	5.0
Odisha	3.5
Kerala	2.8
Jharkhand	2.7
Assam	2.6
Punjab	2.3
Chhattisgarh	2.1
Haryana	2.1
NCT of Delhi	1.4
Jammu & Kashmir	1.0
Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh	1.4
Northeast India except Assam	1.2
Goa, Puducherry, Chandigarh, and Sikkim	0.4
Andaman and Nicobar Islands (0.03%), Dadra and Nagar Haveli (0.03%), Daman and Diu (0.02%), and Lakshadweep (0.01%)	0.1

Source: Census 2011.

country. Thereafter, the nationwide lockdown was extended until 31 May. Consequently, educational institutions, factories, hospitality industries, small- and large-sized industrial and manufacturing units, and workplaces closed down, while vending and other informal sector activities too stopped. In addition, all transport – roadways, railways, and airways were suspended. The scale of the widespread disruption and challenges varied from state to state and city to city but disadvantaged the migrant workers, daily wagers, and other already vulnerable populations, the most. With no money, no job, growing apprehension about the pandemic and unsure about the duration of the lockdown, a mass movement of migrants started from urban areas towards their places of origin. Of the approximately 600,000 migrants whose family members were in the villages, some migrants took whatever private transport they could get to return to their families immediately after the lockdown was announced, others started walking to their hometowns. A large number of workers were in relief camps across multiple sectors (Iyengar, 2021).

The overarching concern at the time was the risk of the spread of viral infection from the urban "hotspots" to the villages. With thousands returning home to their villages, the rural areas did not have the infrastructure to

create institutional quarantine facilities for the returning migrants. In addition, there was a shortage of COVID-19 testing facilities. The apprehension of an explosion of COVID-19 cases in the villages led to several challenges for the migrants and administrators in the various states.

The phenomenon of "reverse migration" was assumed to be permanent during the lockdown months, with concerns being expressed about the re-migration of workers to cities. However, as the situation improved, the lockdown restrictions were eased and vaccination became available, and migrant workers slowly started moving back to the cities of pre-COVID employment. But were the cities really the same or was the pre-COVID situation long gone?

The Research

The primary research was designed to understand the post-COVID-19 lockdown situation of migrant construction workers in the "host cities" of Mumbai, Navi Mumbai, Panvel, and Vasai in Maharashtra. The number of respondents from the different urban areas was proportional to the slum population of the cities, and care was taken to ensure that the respondents were not from the same clusters and neighbourhoods.

According to the 2011 Census report, 54% (9.9 million of the 18.4 million) of Mumbai's population are migrants. Of the 500 migrant construction workers interviewed in these host cities, 217 were from Mumbai. This chapter is based on the findings from Mumbai.

Considering the COVID-19 restrictions, the methodology adopted for the study was to work with individuals and organisations that were already working with migrant construction workers in the selected study areas. The field research was conducted in collaboration with YUVA Urban Initiatives. A structured questionnaire-based survey was prepared for the migrant construction workers and the services of experienced enumerators were utilised to capture their responses.

The Migrants in Mumbai

Of the 217 migrant construction workers interviewed in Mumbai, 19% are intra-state migrants and 81% are inter-state migrants. 23% of the respondents are from Uttar Pradesh, followed by 21% from Bihar, 14% from Karnataka, and 11% from West Bengal. At 19%, the number of intra-state migrants interviewed was less than migrants from Bihar (Table 14.2).

Although the respondents were involved with varied types of work, at 37%, the highest percentage were brick/masonry workers from Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Uttar Pradesh (Table 14.3).

14% of the total respondents had been living in the city for less than 2 years, 15% for 3–4 years, and 21% for 6–10 years. 49% had been living in the city for 11 years or more.

Table 14.2 Places of origin of the migrants

State	*Percentages*
Uttar Pradesh	23
Bihar	21
Karnataka	14
West Bengal	11
Madhya Pradesh	4
Telangana, Uttarakhand, Assam, and Tamil Nadu	5
Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Puducherry, Gujarat, Delhi, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and Tripura	3
Maharashtra (intra-state migrants)	19

Source: Primary survey conducted by the Anant Centre for Sustainability.

Table 14.3 Type of work of construction workers

Type of Work	*% of Respondents*	*Top States Represented by Respondents*
Brick and related workers	37	Maharashtra (25%), Karnataka (24%), and Uttar Pradesh (11%)
Stone masons/cutters/carvers	12	Uttar Pradesh (41%), Karnataka(22%), and Bihar (19%)
Concrete	8	Bihar (39%) and Maharashtra (33%)
Building frame workers	8	Bihar (41%) and Uttar Pradesh (18%)
Plumbers and pipefitters	8	Maharashtra (39%) and Uttar Pradesh (33%)
Electricians	6	Uttar Pradesh (57%)
Plasterers	6	West Bengal (43%)
Building finishers	5	Bihar (90%)
Floor and tile setters	5	West Bengal (40%)
Carpenters	3	Bihar and UP
Welder and painters	1% each	Bihar and Uttar Pradesh
Total	100%	

Source: Primary survey conducted by the Anant Centre for Sustainability.

The Migrants Who Returned to Their Place of Origin

Following the nationwide lockdown of 21 days on 25 March 2020, 48% of the respondents returned to their villages, while 52% stayed in the city (Figure 14.1).

Around 51% of those who had been living in the city for up to 10 years returned to their villages. In contrast, 49% of the respondents who had been living in Mumbai for more than 11 years returned to their villages (Table 14.4).

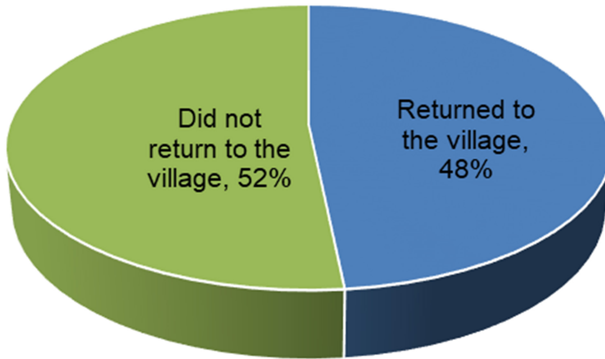

Figure 14.1 Percentages of reverse migration.

Source: Primary survey conducted by the Anant Centre for Sustainability.

Table 14.4 Migrants who returned to their village by period since migrating to Mumbai

No. of Years since Moved to Mumbai	*% of Total Respondents*	*% of Total Respondents Who Returned Home*
Less than 2 years	14	58
3–5 years	15	55
6–10 years	21	57
11 years or more	49	40
Total	100%	48% of total respondents

Source: Primary survey conducted by the Anant Centre for Sustainability.

Looking at the top four source states, 52% of the respondents returned home after the lockdown was declared. The highest percentage of respondents who returned home from the top four states had migrated to Mumbai over 11 years earlier (Table 14.5).

Reasons for Returning to Place of Origin

The top two reasons identified for returning to the villages following the COVID-19 lockdown were the "closure of construction site" (37%) and "lack of opportunities for earning an income" (36%). 23% identified "safety from the pandemic" and 15% identified "lack of basic necessities and a fear for shortage of essentials" as their reasons for returning to the village. 16% of the respondents stated, "their landlord asked them to vacate the rented house." 6% identified "concern for the well-being of family members in the

Table 14.5 Migrant construction workers from top four states

State/Place of Origin	*% of Migrants from Top 4 States*	*% of Migrants from State Who Returned Home*	*% of Migrants Who Returned Home by Duration for Which Living in Mumbai*				
			Less than 2 years	*3–5 years*	*6–10 years*	*11 years or more*	*% from Top 4 States*
Uttar Pradesh	32	42	19	14	33	33	27
Bihar	29	59	22	22	22	33	35
Karnataka	19	63	16	16	11	58	24
West Bengal	15	46	18	18	36	27	14
From top 4 states – who went back	**100**	**52**	19	18	24	38	**100**

Source: Primary survey conducted by the Anant Centre for Sustainability.

Table 14.6 Reasons for returning to the villages

Two Reasons for Returning to the Villages	*Percentages*
Construction site was closing down	37
No opportunities to earn an income	36
For safety from COVID-19	23
Landlord asked us to vacate the house	16
Lack of basic necessities – afraid of shortage of essentials	15
Concerned about the well-being of the family in the village	6
At the request of the family in the village	5
Other reasons	12

Source: Primary survey conducted by the Anant Centre for Sustainability.

village" as the reason for going back to their villages and 5% stated that their family wanted them to go back (Table 14.6).

Reasons for Returning to the City

Following the end of the lockdown at the end of May 2020, many migrant construction workers returned to the city. 52% of the respondents identified "the need to start earning again" as the primary reason for return and 47% returned because they had "no work in the village." 37% of the respondents returned to the city because they had identified opportunities for earning income and 16% returned due to the start of work at their construction sites. 9% of the migrant workers were called back by their respective contractors,

Table 14.7 Reasons for returning to the city

Reasons for Returning to the City	*Percentages*
I needed to start earning again	52
Had no work in the village	47
Identified opportunities for earning income	37
Work had started on construction site	16
Contractor called us back because work on site had restarted	9
We found that essential things were available	5
Felt safe despite COVID-19	3
Rent/deposit was with house owner	3

Source: Primary survey conducted by the Anant Centre for Sustainability.

5% returned because they learned that essential goods were available, and 3% returned because they felt safe despite COVID-19. 3% returned because previously paid "rent/deposit was with the house owner" and hence they had a place to stay (Table 14.7).

Perception of Changes Post-COVID

69% of the respondents stated that a lot has changed in their lives post the COVID-19 lockdown, while 16% felt that little changed in their lives and only 15% felt that nothing had changed post the COVID lockdown. Overall 27% of respondents stated that their pay had reduced following the lockdown (Table 14.8).

Of those who said a lot has changed in their lives post the COVID-19 lockdown, 57% stated that it was more difficult to get work, while 66% of those who said a little changed in their lives found it more difficult to get work (Table 14.9).

Conclusions

The COVID-19 pandemic had an extremely adverse impact on both the lives and livelihoods of migrant construction workers. Most significantly, among the reasons cited by respondents for leaving Mumbai to return to

Table 14.8 Perception of changes post-COVID

Changes – Post-COVID-19	*Percentages*
Same as before	15
Little has changed	16
Lots of change	69
Total	100

Source: Primary survey conducted by the Anant Centre for Sustainability.

Table 14.9 Changes post-COVID-19 lockdown

Changes – Post-COVID-19 Lockdown	*It Is more Difficult to Get Work*	*It Is Easier to Get Work*	*Pay Is Lesser than Before*	*Pay Is More than Before*
	Percentages			
Same as before	63	25	22	3
Little has changed	82	12	16	1
Lots has changed	87	9	39	3
Total	60%	6%	27%	2%

Source: Primary survey conducted by the Anant Centre for Sustainability.

their villages, "fear of the pandemic" was not highlighted. We believe that since the research was conducted 16 months after the lockdown and at a time when people had already gotten into a different routine and situation. The recollection of the hardships or otherwise experienced during the lockdown was muted.

Being informal workers, these migrants face job insecurity, variability in the number of working days, and wages. Though many of the workers continued living in Mumbai and many who had gone to their villages have returned post the lockdown, they continue to face hardships in terms of lesser numbers of work days, income insecurity, inconsistency of work, and overall reduced income. Thus, while the migrants are facing challenges in earning as much as before, the rising costs of living are adding to their financial stress.

The research highlights the situation being faced by migrant construction workers and the fact that they have a long way to go before their employment and financial situations stabilise enough for them to lead a comfortable life. There is therefore a need for measures to protect the migrants in case of unexpected pandemics or disaster situations that may arise in future.

Acknowledgements

This chapter is based on primary surveys and research conducted by the Anant Centre for Sustainability, Anant National University, Ahmedabad. The research has been partially supported by Terwilliger Center for Innovation in Shelter, Habitat for Humanity. The primary surveys have been facilitated by Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action (YUVA).

This chapter has benefited substantially from valuable inputs from Dr Miniya Chatterjee (Director, Anant Centre for Sustainability and Founding Director, Anant School for Climate Action, Anant National University), Mr Dhaval Monani (Director & Associate Professor, Affordable Housing, Anant National University), and Mr Prasanna Sriraman (Senior Specialist, Market Systems & Entrepreneurship, Terwilliger Center for Innovation in Shelter, Habitat for Humanity).

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15 Gulf Return Migrants in India

Socio-economic Reintegration of Gulf Returnees in Rural West Bengal

Snigdha Banerjee and T.V. Sekher

Introduction

Reintegration upon return can be addressed as a return migrant's participation in social, cultural, economic, and political life in their native country after staying in a foreign land for some period (Cassarino, 2008). As Ghosh (2000) described, a sustainable return is achieved when returnees can reintegrate into the community of return, often through taking on productive roles as members of such communities, without immediate inducement to leave again. Sustainable return, therefore, implies the successful reintegration of returnees. Reintegration must not occur within the first year of return. This process can take several months and even years to determine how well-adjusted an individual is upon return (Coniglio & Brzozowski, 2018; Hao et al., 2019). On reintegration into their own society after migration, experience becomes one of the most critical and challenging problems faced by return migrants (Sekher, 1997; Fejerskov & Zeleke, 2020). The severity of the issues faced by return migrants is also related to the amount of time they have been away from home. Returnees gain monetary achievement in their migration period. If that achievement is not utilised productively, it will not enhance their prestige and economic power after returning to their home country (Gilani, 1983). The declining social and economic status creates more adjustment problems in their community. Returnees' success is determined by their preparedness to return, which comprises both readiness and willingness. Readiness refers to accumulating required resources that facilitate the return and reintegration processes. Willingness emphasises how much the returnee wants to return. Spending a longer time in the country of emigration helps migrants to mobilise resources. Accumulating relevant information about the home country and more savings also plays a vital role in reintegrating well upon return (Nisrane, 2020). Gmelch (1980) identified two approaches to reintegration. He explained that returnees found a better job in the "Etic" perspective, participating in community-level work after returning. They maintained a good relationship with others, and they were very much satisfied with their return decision. However, returnees can contribute to the development of the sending country by investing their remittances and transferring the knowledge they accumulated in the host country (Wahba, 2015; Flahaux, 2020; Ianioglo et al., 2020). The other "Emic" perspective dealt with returnees' dissatisfaction after returning to their

DOI: 10.4324/9781003490234-15

original place. Returnees experience a "reverse cultural shock" (Eikass, 1979) and find "no place for them in home society" (Davison, 1968; Wang, 2020).

However, migration can promote occupational mobility for both emigrants and return migrants. This occupational mobility brings considerable changes in the life of migrants to accelerate their socio-economic reintegration process. Returnees are more prone to invest in changing occupations after return only if they have saved a significant amount of money to make the most profitable use of their limited resources. Changing occupation after the return is more dependent on the returnee's education level, acquiring skills from abroad, savings, duration of stay abroad, social ties, age, etc. (Czaika & Varela, 2015). However, there is a possibility of "de-skilling" where overseas workers lose previously held skills (Arif & Irfan, 1997; Sekher, 1999). Workers use their savings to set up their businesses upon return for enhancing their socio-economic status at their place of origin (Rhoades, 1978; Gmelch, 1980). Further to overcome their reintegration problem, they plan to re-migrate. This re-emigration can be an additional mission for sufficient resource mobilisation to solve financial problems (Boere, 2010).

There are many studies in the Indian context that deal with the reintegration process of the return migrants (Jabir, 2014; Rajan, 2012; Rogaly & Rafique, 2003; Sekher, 1999; Rajan & Akhil, 2019; 2022). Kerala has received much attention since the 1970s, given a large number of emigrants to the Gulf countries as a result of the oil boom and the subsequent flow of returnees from the same countries (Zachariah et al., 2001, 2006; Zachariah and Rajan, 2011). The majority of return migrants were unskilled and semi-skilled workers returning due to the loss of jobs because of the ongoing recession and nationalisation policies in the Gulf countries (Ansari, 2020). However, it is important to create a comprehensive framework for return migrants for their smooth reintegration by collaborating with state governments, which involves effective management of the skills earned by migrants in the host country and long-term financial assistance for reintegration (Rajan & Akhil, 2019, 2022; Rajan & Pattath, 2021, 2022; Rajan & Arokkiraj, 2022). However, the importance of return migration on rural life has not been studied extensively. The existing literature emphasises more on developed countries where the return of high-skilled migrants results in brain gain. The present study in the Murshidabad district of West Bengal focuses on low-skilled workers with temporary contracts and, thus, certain to return. The study focuses on the socio-economic reintegration of the Gulf return migrants and various other socio-economic problems encountered while reintegration into their own society after return from the Middle East.

Material and Methods

Murshidabad district contributes to the highest proportion (according to the MOIA, 2019, 9616 ECR emigrants to the Gulf countries from the Murshidabad district) of temporary emigration and return migration from

the Gulf countries in West Bengal (Kumar, 2013; Ali, 2018). For this study, data were collected from June to November 2019 from the Murshidabad district of West Bengal. Murshidabad district has a population of 1.7 million and consists of 5 Subdivisions (Jangipur, Behrampore, Kandi, Lalbagh, and Domkal) and 26 blocks. Based on the preliminary visit to the areas and in consultation with local people, seven villages from three blocks, having a high concentration of Gulf migrants, were selected. The villages having a higher number of Gulf migrants also have a higher number of returnees. From the selected villages, in discussion with the local people, Gulf returnee households were listed and selected for this interview. Information was collected from the returnees themselves through face-to-face interviews. A structured interview schedule was used to collect the data. The respondents who had worked in any of the Middle East countries for at least two years and returned to their villages at least one year prior to the survey and had no immediate plans to migrate again at the time of the survey were considered for interview. A total of 330 Gulf returnees were personally interviewed by administering the structured interview schedules. However, no female returnees could be found at the time of the survey; hence, the analysis was limited to male returnees only. The schedule focused on the socio-economic reintegration of returnees and their coping strategies. In addition, some key informant interviews (with local leaders, head/Sarpanch of the village, bank manager, and teachers), and a few Case Studies of Gulf returnees have been conducted for a better understanding. Informed consent was taken from the Gulf returnees before conducting the interview. Bivariate analysis was used to explore the extent of returnees' preparedness, skill acquisition from abroad, and integration process in the origin society after their return.

Socio-demographic Characteristics of Gulf Returnees

Table 15.1 presents the socio-demographic and economic characteristics of the return migrants in the selected blocks of Murshidabad district of West Bengal. On average, the current age of return migrants was 35 years, the age at first emigration was 28 years, and the age at the time of return was 32 years. Emigrants migrated to the Gulf countries at a young age and on a contractual job which is generally valid for two to five years. Hence, the expiry of a job contract often results in migrants returning to their villages at a young age. With regard to the education level of the migrants, a higher proportion (40.4%) of returnees were illiterate or did not complete their primary level of education, while about 34.8% of respondents attained a primary level of education, and 20.6% of the respondents had a secondary level of education. Most of the respondents migrated to the Gulf countries only once (87.3%) whereas 12% of returnees migrated twice to Gulf countries. Around 91.5% of returnees reported that seeking employment in the Gulf countries was their primary reason for emigration. Further, 88.5% of returnees listed the accumulation of savings as their second reason for emigration.

Table 15.1 Socio-demographic and economic characteristics of Gulf returnees

Background Variables	*Percentage (%)*
Mean age of returnees (at the time of survey)	35 years
Mean age at first migration	28 years
Mean age of respondents at the time of return	32 years
Religion	
Hindu	7.3
Muslim	92.7
Current marital status	
Unmarried	16.4
Married	82.7
Widow/divorced/separated	0.9
Education	
Illiterate and primary not completed	40.3
Primary completed	34.8
Secondary completed	20.6
Higher secondary and above	4.24
Reasons for emigration	
Seeking employment	91.5
Accumulation of savings	88.5
Meeting the household expenditure	39.1
Others (construction of houses, meeting the marriage cost, etc.)	36.7
Number of emigrations abroad	
Once	87.3
Twice	12.1
Thrice	0.6
Reasons for return to the villages	
Low wages in the Middle East	60
Expiry of job contract	54.4
Feeling lonely/missed family	32
Poor living and working conditions	17.6
Others (accomplishment of migration goal, taking care of elderly, etc.)	24.3
Desire to emigrate again to Gulf countries	
Yes	56.1
No	43.9
Duration of working abroad	
2–5 years	88.5
6–9 years	8.5
>9 years	3

Source: Primary data collected by the first author.

Around 39% of returnees stated meeting household expenses as their third most important reason for emigration to the Gulf countries. Respondents provided multiple reasons for their return. The majority of the migrants stated low wages (60%) as their primary reason for return followed by the expiry of a job contract (54.2%), feeling lonely/missed family (32%), worst living and working conditions (17.6%), and harsh behaviour of the employer (12.4%). About 88.5% of the respondents stayed for two to five years at the

place of destination, whereas about 10% stayed for more than five years in Gulf countries. More than half of the return migrants planning to migrate again (56%) to the Gulf countries, if they get an opportunity.

Preparedness to Return

Around 16% of returnees were mentally prepared to return to their villages, while 84% of returnees were not prepared for their return as they encountered several difficulties during their stay (Table 15.2). The Case Studies of Gulf returnees clearly illustrate the lack of preparedness to return.

> I used to work in a Saudi Arabian company, where my duty was to process the dates and pack them. They used to give me only 700 Riyal per month though it was received very irregularly. I use to do extra work for other company. But it was not allowed, one day police caught me

Table 15.2 Readiness and preparedness for the return to India

Variables	*No. of respondents*	*Percentage*
Readiness for return		
Ready	51	15.4
Not ready	279	84.6
Skills acquired abroad		
Yes	89	27
No	241	73
Type of skills acquired		
Technical (OT helper)	6	1.8
Accounting	2	0.6
Carpenter	8	2.4
Housekeeping	2	0.6
Marketing/sales	12	3.6
Driving	11	3.3
Cooking	19	5.8
Construction/painter skill	17	5.2
Others (electrician, mirror work, bookkeeping, CT)	12	3.6
Average amount of remittances sent per month (Rs.)	12881	
utilisation of remittances after return (since there are multiple responses, the percentage is more than 100)		
Buying agricultural land	224	67.9
Construction/repair building	301	91.1
For education of children	7	2.1
Marriage cost of children/ family members	65	19.7
Medical expenses of family members	22	6.7
Repayment of debts	24	7.2
To set up business	71	21.5
To meet emigration cost of family members	102	30.9

Source: Primary data collected by the first author.

> and sent me to jail for this. Within a few months, they deported me to India. It was good that I came back safely, but my migration was not at all successful. Even I could not save desired money.
>
> (31 years old Gulf returnee)

Very few (27%) returnees had acquired some skills while working abroad. Returnees gained skills in various sectors like carpentry (2.42%) construction (5.15%), driver (3.33%), salesman (3.63%), cooking (5.75%), etc.

> My employer provided me with training in carving wooden furniture, and within a few weeks, I was able to manage this work. In the beginning, I made variety of stools, other small wooden things. I worked for eight long years in this field. Over time, I learned to carve a bed, dining table, windows and all other wooden stuff. I learned this skill very well. After my return, I opened up my business of wooden furniture in the village.
>
> (Gulf returnee – worked as a carpenter in Dubai)

Returnees invested their remittances in various purposes like buying agricultural lands and vehicles, constructing buildings, investing in children's education, and health, setting up a business, and repayment of their debt. On average, migrants used to send around Rs. 12,881 per month to their families. It was observed that the remittances were mainly invested in constructing or repairing houses (91%). About 67% of returnees mentioned that they invested their money in buying agricultural land, while around 31% of migrants invested their savings in their family member's/son's emigration process.

> I worked for four years in Saudi Arabia. It was a good decision to emigrate to the Gulf. We were five sisters and three brothers. I took the responsibility for meeting the entire cost of my sisters' marriage. All these things were possible only because of my income. After I returned from Saudi Arabia, I bought a land, and leased a pond. Now I have started a business to sell fish in the market. I used to send the remittances to my mother which she utilized to build a good house. Now we have everything and lead a decent life. I am thankful to God.
>
> (Gulf returnee – aged 35 years)

Socio-economic Status of Returnees before Emigration and after Return

Nearly half of the returnees felt that they have enough savings to sustain their life in a better way. Participation in community activities after the return has increased by around 26%. The percentage of return migrants who donate for social work (72.7%) and provide monetary help to others (60.3%) has also increased tremendously after the return. About 23.9% of returnees reported that they had limited contact with friends and family after the return. More than half of the returnees (55.8%) said that they felt unwanted and valueless

in their own family after the return. Further, it was observed that more number of returnees were self-employed (22.3%) after return in comparison to before emigration. At the same time, the share of investment in land (55.4%) and construction of houses (90.9%) have increased after the return (Table 15.3). Around 82% of returnees stated that they cleared their emigration debt after emigration. Approximately two-thirds of the Gulf returnees achieved moderate economic gain (63.9%) and social (63.0%) status. Around 13.3% and 19.4% of returnees had a low social and economic status. Further, about 22.7% and 17.6% of returnees achieved a better level of economic and social status. In every aspect, the level of involvement has increased after return in comparison to before emigration.

Satisfaction and Challenges Faced by Returnees in Reintegration to Their Village Society

Table 15.4 presents the experiences of returnees. About 46% of returnees reported that they were satisfied and happy with their return decision.

Table 15.3 Socio-economic conditions of returnees before emigration and after return: comparative analysis

	Before Emigration		*After Return*	
Factors	*Frequency*	*Percentage*	*Frequency*	*Percentage*
Social involvement				
Participation in community activities	8	2.42	87	26.36
Political/religion participation	6	1.82	16	4.85
Feel unwanted in family	104	31.52	184	55.76
Lesser contact with friends/relatives	25	7.58	79	23.94
Helping others monetarily	13	3.94	199	60.3
Donate money for social purposes	31	9.39	240	72.73
Economic condition				
Unemployed	89	26.9	45	13.6
Self-employed	7	2.12	65	22.34
Invested in land	0		183	55.45
Housing type (pucca)	3	0.91	300	90.91
Have savings	2	0.61	172	52.12
Repaid emigration cost	–	–	272	82.42
Level of involvement after return	**Economic Integration**		**Social Integration**	
Lower	44	13.33	64	19.39
Moderate	211	63.94	208	63.03
Higher	75	22.73	58	17.58

Source: Primary data collected by the first author.

Table 15.4 Satisfied with decision to return and challenges faced for reintegration after return

Variables	*No. of respondents*	*Percentage*
Satisfied with return decision		
Yes	153	46.4
No	177	53.6
Reasons for happiness		
Earned enough	26	17.0
United with family	16	10.5
Set up their business/ job	37	24.2
Able to take care of family members	17	11.1
Happy to back in the village	57	37.2
Challenged faced for reintegration at origin		
Loss of income /lack of job	117	66.1
Loss of networks/ friendships	4	2.3
Family is not happy on my return	43	24.3
Deteriorating in standard of living	13	7.3

Source: Primary data collected by the first author.

Among various reasons for happiness, about 17% of returnees felt that they had earned the desired money from abroad, 10% of returnees wanted to unite with their family, whereas 11% wanted to take care of their elderly. About 24% of returnees had set up their own business at the place of origin, while 37.2% of returnees felt happy to return to their villages. On the other hand, 54% of returnees stated that they were not happy or satisfied with their return as they confronted several difficulties after their return. Around 66% of returnees stated about the loss of job/income after the return, while 24.3% stated that their family is not happy. Approximately 7% of returnees felt that their standard of living got deteriorated after the return, while 2.3% reported a loss of networks/friendships (2.3%) as the main challenge for their reintegration after the return.

Challenges Faced in Economic Reintegration

Returnees faced many financial challenges that hindered their reintegration process in their origin society. Sizeable proportions were unemployed (27%) before emigration, but this percentage has reduced to 13.6% after the return, because, firstly, the unemployment situation is more common in the origin place (Table 15.5) and, secondly, the most important reason was the changing attitudes and aspirations of returnees. They considered their previous job as a low-status occupation and hesitated to do the same job after returning. Many returnees aspire to improve their socio-economic status after the return. They believe that if they do the same job after returning, it would be very shameful. They would be considered a failure by others. This kind of attitude was more common among the young returnees. Simultaneously

Table 15.5 Occupations before emigration and after return from the Middle East

Before Emigration	*After Return from the Middle East*							
Sectors	*Manufacture*	*Construction*	*Self-employed*	*Agriculture*	*Daily Wage*	*Unemployed*	*Driver*	*Total*
Manufacturing	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2 (0.6)
Construction	0	15	2	3	0	1	0	21 (6.4)
Self-employed	0	1	6	0	0	0	0	7 (2.1)
Agriculture	0	17	27	117	5	10	10	186 (56.4)
Daily wage	0	2	4	9	3	4	1	23 (7.0)
Unemployed	1	10	22	13	2	30	11	89 (27.0)
Driver	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2 (0.6)
Total	1 (0.3)	46 (13.9)	64 (19.4)	142 (43.0)	10 (3.0)	45 (13.6)	22 (6.7)	330

Source: Primary data collectedby the first author.

due to their low educational attainments, most of them were engaged as unskilled/semi-skilled workers abroad (70%). After returning, they were bound to work in the agricultural field (43%) and earned very little to maintain a good standard of living (around 60% of them earned less than Rs. 15,000 per month after their return).

The study found that return migrants faced challenges related to utilisation of acquired skills in their villages. As one of the return migrants stated:

> I was engaged as a salesman in a shopping mall in Dubai. I always used to dress in a good manner and earned quite good money. After my return, I was unable to find any suitable job hence now I am a jobless person. I am planning to migrate again within 2–3 years. Dubai is far better than my village.
>
> (30-year-old Gulf returnee)

Low job opportunity in the place of origin was the main problem in the economic reintegration. Many returnees were planning to emigrate again in order to earn more. About 35% of returnees achieved upward mobility in their occupation after their return. While most (46%) had no change in their occupation status, about 19% of the returnees had experienced downward occupational mobility after their return.

> I paid Rs 50,000 to the recruiting agent for getting a work visa in the Gulf country. I used to work as an electrician in Saudi Arabia. I joined my company as a trainer, and over the time, I had acquired the required skills. I used to earn 1500 Riyals every month. After eight years, I returned to my village. With my earnings, I renovated my old house and bought some agricultural land. But now, I could not find any electrician job in my village. For the past two years, I am working as a farmer. Though the savings from Saudi Arabia made a lot of development in our household, I have forgotten all my skills (electrical work).
>
> (45-year-old Gulf return migrant)

The noticeable feature of the activity status among the Gulf returnees was self-employment. Before emigration, only 2% of them were engaged in any self-employed work. Returnees invest their money in small enterprises. It resulted in a sizeable increase in self-employment (20%) among the returnees (Table 15.5). A few returnees, who were earlier unemployed, also started their own business. To maintain a good lifestyle, they run their small business (grocery shops, betel stalls, chicken firms, packaged water supply, etc.). The low level of literacy among returnees acts as a hindrance to get a better-skilled job. But, no one among the returnee was a prominent entrepreneur nor had a sufficient amount of money to start a small industrial unit where they could also employ others.

Further access to start-up loans for returnees was also a significant economic reintegration challenge in this study. Many returnees wanted to start their own small business, but they had no significant savings, or even some of them did not prefer to invest all of their savings in the business. Many returnees could not start their own business and wait for some suitable job after their return. A key informant (KI – an employee at State Bank of India, Beldanga Block) stated that returnees could not access loans with their minimum savings and income. On the other hand, the interest amount is also very high, and many of them could not re-pay it. In this situation, they are not allowed to get loans.

Challenges Faced in Social Reintegration upon Return

When migrants return, they are welcomed based on their contributions and remittances towards family. However, it becomes a challenge when the family members expect more contributions. When returnees cannot fulfil the demands of their family members, then it will lead to conflict and unhappiness.

> When I returned home after working 14 years in Saudi Arabia, I felt that my wife and sons were really not happy to see me. When I used to send remittances, then I was more respected in my family. I felt very bad when they asked me when I am emigrating again. Now I want to settle down here (village), but they wanted me to migrate again.
>
> (41-year-old Gulf returnee)

Peer pressure also plays a vital role in terms of social integration. When returnees saw their friends and relatives who were still abroad and sending a fair amount of remittances to their family, returnees were under pressure, and to overcome this situation, they plan to re-migrate again. It was observed that around 54% of return migrants planned to re-emigrate to the Gulf countries again.

> My migration journey was not successful. I used to work in a farmhouse there (Saudi Arabia). I felt so frustrated, and somehow, I managed to return to my village. The whole period was a nightmare for me. After return also, I was feeling upset seeing others (my friends, relatives) doing well. I was not able to support my family. I have to migrate again, anyhow.
>
> (Unsuccessful Gulf returnee, aged 27 years)

Villagers have a misconception about the Gulf returnees. They think that returnees have a fair amount of money and then they return to the origin place. Gulf migrants were more affluent than other non-migrants. Villagers expect a lot from the Gulf returnees in case of providing monetary support in

the construction of the Mandir, Mosque, etc. Although many of the returnees contribute (60%) in this aspect and help others monetarily (72.3%), all returnees were not capable of doing so, which is a significant challenge in social integration.

> Many villagers, especially the Gulf returnees, donate a good amount of money in building Madrasa, Masjid and other social activities. I also donated a little amount of money to install a water connection in the village masjid. But they expected more from me. I could not donate big amount. If Allah wants, he will again send me abroad and make me donate more.
>
> (Gulf returnee, aged 41 – Sahajadpur Block)

When returnees could not fulfil the demand of their family members and villagers, they got frustrated and isolated, including from their own relatives. To overcome this situation, they tried hard to emigrate again to Gulf countries, though not with success.

> Whenever I saw my elder brother living his life happily with his family after return, the feeling of jealousy would enfold me always. I always felt, what wrong I did, how would I manage my family? I have two daughters; I have to arrange their marriage. How will all this be accomplished? I was angry with myself every time and used to spend sleepless nights. I felt worthless in my own home.
>
> (Gulf returnee, aged 37 years, – Kandi Block)

Discussions and Conclusions

The study examined the socio-economic reintegration of the Gulf return migrants in their own villages. Based on the findings, the majority of the migrants returned to Murshidabad district were unprepared with no significant accumulation of savings to facilitate their readjustment process. Very few returnees acquired some skills from abroad, like carpenter, driver, sales boy, cooking, construction work, etc. The study revealed that returnees encountered unemployment or lack of suitable jobs at their place of origin, which was one of the major hurdles for their economic reintegration. To maintain a good lifestyle, they need to earn a good amount of income. In this situation, remittances play a vital role in uplifting the socio-economic status of the migrants. They invested their remittances in purchasing lands, assets, constructing buildings, and other purposes. Few returnees also invested in the education of their children, while few invested a good amount of money in sending their son or relatives to the Gulf countries. Even those who started small businesses/enterprises after returning to their villages are not very successful in making them profitable. It is expected that good members of these

ventures will likely fail. Not only returnees faced economic challenges but also encountered many social isolations. However, most studies discussed only the positive impact of return migration on village society (Hao et al., 2019; Lin & Li, 2020; Yang et al., 2020), ignoring the negative impacts. Returnees financially contributed towards the construction of worship places and other social activities in their villages. They helped fellow villagers monetarily and also influenced them to take part in community activities. The socio-economic integration index revealed that approximately two-thirds of the Gulf returnees achieved a moderate level of economic and social integration. Less than half of the returnees reported that they were satisfied and happy with their return decision as some of them earned enough money or wanted to be united with their family and take care of elderly parents. However, half of the return migrants interviewed stated that they were not happy and not satisfied with their return as they faced several difficulties in their place of origin. Lack of a job, low income, feeling useless, and peer pressure were the main challenges for readjustment after return. These challenges have an impact on their ability to readjust to their own communities. In this study, we found that the returnee's inability to successful readjustment triggers further emigration.

Effective reintegration of Gulf returnees needs collaboration and cooperation of government institutions and communities. However, the findings of the qualitative analysis illustrate that the Gulf returnees in the study villages could not avail such kind of rehabilitation and reintegration schemes. Lack of awareness and skills of returnees are the main barriers to their successful socio-economic reintegration in the villages. There is a need to focus on the right policies in the home country for the encouragement of returnees to invest their savings and skills in a productive way (Rajan & Akhil, 2019). Providing useful information related to the job market is a crucial factor for successful reintegration. However, the provision of vocational training adapted to employment prospects can also play an important role in the smooth reintegration and rehabilitation process of return migrants. Lack of economic opportunities coupled with changing aspirations for higher social status results in a situation in which most Gulf returnees find it difficult to adjust. They are also concerned with whether their own family members and village at large consider them as a "failure" in comparison to other "successful" Gulf returnees. The only way to escape from this situation is to re-emigrate again, though there is no assurance that they will be "successful" in the future.

Emigration was goal-oriented to attain economic gains, but a lack of savings and unwise spending led to a depletion of economic assets over the years. The desire to gain social status after the return was also not possible due to lower education, skills, and lack of jobs. Even those who started self-employment ventures were affected by a lack of entrepreneurship. Most Gulf returnees are caught in a "trap" of higher aspirations on the one hand and

inadequate earnings on the other, and, unfortunately, they have no concrete plans to overcome this desperate situation.

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16 Do Individuals' Life-Cycle Earnings and Consumption Differ in Migrant and Non-migrant Households in Rural Areas?

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Introduction

In developing countries, labour migration is a predominant phenomenon and is crucial to rural households' economies. As migration occurs for economic reasons, the major gain from migration is in terms of an increase in household income from remittances (Lu, 2013). However, scholars have mixed opinions on the economic implication of migration development in sending areas. One school of thought argues that remittances sent by the migrants significantly help to mitigate financial risk and facilitate income diversification within families (Oberai & Singh, 1983; Ellis, 1998; World Bank, 2006; Biswas & Mallick, 2021) and meet daily consumption, health, education, and other essential expenses (Mishra et al., 2022; Das et al., 2020; Sunny et al., 2020). Increasing household income, the ability to manage consumption, and access to financing for beginning a new initiative through remittance are the key ways that migration reduces poverty (Mohanty et al., 2016). Because of the important contribution of remittances to welfare, it has been argued that remittances work as a safety net for relatively poor areas (Jones, 2008). However, another school of thought rejects the argument and concludes that remittances are consumed instead of invested and thus are not put to productive use in migrants' sending areas (Durand & Massey, 1992; Taylor et al., 1996). The migration of individuals in their survival does not lift them upward in social mobility and prosperity (Breman, 1985; Mukherji, 1991).

The impact of migration and remittances on development differs across the localities and types of migration (Taylor, 1999). The remittances from international migrants comprise a large sum of the amount used for consumption for investment and to improve the standard of living of the families. They directly or indirectly help in reducing poverty (Adams & Page, 2005). However, the remittances sent by rural–urban migrants are relatively poor and intermittent in comparison to emigrants (Connell et al., 1976) and are mostly used for the purpose of consumption (Shah, 1998). This enables poor families to rise above the poverty line but still remain at the subsistence level.

DOI: 10.4324/9781003490234-16

The present study adopts an individual life-cycle approach to understand the contribution of remittances in the household economy of the economically backward and migrant-sending region. The life-cycle approach is a widely used framework for modelling people's savings. The basic idea of this approach is that individuals save and accumulate wealth during their working years and dis-save (spending from savings) during periods of lower income, such as retirement (Banks et al., 1998). Overall, the amount of capital owned by any individual at any given moment is a combination of saving over time and windfall gains, including those from inherited wealth (Lydall, 1955). Individuals in the lowest income group rely on their earnings during their working years to support themselves (Browning & Crossley, 2001; Lusardi et al., 2017) and tend to have limited savings to withdraw during retirement. During retirement, they may depend on a meagre pension, including social pension programmes, or choose to continue working. However, individuals in the high-income tier tend to save during their economically active years and often benefit from inheritances. However, they typically engage in limited dissaving (withdrawing savings) unless they experience a significant financial shock (Holzmann et al., 2019).

The age period of economic independence or "life-cycle surplus" and the age period of economic dependency can be identified by allocating all categories of income and consumption by age (Tofoska et al., 2022). The age period of economic independence refers to the stage of life when individuals are typically self-sufficient and financially independent. They rely on their own income and resources to meet their needs and expenses. Savings take an erratic course when income increases from youth to middle age and then drops. Traditionally, the age period of economic independence has been associated with adulthood, typically starting in the early to mid-20s. While the age periods of economic dependency refer to the stages of life when individuals rely on others for financial support and are not yet self-sufficient in meeting their own needs and expenses (Hammer et al., 2015; Istenič et al., 2018; Pekarek, 2018). These periods typically occur during childhood and old age.

Indian Context

According to the 2011 Census of India, approximately 450 million people, which accounts for nearly 2/5th of the country's population, engage in internal migration (Rajan & Bhagat, 2021). While marriage migration dominates domestic migration in India, a significant number of individuals, particularly males, migrate for the purpose of work or employment. With its high youth population and unemployment in India, migration often starts during early adulthood (Rajan, 2013; UNDESA, 2016). A significant number of females migrate around the age of 20 primarily due to marriage (Abbas & Verma, 2014). The male migration peaks between the ages of 15 and 35 driven by work opportunities (Bhagat & Keshri, 2020). Inter-state migration is predominantly driven by youth aged 20–29, accounting for one-fifth of total migrants.

Migration occurs from less developed and agro-based regions like eastern Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, southern Madhya Pradesh, western Orissa, and southern Rajasthan to more developed states like Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Punjab as a manifestation of regional disparity. According to the 2011 Census, 20.9 million, people left their home states from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, which together accounted for the largest number of migrants in India.

Since independence, poor infrastructure, unemployment, and a seasonal agriculture-based economy have triggered millions of working-age population to move out of the state or country for employment and survival. As a result, migration to support oneself has become common in Uttar Pradesh, where the male migration rate for employment-related reasons is more than double the national average. This illustrates the state's population's reliance on migration for economic survival (Sarkar, 2020). Although Uttar Pradesh and Bihar are dominated by internal labour migration, however, international migration particularly low or semi-skilled also increased significantly. According to the Ministry of External Affairs (2019), out of the top districts with international migration 28 were from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar which constitute 45% of total international migration from India (Bhattacharjee, 2020). In the states of high out-migration, these two states only received 4.4% total India's remittance, as most of the migrants worked for survival and agreed to work at a minimal price. According to Kapur (2020) in Delhi, more than half of India's daily wage and migrant population earns a meagre amount ranging from Rs 200 to 400 per day ($2.6-5.2). This falls significantly below the recommended minimum wage of Rs 692, Rs 629, and Rs 571 for skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled workers, respectively. In consequence, 50% of the migrant households in Bihar and 30% in eastern UP receive less than Rs 12,000 in a year, and the majority of these remittances are used in daily household consumptions and medical and loan repayment rather than savings and investment (Roy et al., 2021).

Remittances from migrants contribute to the economic upliftment of the migrant-sending households or they just remain at subsistence is the key question. There are a few studies that look at the income and consumption gap among households with and without out-migrants and emigrant members. The present study adopts an individual life-cycle approach, to understand the contribution of remittances in the household economy of eastern Uttar Pradesh (henceforth used as eastern UP) and Bihar. We examine the patterns of income and consumption throughout the course of a person's life cycle by migration status of the household members to determine the economic effects of household members' out-migration and emigration. Firstly, the life-cycle age pattern of income and consumption, separately for the individuals from non-migrant households, households with international migrants, and households with internal migrants, is identified. Secondly, we examine the occupation pattern of individuals by migration status of the households. And lastly, we examine the relationship between aggregate income and consumption expenditure for individuals after controlling for other factors in rural eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

Methodology

Data source: The present study used data from a migration survey titled "Causes and Consequences of Out-Migration from Middle Ganga Plain," conducted in rural areas of Bihar and eastern Uttar Pradesh[1] by the International Institute for Population Sciences, Mumbai (an Autonomous Organization of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, GoI) in 2018 and 2019. This survey data was collected from 4056 migrant and non-migrant households and covers several socio-economic aspects of migration and left-behind families. This paper uses household rosters, remittances and their use, food security and consumption, health schemes and programmes, possession of beneficiary cards, etc.

Methods: The age-specific gap between consumption and labour income was used to calculate a person's life-cycle economic saving or dissaving. An individual goes through stages of financial saving and dissaving over the course of their lifetime. The individual is in the period of economic saving when labour income surpasses consumption and in the dissaving stage when consumption exceeds labour income.

Children and elderly people consume more than they make from their jobs; therefore, they must get their money for financing consumption from their parents' spending, past savings, government assistance, borrowing, etc. These are the stages of economic dissaving. People who are in the workforce make more money than they spend, so they save the extra money for their children and retirement. This is the stage of the life cycle of economic saving. In this chapter, the life-cycle labour income and consumption gap is represented with the following flow identity

$$(Y_x + R_x) - C_x \equiv S_x + b_x$$

where Y_x represents labour income, R_x represents income from the receipt of remittances from the migrated family members, C_x represents consumption, S_x represents saving, and b_x represents consumption financed through borrowing or past saving or ancestral asset. If C_x is less than $(Y_x + R_x)$, then S_x will be positive, and b_x will be zero. On the other hand, if C_x is more than $(Y_x + R_x)$, then S_x will be zero and b_x will be positive, which is referred to as dissaving in our analysis.

Furthermore, a simple linear regression analysis has been performed in order to identify the functions of consumption expenditure and the specific relationship between aggregate income and food and non-food consumption expenditure.

Results

Age-Specific Labour Income

The labour income of each individual of the household has been calculated considering earnings from all sources like salary, business and trade,

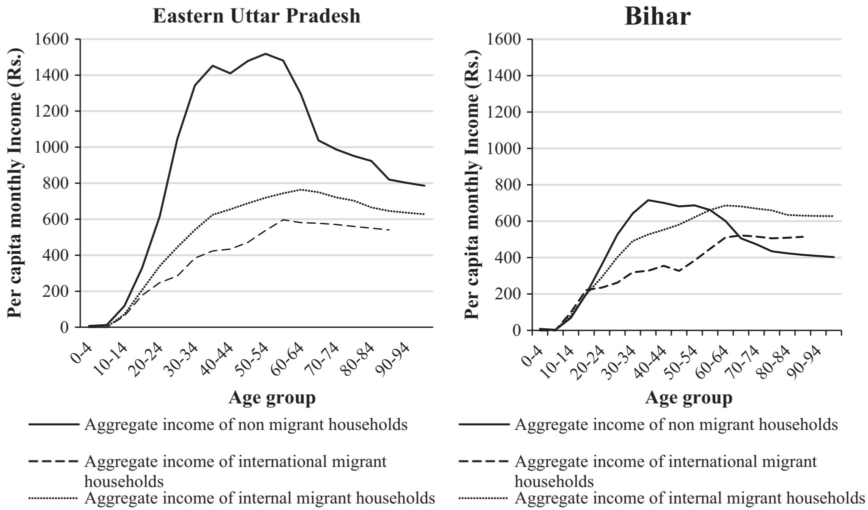

Figure 16.1 Age-specific monthly income for individuals of non-migrant household, international migrant household and internal migrant household in Eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, 2018–2019.

self-employment, non-agricultural pursuits, MGNREGA, livestock, and other sources. It does not include migrants and remittances received by the households. Figure 16.1 shows how the labour income age profile differs for persons living in households with internal and international migrants as well as without any migrants in study areas of eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Broadly, individuals have no income in either state until the age of 14 years. Labour income of the younger individual starts early at 15 but remains low. The middle-age group witnesses a significant rise in their income, which remains stable till the age of 50–54 and begins to fall as they get older. This is true for both households with and without migrants; however, the labour income remains low in migrant households without remittances. In both areas, non-migrant households have much higher labour income across all age trajectories compared to internal and international migrant households. However, at every stage of the earning process, workers in all three types of households in eastern Uttar Pradesh make much more money than those in Bihar when the two states are compared.

Thus, in the absence of remittances, labour income in internal migrant households was much lower and lowest in international migrant households compared to non-migrant households. However, after adding remittances to the labour income, there is a substantial increase in income in both types of migrant households; however, the rise is much sharper in the international migrant households (Figure 16.2). The labour incomes of individuals in the older age group of households without migrants' declined more compared to those in households with migrants.

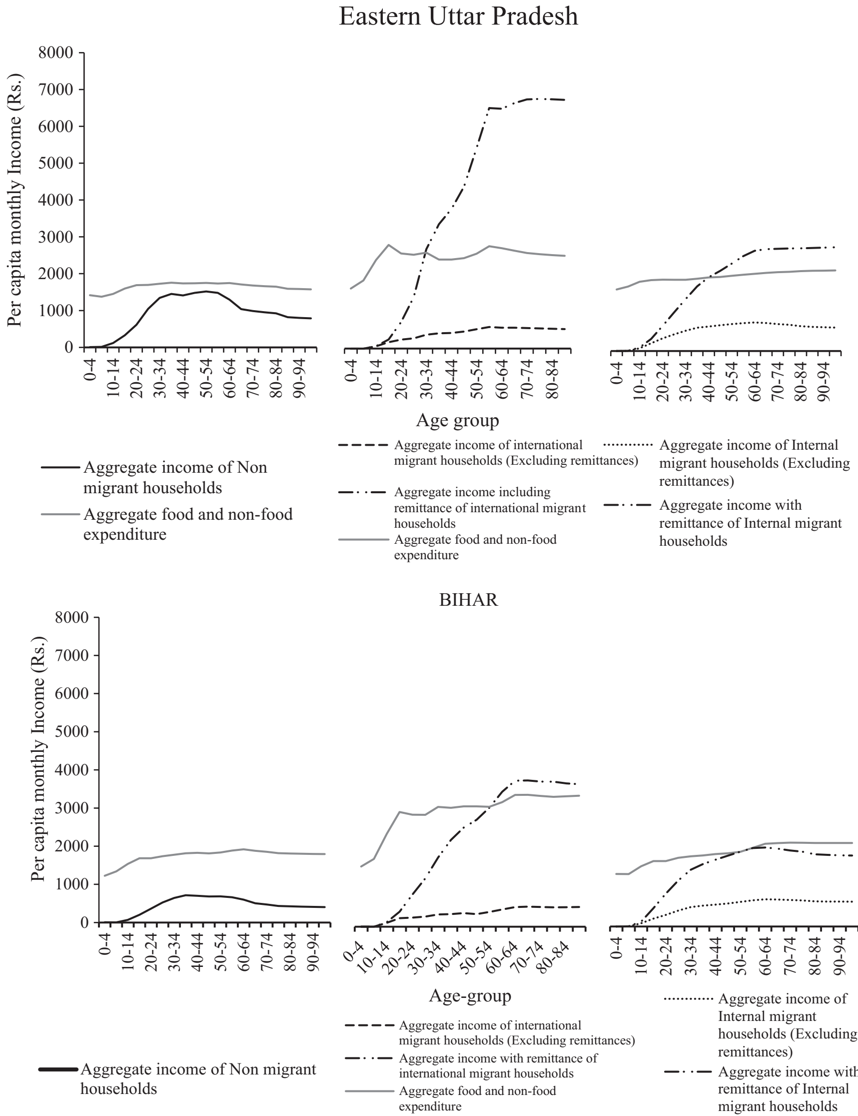

Figure 16.2 Life-cycle age-specific aggregate income (labour income plus remittance) and consumption (food and non-food expenditure) gap for individuals of households without migrated members, with international and internal migrant members in eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, 2018 and 2019.

Life-Cycle Age-Specific Aggregate Income and Consumption Gap

Life-cycle age-specific aggregate income refers to the total income earned by individuals within specific age groups over their lifetime. Remittances sent by the emigrant/out-migrant household members have a significant impact on the income of the household. Therefore, age-specific aggregate income was

calculated after adding remittances to the labour income and compared with the age-specific consumption (including food and non-food expenditures) pattern. Figure 16.2 illustrates how life-cycle age-specific aggregate income and consumption changes across different life stages in non-migrant households and migrant households with international emigrants in eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. The figure clearly illustrates that after adding remittances to the labour income, there is a substantial increase in income in both types of migrant households; however, rise is much sharper in international migrant households. However, the age-specific consumption maintains a relatively stable level over all age groups, though the level was slightly higher in internal migrant households and much higher in international migrant households.

As far as the income-expenditure gap is concerned, the aggregate income balance is negative in both states. Individuals from households without any migrants are unable to cover their monthly consumption needs from their monthly income at all life-cycle ages, with the gap being significantly greater in Bihar.

Even after adding the remittance amount, individuals from households with international migrants could not meet their monthly consumption needs in eastern Uttar Pradesh until they were 30–34 years old and in Bihar until the age of 55–59. Even if their aggregate income is greater than their consumption expenditure in later years, the excess is little and cannot make up for their deficits from prior years.

Although the aggregate income of people from homes with internal migrants in eastern Uttar Pradesh increases slightly after they reach the age of 40–44, their life-cycle dissaving is significantly greater than the saving in later ages. The individuals from households with internal migrants in Bihar struggle to cover their consumption costs across all age trajectories.

In short, migrant households heavily rely on the remittances sent by migrated individuals. However, except for the individuals of households with international migrants from eastern Uttar Pradesh, individuals in both states are in deficits of income of their life-cycle expenditure. Individuals' labour income alone cannot meet their consumption expenditure in all three types of households that both states.

Source of Livelihood

Table 16.1 lists the types of jobs of rural individuals over the age of 14 in two regions. There is a difference in the pattern of occupation individuals have in the two regions. In comparison to eastern UP (31%), a much higher (42%) proportion of individuals were not working in Bihar. As agriculture is the mainstay of the region, farmers make up the biggest share with 52% of the individual in eastern Uttar Pradesh and 38% in Bihar. A small share of individuals work as a labour (approx. 6%). Five percent of people in eastern Uttar Pradesh and 8% of people in Bihar rely solely on remittances sent by migrant household members.

Table 16.1 Type of occupation of the rural residents over age 14 years in eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar

Occupation	*Eastern Uttar Pradesh*	*Bihar*	*Total*
Not working	30.83	41.83	35.88
Farmer	51.01	37.61	44.86
Agri. labourer	2.7	4.44	3.5
Non-agri. activity	3.08	2.22	2.69
Business and trade	1.19	0.74	0.99
Multiple work	5.65	4.88	5.3
MGNREGS and other works	0.33	0.13	0.24
Lived on remittance	5.21	8.15	6.56

Source: Calculated by authors from MGP data.

Table 16.2 displays the distribution of profession types by five-year age groups. In both regions, the share of not working in the 15–19 age groups is nearly half, which gradually decreases with the progression of age. However, in Bihar, nearly one in every two compared to one in every four in eastern UP at age 14 years and above remains unemployed throughout their life course. As people get older, the proportion of farmers increases in both regions; however, the share in Bihar is 10% lower than eastern UP. Interestingly, the share of agricultural and non-agricultural labourers and multi-workers is found to be high (more than 15%) from age 30 to 49 years and then starts declining gradually.

Age dependency on remittances presents an interesting picture. In eastern UP, reliance on remittances goes above 5% and remains above 7% in all age groups and reaching above 9% in the 50–54 age group. In Bihar, for 7% of individuals, remittances were the main source of income, which doubles to 14% in 25–29 and remains high till the age of 60 years. People in both states either work as farmers or are not employed or they depend on remittances sent by their migrated family members.

Expenditure Pattern and Its Determinants

Table 16.3 shows that more than half of the expenditure is done on food items in both migrant and non-migrant households in the region in general. It is slightly higher (56%) among non-migrant households in eastern UP and international migrant households in Bihar. Among non-food expenditures, medical expenses comprise one-fifth of the expenditure share followed by one-tenth each on education and agriculture.

The results of linear regression analysis of consumption expenditure and socio-economic background factors at the household level for total, eastern Uttar Pradesh, and Bihar display a significant difference in consumption expenditure in the two states (Table 16.4). The individuals from Bihar tend to spend more than those from eastern Uttar Pradesh. Migration status also affects consumption expenditure. Individuals in homes with internal and international migrants

Table 16.2 Percentage distribution of type of occupation by five-year age group in rural eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar

Eastern Uttar Pradesh								
Age group	*Not working*	*Farmer*	*Agri labourer*	*Non-agri. activity*	*Business and trade*	*Multi-work*	*MGNREGA and other works*	*Lived on remittance*
15–19	42.9	51.6	2.0	1.3	0.1	1.7	0.1	0.3
20–24	36.5	53.7	0.6	1.4	0.7	4.4	0.2	2.5
25–29	33.5	49.4	1.8	4.3	1.1	3.9	0.3	5.8
30–34	28.7	47.1	4.6	5.2	1.1	6.9	0.3	6.1
35–39	27.0	42.0	5.6	6.5	1.6	10.1	0.4	6.7
40–44	21.7	46.7	4.6	5.5	2.3	10.2	0.5	8.5
45–49	24.2	47.1	3.5	4.5	3.0	10.3	0.3	7.2
50–54	22.2	51.6	2.1	3.8	2.4	8.0	0.8	9.1
55–59	19.0	56.5	3.3	2.8	2.0	8.3	0.6	7.5
60–64	27.8	50.9	3.4	2.0	0.4	6.8	0.8	8.0
65–69	28.7	51.5	3.9	1.7	0.8	4.1	0.0	9.3
70–74	23.2	64.8	1.5	0.2	0.3	2.6	0.0	7.4
75 & above	23.6	67.1	0.0	0.0	1.9	0.9	0.0	6.4
Total	30.8	51.0	2.7	3.1	1.2	5.7	0.3	5.2
Bihar								
Age group	*Not working*	*Farmer*	*Agri labourer*	*Non-agri. activity*	*Business and trade*	*Multi-work*	*MGNREGS and other works*	*Lived on remittance*
15–19	52.3	43.8	1.1	0.5	0.1	1.2	0.1	0.9
20–24	49.8	35.4	2.2	2.0	0.8	2.5	0.0	7.4
25–29	45.4	29.1	5.0	1.5	1.1	3.9	0.0	14.1
30–34	37.7	28.2	7.5	4.8	2.1	5.8	0.5	13.4
35–39	36.3	32.6	6.4	5.3	0.6	7.8	0.4	10.6
40–44	32.4	37.7	6.6	3.6	1.6	8.9	0.0	9.3

45–49	26.0	41.3	6.8	2.9	1.6	10.7	0.0	10.8
50–54	36.6	35.9	8.8	1.1	0.5	8.6	0.0	8.6
55–59	34.9	38.6	6.0	2.6	0.0	8.4	0.0	9.5
60–64	34.4	47.8	5.0	1.5	0.1	5.7	0.0	5.5
65–69	42.0	42.1	4.8	2.4	0.9	2.3	0.0	5.6
70–74	43.0	45.6	0.4	0.0	0.6	0.6	0.6	9.2
75 and above	49.0	37.0	0.8	1.0	0.2	2.3	0.4	9.5
Total	41.8	37.6	4.4	2.2	0.7	4.9	0.1	8.2

Source: Calculated by authors from MGP data.

Table 16.3 Percentage distribution of shares of consumption items in the last one month by migration status of households in eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar

Region	Migration status	*Percentage share of expenditure on consumption item related to*				
		Agricultural and livestock	*Food*	*Medical*	*Education*	*Others*
Utter Pradesh	Non-migrant	11.99	57.36	17.18	8.52	4.91
	International migrant	10.34	50.52	18.74	12.07	8.18
	Internal migrant	11.76	53.98	18.90	10.10	5.19
Bihar	Non-migrant	15.76	49.66	18.51	11.71	4.26
	International migrant	5.41	56.41	16.07	11.64	9.59
	Internal migrant	11.91	52.38	19.63	10.31	5.64

Source: Calculated by authors from MGP data.

are significantly more likely to spend on consumption than those in households without any migrants. The propensity of expenditure significantly increases with an increase in SLI and is the greatest for those with the highest SLI and with an increase in the size of the landholding. Both states can attest to this, and the responsiveness is greater in Bihar than in eastern Uttar Pradesh.

In both states, when social groups are considered, Other Backward Classes (OBCs) and other social groups are significantly more likely to consume more with reference to Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Scheduled Castes (SCs). Overall, individuals belonging to Muslim households and joint families are less likely to spend more on consumption than their reference group, with a significance level of 1% in both states. Muslims in Bihar, on the other hand, are significantly more likely to spend more than Hindus. There is no significant difference in consumption expenditure between Hindu and Muslim family members in eastern Uttar Pradesh.

Following the elimination of socio-economic background factors, consumption is depicted in Figure 16.3 as a function of income. Without any income, autonomous consumption equals Rs. 883 according to the relationship between consumption and income. The average rise in consumption is 0.045 times for every unit increase in the log of income. As a result, consumption and income have a positive relationship, as shown by the positively sloped but flatter curve, indicating that as income rises, consumption also does, at a slower rate than income growth.

Food and Non-food Consumption: Pattern and Determinants

Analysis of expenditures for food and non-food consumption is crucial for understanding saving and dissaving patterns. Higher levels of consumption

Table 16.4 Regression result of total consumption as a function of socio-economic background characteristics at the household level by total, Uttar Pradesh, and Bihar

	Total		*Uttar Pradesh*		*Bihar*	
Dependent variable: log(consumption)	*Coef.*	*Std. Err.*	*Coef.*	*Std. Err.*	*Coef.*	*Std. Err.*
State						
Uttar Pradesh[R]						
Bihar	0.04**	0.02				
Migration status of the household						
Non-migrant[R]						
Internal migrant	0.08**	0.02	0.07***	0.02	0.11***	0.03
International migrant	0.26***	0.05	0.25***	0.05	0.33***	0.08
log(income)	0.06***	0.005	0.05***	0.00	0.08***	0.01
Standard of living index						
Low tertile[R]						
Medium tertile	0.15***	0.03	0.19***	0.04	0.18***	0.03
Highest tertile	0.38***	0.03	0.38***	0.04	0.25***	0.04
Type of family						
Nuclear[R]						
Joint	–0.23***	0.02	–0.25***	0.03	0.0076	0.03
Land Holding						
Landless[R]						
Less than 1 acre	0.24***	0.03	0.22***	0.04	0.13***	0.03
1–5 acres	0.27***	0.03	0.34***	0.05	0.07	0.04
5 acres and more	0.51***	0.04	0.97***	0.11	0.21**	0.09
Religion						
Others[R]						
Muslim	–0.20***	0.03	–0.21	0.03	0.17***	0.04
Social group						
STs/SCs[R]						
OBCs	0.21***	0.02	0.24***	0.03	0.16***	0.04
Others	0.35***	0.03	0.45***	0.04	0.16***	0.06
Constant	**6.43*****	**0.20**	**6.86*****	**0.08**	**6.7*****	**0.1**

Note: R represents reference category; *** represents 1% level of significance; ** represents 5% level of significance, and * represents 10% level of significance.

are relative to income, which may indicate dissaving, while lower levels may suggest saving behaviour. Households were classified into two categories, income deficit (income is less than expenditure) and income surplus (income is more than expenditure) category.

Even after considering remittances in income, the internal migrant households have lesser or equal income to the household without any migrants, while the households with international migrants have double the income of internal migrant households in both deficit and surplus income categories.

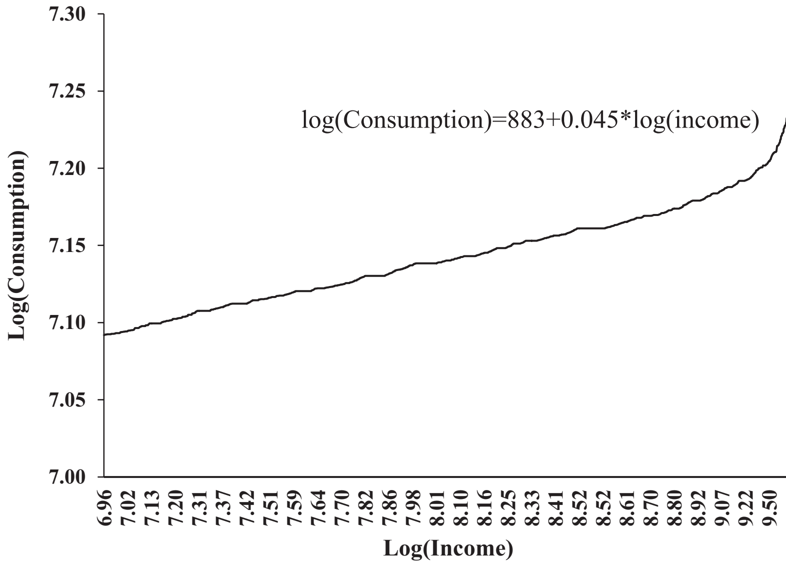

Figure 16.3 Consumption as a function of income after controlling for socio-economic background characteristics.

Expenditure on food remains more or less the same in all three types of households irrespective of income. The income deficit category displays a typical condition where income remains very low, barely meeting the food expenditure, and expenditure on non-food expenditure is much higher. These families meet their non-food demands either by taking loans or on government aids/programme benefits (Table 16.5).

The likelihood/tendency of higher expenditure on food increases with the rise in income, wealth quintile, OBC, and other in case group and change in migration status; however, the difference is marginal. However, for individuals in international households, land holding sizes with more than 5 acres have substantially higher exp. on food items (Table 16.6). The tendency of expenditure on non-food items is also positive, but the intensity is low. There is no significant difference in non-expenditure and non-food consumption between non-migrant and internal migrant households. The expenditure tends to increase substantially with an increase in SLI, land holding size, and caste hierarchy in Bihar in reference to their counterparts.

Table 16.7 shows the prevalence of loans by different categories of migration in eastern UP and Bihar and by type of loan. Overall, a higher number of non-migrant households (more than one-tenth) have taken loans than the internal (7%) and international (4%) migrant households. The loan has been taken mainly to meet the health expenditure (25% and 15% in non-migrant households in UP and Bihar, respectively) followed by food loans and education loans. Nearly 3% of the households have taken loans for agricultural purposes, but the mean amount of loans is substantially very high.

Table 16.5 Differential in the pattern of income and expenditure made by migration status in Eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar in one month preceding the survey

Household migration status	*Variables*	*Income greater than consumption expenditure*		*Income short of consumption expenditure*		*Total*	
		Mean	*SD*	*Mean*	*SD*	*Mean*	*SD*
Non-migrant	Income	4360	5926	695	964	2888	4960
	Food expend.	677	525	739	526	692	526
	Non-food expend.	1017	3688	1609	3457	1157	3642
	Saving/loan amount	3120	5665	–1612	3234	1219	5364
International migrant	Income	8041	6284	1426	2430	5543	6088
	Food expend.	913	524	1277	964	1033	719
	Non-food expend.	1040	2254	3669	6519	1868	4270
	Saving/loan amount	6315	6090	–3520	6185	2601	7759
Internal migrant	Income	4270	6598	866	1147	2590	5058
	Food expend.	765	553	946	850	840	698
	Non-food expend.	853	1578	1759	3200	1225	2423
	Saving/loan amount	6315	6090	–1810	2980	550	5363

Source: Calculated by authors from MGP data.

Discussion and Conclusion

Using information on per capita current income, money sent by e/migrated family members, and expenditures for food and non-food consumption, the current chapter evaluated the life-cycle saving and dissaving in migrant and non-migrant households. If the aggregate income balance, which is calculated by adding the per capita current income and remittance and then deducting the total consumption expenditure, is positive, it indicates saving; if it is negative, it denotes dissaving. According to the findings, families without any migrated members have greater per capita current incomes than households with moved members. Yet, the level of income is highest for those people from households with international migrants in both states when we add the sum of remittances sent by migrated members to current income. The income of those left out is likely significantly smaller than that of the others because those family members who could earn in the family may have moved away. And also, rural areas have very limited opportunities in non-agricultural avenues.

The dependence of people in rural Uttar Pradesh and Bihar on agriculture and other simple means of subsistence is also supported by the literature. The most populous state in India, Uttar Pradesh, is known for its geographical

Table 16.6 Regression result of food and non-food consumption as a function of socio-economic background characteristics at the household level for total region

	Total food consumption		*Total non-food consumption*	
Dependent variable: log(consumption)	*Coef.*	*Std. Err.*	*Coef.*	*Std. Err.*
State				
Uttar Pradesh[R]				
Bihar	–0.15***	0.02	0.21***	0.03
log(income)	0.058***	0.004	0.05***	0.007
Migration status of the household				
Non-migrant household[R]				
Internal Migrant Households	0.14**	0.02	0.03	0.03
International Migrant Households	0.38***	0.04	0.17***	0.06
Standard of living index				
Low tertile[R]				
Medium tertile	0.10***	0.02	0.12***	0.04
Highest tertile	0.26***	0.02	0.47***	0.04
Type of family				
Nuclear[R]				
Joint	–0.25***	0.03	–0.27***	0.03
Land Holding				
Landless[R]				
Less than 1 acre	0.03	0.02	0.44***	0.04
1–5 acres	–0.02	0.03	0.50***	0.43
5 acres and more	0.09**	0.04	0.82***	0.06
Religion				
Others[R]				
Muslim	0.04	0.03	–0.48***	0.03
STs/SCs[R]				
OBCs	0.06***	0.02	0.36***	0.03
Others	0.17**	0.03	0.53**	0.04
Constant	**7.6*****	**0.17**	**3.8*****	**0.29**

Source: Calculated by authors from MGP data.

Note: R represents reference category; *** represents 1% level of significance; ** represents 5% level of significance, and * represents 10% level of significance.

disparities, extremely high unemployment rate, and pervasive poverty (Sarkar, 2020). Yet, despite the fact that agriculture still provides the majority of jobs in rural Bihar, the state's growing population has required more employment opportunities than the state's relatively static agricultural sector has been able to provide.

When it comes to the life cycle of labour income, both states' labour incomes indicate lower income for the young and old and higher income for those who are of working age owing to higher experience than younger and more capability than older ones. Regardless of their family's migration

Table 16.7 Description of loan taken by households without migrants and with international and internal migrants in eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar

	Eastern Utter Pradesh						*Bihar*					
	Non-migrant		*International migrant*		*Internal migrant*		*Non-migrant*		*International migrant*		*Internal migrant*	
Loan type	*% of those who took loan*	*Mean loan amount*	*% of those who took loan*	*Mean loan amount*	*% of those who took loan*	*Mean loan amount*	*% of those who took loan*	*Mean loan amount*	*% of those who took loan*	*Mean loan amount*	*% of those who took loan*	*Mean loan amount*
Total	11.6	24681	3.4	8624	7.6	41425	9.6	11944	4.5	24532	8.5	13681
Food loan	10.4	4876	Nil	Nil	6.2	4441	2.7	2018	Nil	Nil	1.7	5413
Medical loan	24.8	21190	13.7	15000	19.5	16677	16.5	9808	Nil	Nil	18.8	11483
Education loan	4.9	5025	Nil	Nil	3.5	6830	0.26	300	Nil	Nil	1.9	10339
Agricultural loan	3.4	30230	Nil	Nil	2.7	92609	4.8	14360	3.0	16134	3.6	18016

Source: Calculated by authors from MGP data.

pattern, older adults in both states have high incomes, albeit not as high as they did when they were younger. This demonstrates that people in both states, even as they get older, work to make a living. In developing countries, many migrants do not have the resources to save for retirement and may have to extend their working period as much as possible. In contrast, in Europe, for example, early-life migration has been shown to have significant economic and well-being benefits in later life (Gruber & Sand, 2022).

It is determined that individuals' labour income alone cannot meet their consumption expenditure in all three types of homes based on consumption gaps for people in households and life-cycle age-specific income (without remittances) in both states. Migration and the inflow of remittances positively impact poverty alleviation (Sangita, 2017; Shah et al., 2018). However, in the long term, with appropriate and systematic means to achieve economic independence, their ability to escape poverty remains the same (IOM, 2007). Even with the addition of remittances from migrated family members, a person's income seldom meets their consumption spending requirements, making it challenging for them to go through the life-cycle stages where they must withdraw their life-cycle savings from their active times. This is valid for all types of families in both states, with the exception of international migrant households in Uttar Pradesh due to the substantial amount of remittances received from migrant family members. Because of this, the majority of people in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar must borrow money, get an inheritance, or pay for their children's education, which puts their quality of life in a precarious position and necessitates outside help.

In rural Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, the majority of people work as farmers or are unemployed; other occupations are scarce. These data suggest that the industrial and service sectors are slow to develop and in need of a commercial breakthrough, while people's livelihoods are dependent on the agricultural sector. The tendency to consume increases on average as income increases, although not by as much as income increases, according to the research. The findings show that the agrarian economies of the rural populations in UP and Bihar are characterised by low income and a predominance of borrowing. The fact that remittances sent by internal migrants are low enough only to meet the food consumption expenditure is also supported by other literature (Connell et al., 1976). They remain at the subsistence level. It doesn't lead to economic upliftment and savings except in international migrant households in eastern UP. If there had been no migration, the situation of the left behind families in the agriculatural distress region would have been mich worse. Political leaders and decision-makers should concentrate on what can be done to address these two states' poor economic conditions.

Note

1 Eastern Uttar Pradesh comprises the districts, namely Pratapgarh, Allahabad, Sultanpur, Bahraich, Balrampur, Siddharthnagar, Basti, Gorakhpur, Deoria, Azamgarh, Jaunpur, Varanasi, and SantRavidas Nagar.

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17 Social Enterprise

The Impact of COVID-19 on Migrant Communities within India

George D. John, Michael Snowden, and Jamie P. Halsall

Introduction

Migration is a global phenomenon that is driven not only by economic necessity but also by other social, political, cultural, environmental, health, and educational factors (Mohan & Mishra, 2020). According to the United Nations migration agency, migrants are

> any person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a State away from his or her habitual place of residence, regardless of 1) the person's legal status; 2) whether the movement is voluntary or involuntary; 3) what the causes for the movement are; or 4) what the length of the stay is.
>
> (United Nations, n.d.)

In India, migration is influenced by poverty, lack of work opportunities, unemployment, poor economic conditions, lack of opportunities, scarcity of cultivated land, inequitable land distribution, and low agricultural productivity (Bala, 2017). Annually, more than 9 million people migrate within India, and the majority of such migration is for jobs or education (Khanna, 2020). The Census 2011 in India reveals that a large proportion of migration of workers is interstate, with one-fourth of the total migration intrastate (Khanna, 2020). Migrant workers migrate more to urban areas due to the availability of educational and employment opportunities (Khanna, 2020).

According to the National Sample Survey (NSS) and the India Human Development Survey (IHDS), the majority of inter and intrastate migrants are mainly from rural areas, come from very poor backgrounds, and belong to the lower social classes like the Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), and Other Backward Classes (OBC) (Jesline et al., 2021). Rawat and Singh (2020) suggest that approximately 16% of the intrastate migrations belong to migrants from SC and 8% to the ST. There have been overlaps between social and economic status between different caste categories such as OBC and GEN (general) in comparison to SC and ST (Chandrasekhar & Mitra, 2018). Migrants from higher in the hierarchy of caste have better endowments required for absorption in the labour market, as the costs of migration are easy for them to

DOI: 10.4324/9781003490234-17

bear as compared to migrants from lower in the caste hierarchy (ST and SC) (Chandrasekhar & Mitra, 2018). When compared with migrants from higher castes, migrants from lower castes are less likely to secure higher earnings in the labour market (Chandrasekhar & Mitra, 2018).

In India, as alluded to by Suresh et al. (2020), migrants are not a homogenous category and are diverse in terms of gender, class, ethnicity, language, and faith. Consequently, migration is considered an economically, socially, and politically destabilising process, and the economic benefits of migration are seldom recognised (Suresh et al., 2020). The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is devastating, as it not only impacted the health and well-being of the nation but also caused widespread disruptions in the labour market across nations; this, in turn, affected the supply chain and demand, causing labour markets to shrink and loss of livelihood across the globe (Irudaya Rajan et al., 2020).

The World Bank report predicted that the cessation of economic activity caused by the coronavirus pandemic would lead to a contraction of 5.2% of GDP around the world in 2020 (Kesar et al., 2020). This could push 60–100 million people into poverty and cause the loss of 300 million full-time jobs worldwide in the second quarter of 2020 (Kesar et al., 2020). Due to the sudden loss of jobs, migrants in India faced displacement, hunger, accident, malnutrition, suicide, and unbearable mental stress (Agoramoorthy & Hsu, 2020). Millions of migrant workers in India faced instant job losses during the imposition of lockdown measures; with meagre savings, limited food, and lack of ration cards and public transport, many were struggling to survive in the cities thereby forcing them to walk hundreds of kilometres to travel back to their native homes (Guha et al., 2020). These triggered a mass exodus and the reverse migration of low-skilled and semi-skilled migrant workers from urban cities to rural areas with limited food and income (Guha et al., 2020).

Following their plea, a group of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and self-help groups from 13 states and union territories (UT) provided humanitarian relief to the migrants in the form of meals (Rawat, 2020). According to the initial data presented by the Government of India, of 84,26,509 meals around 54.15 lakh were provided by state governments, while the remaining 30.11 lakh were provided by NGOs (Rawat, 2020). As noted by Rathna (2020), these self-help groups turned the crisis into an opportunity to earn their livelihood while fighting against the pandemic by producing and supplying 19 million masks, 100,000 litres of sanitisers, and 50,000 litres of hand wash without going through the complex logistical and transportation process (World Bank, 2020).

These self-help groups operate on the principles of social entrepreneurship, which Halsall et al. define as a “business that has both social and commercial goals where surpluses are principally reinvested for the community, rather than being driven by the maximization of profit for shareholders” (2020, p. 81). Contextually, defining social entrepreneurship is difficult; in India, social enterprise is driven by the diversity of models and practices, and the overarching institutional and marketing influences, which are context-specific

rather than field-specific (Agrawal & Khare, 2019). Social enterprises within India can be classified into five groups: the entrepreneurial non-profit model, the social business model, the cooperative model, the public sector social enterprise model, and the social change model (Agrawal & Khare, 2019). At present, social enterprise has helped to overcome the impact of the pandemic by engaging in social initiatives and highlighting the inefficiency of market economies in providing both intragenerational and intergenerational equity (Oberoi et al., 2019).

In Gujarat, the Self-Employed Women Association (SEWA) self-help group engaged in the fight against the pandemic by helping women to make masks, herbal sanitisers, soaps, PPE kits, gloves, and caps and has partnered with the government to produce more products; this, in turn, created a huge source of stable income for migrant women during lockdown (Anju, 2020). Therefore, it is an ideal time for governments and private entities to engage and collaborate with social enterprises, listen to their voices, and build on their strengths that will prove beneficial beyond the pandemic (Laila, 2020). COVID-19 is an emerging research arena, and there is limited literature that concentrates on migration and social enterprise. Consequently, the basis of this review is to understand the impact of health emergencies such as COVID-19 on migration and migrants' livelihoods and explore how social entrepreneurship has evolved to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in India.

Structure of the Chapter

This study is important within the current climate as it provides an assessment of the impact of coronavirus on migration and migrants and how developing social enterprise could help to reduce inequality and create livelihoods among deprived groups such as migrants. In this context, the authors of this research have devised the chapter into six sections. To begin with, section "Aims and Objectives" will present the overall aims and objectives of the study. From this, section "Literature Review Designs and Methods" outlines the systematic methodological literature review process that was applied. The section "Findings" presents the systematic literature review findings of the study and defines five distinct thematic analysis themes. Moving on from this, in the section "Discussion" the authors provide a discussion section that explains, analyses, and synthesises the five key themes in the academic literature. Hence, the sections "Strengths and Limitations" and "Conclusion" of the chapter provide a brief overview of the strengths/limitations of the study and a conclusion to summarise the key points developed in this research.

Aims and Objectives

This study aims to explore the impact of COVID-19 on migrant workers within India, understand how the current pandemic has affected the livelihood of unskilled migrants and migration, examine factors influencing

reverse migration, and explore how social entrepreneurship is playing a key role in addressing those barriers. Therefore, the key research questions that framed this review were as follows:

1. How has a health emergency (COVID-19) impacted migration patterns and the livelihoods of migrants and their dependents in India?
2. What has been the impact on social enterprises and support in providing opportunities and safe environments for migrants within India?
3. How has social entrepreneurship addressed the challenges faced by migrants in India during the COVID-19 crisis?

Literature Review Designs and Methods

Systematic literature searching is an important part of the systematic review process (Bettany-Saltikov, 2012). It involves a systematic search for studies within a clear framework, ensuring credibility and reliability, thus promoting transparency in reporting the identification of studies and how the findings of the review are situated in the relevant evidence (Cooper et al., 2018; Chaudhary et al., 2020).

The process adopted draws upon Aveyard's (2018) framework, ensuring rigour and reliability. Initially, the key terms were based on a conceptualised approach to determine relevant research studies, as it was considered that effective retrieval terms rely on the clarity of the title and abstract (Cooke et al., 2012). Although the framing of terms depends on the interpretation of the full article, it was observed that key terms are sometimes unclear as authors and searches define the concepts differently; this led to the conclusion that searching for research studies using thesaurus terms in databases is of limited value (Cooke et al., 2012). Therefore, the key terms were framed using the Population, Intervention, Comparison and Outcome (PICO) tool in each of the project categories. PICO was preferred to the Sample, Phenomenon of Interest, Design, Evaluation and Research type (SPIDER) tool as this reduced a significant number of research articles due to increased specificity(consequently making data more manageable), but omitted many relevant papers due to lower sensitivity (Methley, 2014). However, it has also been observed that while searching for relevant studies, the PICO tool yields more irrelevant hits to sift through when searching for qualitative studies for potential inclusion in the literature review (Cooke et al., 2012). Hence, specification using PICO could be perceived as a subjective exercise when utilised for qualitative research questions, rather than the systematic search strategy tool intended when used for quantitative research questions (Methley, 2014). Nevertheless, it was decided that the PICO tool would be appropriate because the main aim of the review is to answer the question through the retrieval of relevant qualitative and quantitative data. Thus, the key search terms used to retrieve the literature were social enterprise, migrant health patterns, India, and COVID-19.

The eligibility criteria determine the usefulness of studies that need to be included or excluded from the review, though the criteria might change as the systematic review progresses through the early stages of the process (Meline, 2006). The commonly used criteria in the systematic review are time, population, and type of research study, which when applied help to gather recent evidence on the topic of interest and avoid irrelevant studies (Meline, 2006). Therefore, the initial search was performed based on inclusion and exclusion criteria, which yielded an adequate amount of relevant research studies. The inclusion criteria were sixfold:

1. Empirical or non-empirical research.
2. Migrant workers in India.
3. Studies that explicitly explore migration, migrants, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on migrant workers.
4. Studies conducted from March 2020 to April 2021 were mainly prioritised to explore the impact of COVID-19 on the migrant population during the above-mentioned timeframe to understand the experiences and choices of migrants, which drove them to reverse migration.
5. Studies or credible news articles emphasise the role of social enterprises in mitigating the challenges faced by migrants during the pandemic.
6. English-published literature, besides the initial search, resulted in vast literature published in English related to the concerned topic and limited foreign language studies, thereby prompting the exclusion of foreign literature.

Hence, the exclusion criteria were fivefold:

1. Literature excluding migrant population.
2. Literature that did not focus on India.
3. Studies exploring other aspects other than the impact of COVID-19 restriction on the migrant populations and the role of social enterprises.
4. Research conducted before March 2020.
5. Literature published in languages other than English.

Once the literature search was undertaken, with the help of an electronic database and additional search strategy, the results of all the electronic and additional searches were combined and compared against the abstracts of the identified paper based on the inclusion criteria (Aveyard, 2018). The identified research paper was then compared against the inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure that it could be accepted as the highest hierarchy of evidence that would answer the research question; those which failed to satisfy the criteria were not included in the study (Aveyard, 2018). This strategy led to the inclusion of 14 studies in the final selection. Finally, to display the extensiveness of the search process, as illustrated by Figure 17.1, the PRISMA evaluation process (Moher et al., 2009) was used to ensure that the

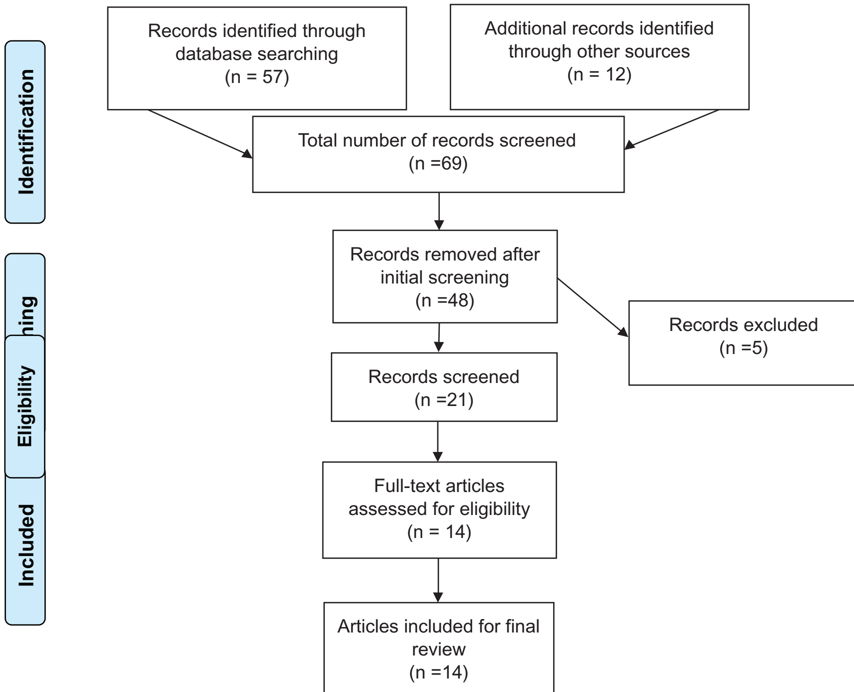

Figure 17.1 PRISMA 2009 flow diagram.

process involved in identifying the appropriate literature was transparent and comprehensive.

The main aim of the literature review is to identify the crucial elements within the research data that are appropriate to the analytical process and answer the research questions (Terry et al., 2017). Therefore, this literature review would follow the process involved in the thematic analysis described by Thomas and Harden (2008). The four steps involved in the thematic analysis process were as follows:

1. Searching for studies that could satisfy the aims and objectives.
2. Quality assessment of the identified studies to ensure the credibility and rigour of the research process.
3. Extracting the data from the selected studies.
4. Thematic analysis of the identified data by deriving themes from the data grouped into codes.

Following the critical appraisal, 14 studies were identified and considered to be eligible to be included in this literature review based on the strengths, weaknesses, and impact of the research findings. The critical appraisal tools used in this literature review were the Critical Assessment Skills Programme (CASP) (Nadelson &

Nadelson, 2014) and the Joanna Briggs Institute tool (JBI) (Munn et al., 2019). Adopting a thematic approach, each study was read, and the appropriate data from the studies were identified and compared against the other studies to generate meaningful themes. Furthermore, the identified themes were cross-checked to determine congruence with the aims and objectives of this literature review: to explore the relationships between social enterprise and migrant health patterns within India during COVID-19.

Findings

In total, 14 papers were included in the review and formed the basis of the thematic analysis, which generated five themes:

The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Livelihood Strategies

In the era of globalisation, the COVID-19 pandemic exposed the economic vulnerabilities of various nations that continued to suffer as a result of the public health and economic crisis (Gupta & Sengupta, 2020). It was estimated that 25 million people would become unemployed worldwide due to the impact of COVID-19, approximately ranging from 5.3 million to 24 million (Khanna, 2020). With the advent of COVID-19, microenterprises collapsed despite the introduction of an economic support scheme valuing INR 20.97 billion (10% of the GDP), thus resulting in income loss and unemployment throughout India (Gupta & Sengupta, 2020). According to Singh et al. (2020), the unemployment rate in India increased to 25.5%, with nearly 83% reporting a loss of income in April and 34% reporting they cannot survive more than a week on savings and food stock. More than 80% of migrant workers received no income from their main occupation, with daily income falling by 77% during the lockdown, and 40% of households reporting food and income deficiency; as a result, more than 400 million workers in India were pushed into poverty (Singh et al., 2020). Agricultural sectors such as wheat, rice, lentil, tea, and sugarcane production were affected, due to labour shortages, supply chain disruption, and limited market operations (Gupta & Sengupta, 2020). The loss of employment was particularly high for the illiterate and less educated in the initial phases of the pandemic, with casual workers being hit hardest. According to Singh et al. (2020), employment figures subsequently dropped to 66.7% in Phase III and 23.8% in Phase IV of the lockdowns. However, 50% of regular salaried workers could not find work throughout Phases II–IV of lockdown restrictions (Singh et al., 2020).

Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic Measures on the Labour Market and Government Schemes

During the pandemic, changes in consumer demand patterns and a reduction in labour supply led to a loss in income and gross values (Estupinan et al., 2020). In March 2020, about 465.3 million people were employed in

the Indian labour market, of which 116.18 and 78.93 million workers were affected by lockdowns 1.0 and 2.0 and were at risk of job loss (Estupinan et al., 2020). According to Estupinan et al. (2020), the affected migrant workers in lockdown 1.0 who were at risk of job accounts 60 million and were casual and own-account workers. Estupinan et al. (2020) further observed that 42% of workers in urban areas and 16% in rural areas were impacted, whereas migrant workers employed in essential industries (29% from urban and 72% from rural areas) were not affected. Between 88% and 90% of all migrant workers who suffered job loss during subsequent lockdowns were employed in the informal sector and were not enrolled in social security measures (Estupinan et al., 2020). Estupinan et al. (2020) further assert that the total income loss due to lockdown measures was Rs 864.5 billion, roughly 1.4 times the annual budget allotted for the employment guarantee scheme MNREGA in 2020–2021. The first nine weeks of the lockdown cost approximately Rs. 23 trillion (11.5% of GDP), and the Indian economy was predicted to contract by anywhere between 5% and 12.5% in 2020–2021 (Kesar et al., 2020). The money transferred by the government was not significant; only 7.3% of migrant households received money from the government despite the free rations provided to all, with access to free rations relatively higher among vulnerable sections (60–65% of casual workers and SC households) (Singh et al., 2020).

Experiences of Migrants during a Pandemic

Migrants are more likely to be vulnerable to the direct and indirect effects of COVID-19 (Suresh et al., 2020). The immediate challenges faced by the migrants were food shortage, lack of shelter, loss of income, and fear of infection (Suresh et al., 2020). When they returned to their rural/native homes, migrants felt depressed and insecure due to the loss of their jobs and livelihood, and they were met with hostility with national and state governments restricting their movements due to COVID-19 measures (Das, 2020). Within 36 hours of the lockdown announcement, the central government announced an economic relief package that was a little less than 1% of the national GDP; it did not have any specific measures addressing the potential concern but advocated longer-term, credit-focused proposals rather than following a more direct approach such as cash transfers (Mohan & Mishra, 2020). The sudden lockdown caused panic among migrants, and those who were stranded away from their homes were not eligible to access rations or free food grains provided by the governments (Adhikari et al., 2020). This is because the government relied on the census 2011 population, thereby excluding 100 million people from public distribution system entitlement (Adhikari et al., 2020). The situation was further exacerbated by the non-payment of wages and the threat by employers to withdraw food and accommodation if people did not continue to work (Adhikari et al., 2020). Another issue was banks' freezing accounts for failure to maintain a minimum balance (Adhikari et al., 2020).

The return of migrants to their native villages also increased the spread of the virus; the female relatives of migrants were placed most at risk of exposure to COVID-19 as a result of this movement (Agarwal, 2021). The impact on women was significant. With many returning male migrants, women have been forced out of important job security schemes, and women's domestic workload burden has increased (Agarwal, 2021). The impact was also exacerbated in urban areas, with around 86% of households reporting a reduction in their food intake (Kesar et al., 2020). Many migrants died for reasons ranging from starvation, suicide, exhaustion, road and rail accidents, police brutality, and denial of timely medical care (Guha et al., 2020). Migrants are often stigmatised and unjustly blamed for the spread of disease (Guha et al., 2020).

Factors Influencing Migrants and Migration Patterns

Migration is generally regarded as an economically, socially, and politically destabilising process that takes away the productive family member, undermines family life, and causes labour exploitation (Suresh et al., 2020). Internal migration in India has increased from 314.5 million to 455.8 million (Guha et al., 2020), with the economic survey estimating that more than 9 million people have migrated either for jobs or education (Khanna, 2020). Around 25% of the total migration is interstate, with migration primarily towards urban areas due to educational and employment opportunities (Khanna, 2020). It is estimated that around 260 million people work in the non-farm sector, and of these 101 million work in the unorganised sector (Khanna, 2020). Out of 465 million workers in India, a total of 419 million work in the informal sector, of which 298 million work in the rural informal sector and 121 million in urban areas (Das, 2020). Manufacturing constitutes 28 million workers; restaurants and hotel and trade accounts for 32 million workers; construction has 15 million workers; transport, communications, and storage has 11 million workers; and finance, business, and real estate accounts for 7 million workers, which constitute the total 93% of the workforce (Das, 2020). Male migration is driven by work, and female migration is driven by marriage in addition to work purposes (Rajan et al., 2020).

Role of Social Enterprises during the COVID-19 Pandemic

During the pandemic, SHGs began producing masks, sanitisers, and herbal drinks to boost immunity, concentrating their sales in various rural and urban areas (Rathna, 2020). This production of masks and sanitisers gave a new ray of hope to managing the pandemic, with many planning to venture into the business of making sanitisers using aloe vera, involving farmers to process it locally, and thus also aiming to create jobs for locals (Rathna, 2020). Many SHGs started working at grassroots levels to create public awareness about the importance of social distancing and other preventive measures to stay safe (Rathna, 2020). Among them is SEWA, an artisan producer company employing migrant women to make masks, herbal sanitisers, herbal soaps,

PPS kits, shoe mitts, gloves, scarves, and caps (Ann, 2020). In a bid to make migrant women financially independent, SEWA Bharat collaborated with the State Bank of India (SBI) to mould a SEWA-SBI correspondent model, where local women are employed as banking agents and are given the technical capacity to bring banking services to previously unbanked areas, and where each customer is perceived as a customer service point in a cluster (Ann, 2020). Since most people were afraid to step out during the pandemic, and the bank was situated far away, these agents went door to door to assist distressed people, with some agents using money from their own pocket to activate bank accounts on their behalf to avail them of the government economic support scheme (Ann, 2020). The Kudumbashree Network, which employs 4.4 million women across 300,000 SHGs in Kerala, was one of the other organisations whose community kitchen initiative cooked and distributed fresh meals to vulnerable groups, as well as those who were bedridden and placed in quarantine centres (Ann, 2020). Following this, another network of 295,000 NGOs began community kitchens delivering meals to the needy, including school children, and coordinated with community health workers for contact tracing (Agarwal, 2021). Moreover, in Jharkhand, SHGs have collaborated with the district administration to eradicate hunger and starvation among the underprivileged. They delivered rations to underprivileged families and also operated a helpline for returning migrants (Ann, 2020).

Discussion

The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Livelihood Strategies

Following the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a striking impact on the livelihood strategies of the migrants who worked for daily wages and sent remittances to their families who depended on them for their survival. In India, COVID-19 has had a devastating impact on small- and medium-scale enterprises; this has been caused by a disruption in the supply chain and a shortage of labour, despite the monetary support provided by the government (Gupta & Sengupta, 2020). This resulted in increased unemployment, loss of income, and a shortage of food among migrants (Singh et al., 2020). The pandemic and the measures introduced to control the spread have impacted a large proportion of working migrants in terms of social, economic, and structural support (Srivastava et al., 2021). The pandemic has exposed existing disparities and has led to further difficulties in the lives of migrant workers (Srivastava et al., 2021). This was also visible in the agricultural sector, which was impacted significantly due to limited market operations (Gupta & Sengupta, 2020). These findings are similar to those of Srivastava et al. (2021), who found that around 92% of the migrant labourers in India have lost their work due to low demand for migrant workers, and 42% of migrant workers have been negatively impacted by the lack of food or supplies due to their reduced income as a result of coronavirus restrictions imposed by the government to control the spread of COVID-19 infection.

The prominent experience was the loss of livelihood and the increase in debt associated with it (Srivastava et al., 2021).

The negative impact of job losses was more acute for those workers who lacked education, as compared with educated workers whose incomes appeared more stable. These findings are similar to those of Kapoor (2020), who found that the effects of the pandemic had a greater impact on less-educated workers who are typically engaged in low-paying, precarious work arrangements. Therefore, it was expected that this crisis would aggravate the pre-existing inequalities in India's labour market, which shows stark disparities between a workforce that is engaged in jobs that offer stable income and social security benefits, and the large proportion engaged in informal employment (Kapoor, 2020).

The reduction in monetary support (as a result of loss of wages) – due to reduced business demands (causing employers to fire migrant workers) – led to displacement (migrants moved home) – creating more pressure and demand for resources in their native rural areas – resulting in further negative outcomes (death/starvation, etc.) (Gupta & Sengupta, 2020). These findings are similar to those of Srivastava et al. (2021), who note that the pandemic posed a set of challenges such as loss of job, financial crisis, stress, loss of money, and job assurance, thus persuading a large number of migrants to return to their homes without any proper transport facility or food, and these factors, coupled with fear and anxiety, compound the challenge of reaching their native homes.

Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic Measures on the Labour Market and Government Schemes

During the pandemic consumer behaviour changed, which impacted the market and supply chain leading to income loss and a decrease in GDP. As a result, a large proportion of the labour workforce (195.11 million) was expected to lose jobs (Estupinan et al., 2020). The brunt was most likely to be experienced by casual or self-employed migrant workers. These findings are similar to those of Miyamura (2021), who presents estimates with caution, indicating that approximately 128 million workers who were either in casual employment or self-employed are at particularly high risk of losing their jobs. There was a stark contrast in the percentage of migrants who worked either in essential or non-essential work settings losing their livelihoods, and those migrants did not have access to social security benefits (Estupinan et al., 2020). These findings are contrary to those of Miyamura (2021), who notes that, despite being interstate migrants, most of them did not have the privilege to access rations due to a lack of government mechanisms to monitor and register them. Following this, the government introduced reforms in its social security schemes to accommodate migrants; however, only a small section of the migrant community were recipients of these schemes. The failure of the schemes to support distressed migrants was due to administrative

barriers caused by central and state government division of power. The findings are similar to the observations of Kar et al. (2021), who conclude that the administrative barriers were not only affecting the coordination between the state and centre but are also impacting the national institute's COVID-19 response, which could also be a contributor to the inadequate response to COVID-19 during the second wave.

Experiences of Migrants during a Pandemic

Migrants are more vulnerable to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. There is a range of factors that makes them more susceptible to risks posed by the pandemic, both directly and indirectly, such as poor education, less provision of healthcare services, work environment, awareness about their rights, and lack of acceptance in the communities they live in (Suresh et al., 2020). Many social welfare programmes, which migrants are entitled to receive, are being deprived of them due to their migratory status, lack of proper documentation, and economic status (Suresh et al., 2020). Kusuma and Babu (2018) also agree that migrants are more vulnerable due to livelihood insecurity, negligence, and alienation in their new environment. As a result, the migrants have less access to the available resources that are meant for all members of society, such as healthcare (Kusuma & Babu, 2018).

The migrants were hard hit during the pandemic, and the sudden lockdown has had a devastating impact on their health, lives, and livelihoods (Suresh et al., 2020). With meagre income, migrants started walking barefoot (Das, 2020) towards their home towns, which resulted in overcrowding of public transportation (Suresh et al., 2020). However, throughout their journeys, migrants faced many challenges, such as a shortage of food and shelter, which also affected their mental health; as a result, some committed suicide and died due to starvation (Suresh et al., 2020). These findings are similar to those of Preethi and Diwani (2021), who observed that, during the lockdown, due to lack of transportation, uncertainty about the future, and lack of government support, many labourers and their families (including infants, pregnant women, and elderly people) walked thousands of kilometres. Lockdowns, travel bans, and social distancing measures worsened the situation for these migrant workers (Preethi & Diwani, 2021). As a result, initially, more than 350 deaths were reported, caused by starvation, exhaustion, and rail and road accidents (Preethi & Diwani, 2021).

In response, to contain the spread of COVID-19 infections, the central government announced a lockdown; within 36 hours, the government announced a relief package of less than 1% GDP focused on long-term credit proposals rather than cash transfers (Mohan & Mishra, 2020), and which did not benefit the majority of migrant workers. These findings confirm those of Ghosh (2020), who observes that the initial relief package amounted to 0.5% of GDP and was in the form of credit guarantees and other liquidity provisions without any fiscal outlay. The total additional public spending on

all relief measures, announced at the end of May 2020, amounted to 1% of GDP and did not benefit many of the affected people (Ghosh, 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic had a particularly devastating impact on the women belonging to migrant communities, as the majority of them depended on the rations provided by the government, which they found difficult to access due to social restrictions (Agarwal, 2021). The majority of them also could not benefit from the cash promised by the government due to a lack of access to bank accounts (Agarwal, 2021). These findings are similar to those of Gulati et al. (2021) and Arora and Majumder (2021), who observed that the economic measures announced by the government were only accessible to migrants if they had proper documentation and bank accounts. With the economic constraints imposed by the pandemic, migrants had to return to their home villages, resulting in women engaging in extra domestic responsibilities with no monetary support, and sometimes going a week or more with limited food, water, and toilet facilities (Arora & Majumder, 2021).

Factors Influencing Migrants and Migration Patterns

Migration is a process of moving from the present place of residence to the destination residence driven by several factors, including the pattern of development, social structure, interregional disparity, the disparity between different socioeconomic classes, and the development policies influencing seasonal migration. Migration occurs when workers in source areas lack suitable options for employment/livelihood, and there is some expectation of improvement in circumstances by migrating (Sanyal, 2018). Migrants are vulnerable to poor health outcomes, not because of migration but because of the conditions associated with it, such as unhygienic conditions, poor shelter, inadequate dietary intake, and difficulty in accessing health services (Mohan & Mishra, 2020). These findings are similar to those of Sanyal (2018), who notes that migrants often work in harsh circumstances, live in unhygienic conditions, and suffer from occupational health problems and various health hazards. Migrants cannot access various health and family care programmes due to their temporary status (Sanyal, 2018).

According to the 2011 Census, internal migration within India has increased, accounting for 455.8 million people, of which 9 million have migrated for job or education purposes, and this migration is primarily towards urban areas (Guha et al., 2020). It is believed that around 491 million migrants work in the informal sector (Das, 2020), and among them, about 30% are working as casual workers who are quite vulnerable to the vagaries of the labour market and lack social protection (Bhagat et al., 2020). Only 35% of migrant workers are employed as regular or salaried workers (Bhagat et al., 2020). Male migrants migrate due to work purposes, while females accompany them to undertake domestic responsibilities unregistered (Rajan et al., 2020). Because of their temporary residence status, most of the women migrants could not avail of social welfare schemes and do not have

official status (Rajan et al., 2020). Sanyal (2018) agrees that women migrants are more prone to risk and are less likely to benefit from food rations/social security welfare schemes due to temporary residency status.

Role of Social Enterprises during the COVID-19 Pandemic

The social enterprise is not a homogenous entity; rather, social enterprises are prevalent across different sectors and organisations, with various names and philosophical beliefs (Joshi & Khare, 2021). Social enterprises aim to work with a notion of prioritising the needs of neglected and disadvantaged communities, with a means of sustainable, innovative, and entrepreneurial skills (Joshi & Khare, 2021). In India, social entrepreneurship holds a promising future, as it can address various socioeconomic and developmental needs (Joshi & Khare, 2021). In India, social enterprises are characterised by geopolitical variations; for instance, in some parts of India, they are known as self-help groups (SHGs), which are microfinance models of entrepreneurship collectively run by a group of individuals, supported by a private organisation, banks, or government agencies to lead community development programmes targeting deprived communities. These SHGs were a pioneer in steering the coronavirus relief measures during the pandemic when migrants were hard hit due to the restrictions imposed by the government to contain the spread of infection. It has been observed that during the pandemic, SHGs were involved in the task of meeting the shortfall in the provision of masks, sanitiser, PPE, and the running of community kitchens, fighting misinformation, and providing banking and financial solutions in hard-to-reach communities (World Bank, 2020). During the migrant crisis, these SHGs ventured into entrepreneurial business models, where they involved locals and farmers in making natural hand sanitisers, thus sustaining the livelihoods of many who lost their income (Rathna, 2020). The members of SHGs seized the opportunity to help the community during the crisis, by engaging in training migrant workers to make masks, gloves, and gowns. They also used various means of social media platforms to spread awareness and run helplines to advise migrants who got stuck due to social restrictions, and to educate them to take care of aged people(Ann, 2020). These findings are similar to those in an article published by Livemint (2020), who reported that SHGs were initially engaged in making masks but are now engaged in a range of interventions, which include door-to-door surveys to create awareness, making sanitisers, running helplines to help migrant women and children stuck in difficult situations, delivering food, and providing medicine to elderly people. Since the pandemic posed challenges relating to access to basic day-to-day amenities, many communities who relied on cash transactions for their survival could not access banking services via digital platforms due to a lack of smartphones; as a result, they were prone to isolation. Thus, considering the complexity of the situation, some SHGs collaborated with the banking sector and employed women as bank representatives in the local areas, providing them with the digital and technical

capacity to assist those communities with banking services (Ann, 2020). This, in turn, strengthened migrant communities because they were able to access remote banking services through these banking agents and activate bank accounts to gain access to government economic relief payments, which were transferred to bank accounts at the time (Ann, 2020). The Kudumbashree networks, which employ 4.4 million women across 300,000 SHGs in Kerala (Ann, 2020), were phenomenal in supporting the public-facing distress due to the COVID-19 pandemic; its "Janakeeya" canteen initiative served meals at very affordable prices and delivered food to quarantined individuals, elderly people, and migrant workers in the relief camps (Jalan & Sen, 2020).

Strengths and Limitations

This literature review included 14 studies, which were diverse in design, methods, and samples. It was observed that the literature search strategy could have been improved. However, due to limited time and resources, the search was executed with the aid of keywords and terms that were identified through the brainstorming session and which yielded good results. To validate the trustworthiness of the findings, peer debriefing was conducted, through which the authors reviewed and discussed various aspects of the research process, such as the selection process, results, and emerging themes, to ensure that the research process was consistent and systematic. The choice of methodology was understandable in some research papers, which enabled the detection of phenomena in the appropriate context for it to be valid, with due regard to cultural and contextual variables (Leung, 2015). Nevertheless, in some studies, the external and internal criteria were not explicit, which could cause bias and could limit the generalisation of findings (Drotar, 2008). Regarding the quality of qualitative studies, there is a limited consensus on how the quality of studies could be evaluated due to different forms of qualitative methods (Dixon-Woods et al., 2005). Considering this, the generalisation of findings should be considered with care, as not all research studies mentioned the transferability of findings to different settings.

Conclusion

The escalating and pervasive nature of the COVID-19 pandemic has distorted the world's thriving economy in an unpredictable and opaque way (Chaudhary et al., 2020). During the COVID-19 pandemic, restrictions implemented as a part of lockdown measures to contain the spread of infection caused problems for many migrant workers, who worked mainly in the informal sector, due to the closure of their work institutions, many of whom were unable to live their lives without working (Pal et al., 2021). The COVID-19 crisis has brought migrants, migration, and policy surrounding the social protection of migrants to the centre stage (Sengupta & Jha, 2020). Amid the COVID-19 pandemic and the related, unprecedented crisis, the impact of

the pandemic is extremely harsh from social, economic, and psychological perspectives (Aneja & Ahuja, 2020). The onset of the pandemic has already widened the existing inequity between rich and poor in India and worldwide, and this would likely increase the negative impact on migrants as a result of job loss, lack of livelihood, and fear of infection (Aneja & Ahuja, 2020). Despite resultant uncertainties, social enterprises have emerged as a ray of hope, due to their innovative and sustainable ways of working to support migrants and strengthen COVID-19 relief services. Since the pandemic, the world has faced some tough challenges in the way it functions and responds to the needs of the population; at this crucial point in time, the world needs a successful response to the challenges, critical thinking on current policies to ensure resources are distributed equally, and an environment that is supportive of social enterprises (Oberoi et al., 2021). It is widely accepted that social enterprises are a valuable asset for a sustainable future, as they can influence society by responding to societal challenges and providing solutions to the problems presented (Oberoi et al., 2021). Consequently, it is high time for policymakers and governments to frame policies that define the scope of social enterprises, implement sustainable policies with social entrepreneurship embedded, and empower budding entrepreneurs with skills that would facilitate and support them in the development of change in response to social and societal need, both nationally and globally (Oberoi et al., 2021).

A Note on the Chapter

This chapter has been adapted from an unpublished Master's Research in Public Health thesis by George D. John, entitled: "A Comparative Case Study of the Relationship between Social Enterprise and Migrant Health Patterns within India during COVID-19." The authors would like to thank Dr Stefanie El Madawi for proofreading this piece of work.

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18 A Computational Study of Indian Interstate Migration through the Gender Lens

Niveditta Batra, Mayurakshi Chaudhuri, and Chiranjoy Chattopadhyay

Introduction

The last decades in migration research globally and in Indian contexts have witnessed an exponential growth in the literature on the diverse forms, practices, and politics of migration to illuminate the economic, demographic, geopolitical, and cultural dynamics of movements. A rich amount of scholarship explores the conceptual understanding of human migration and its intersection with various socioeconomic aspects. Particularly in South Asian contexts such as in India, migration paths often reflect global historical trajectories of powerful conditions (e.g., deriving from imperialism and colonialism). Such global historical trajectories often impact locally and inflect mobile people's experiences of structure, agency, and identity negotiations during pre- and post-movements.

Such everyday negotiations explicitly refer to pressure points and movements across multiple geographic and social scales where axes of differentiations are constantly negotiated and redefined via changing subjectivities (Chaudhuri and Thimm 2018). The resulting social status positions are also heavily informed by the subject's gender, race, ethnicity, class, religion, sexuality, and nationality, to name a few axes of differentiations, and are popularly known as people's intersectionalities. About two decades ago, cultural anthropologists Sarah Mahler and Patricia Pessar (2006) argued for bringing gender from the periphery to the core of migration studies. They argued that although gender had conceptually developed beyond just a variable in social science writing on migration, it was still not brought to the core of discussion in migration scholarship. Along similar strands, migrants' experiences through a gender lens were observed in works by Espiritu (1999, 628–647) and Sassen (1988), where viewing migration through the gender lens formed the core of the debate of migration and globalisation.

Furthermore, in the literature on gender and migration, attention to aspects like education and politics has also been noted. Brown (2021) presents a key argument that since there is a global need for cheap, replaceable labour, women have been negotiating their roles and rights in destination countries while experiencing the freedom of mobility. Diasporic transnationalism makes space for marginalised people to create their own identities. On

DOI: 10.4324/9781003490234-18

a similar note, gender politics has also seen a significant involvement in the negotiation for women's rights and representation (Mageza 2020). The literature on Indian international migrants has observed a gradual feminisation of migration in the last decade (Sivakumar 2021). Some existing work also emphasises narratives of the non-male migrant population of migrants. For example, one of the questions asked by Yeoh and Ramdas (2014a; 2014b) is, what is the relation between the construction of masculinity and masculine ideologies, and migration, mobility, and transnationalism, on the other? Over the decades, gender and migration scholars have advanced the field by bringing in multidisciplinary lenses to understand gender in migration, such as through lenses of intersectionality (Chaudhuri and Thimm 2018; Thimm and Chaudhuri 2019), yet, gender in migration is still comparatively an under-researched area worldwide.

In this chapter, we aim to contribute to existing scholarship on gender and migration by employing a rather understudied method, particularly in Indian contexts – computational approaches to studying intra-national or internal migration in India to identify gendered patterns of migration. As a conceptual framework, we acknowledge the fluidity of "gender" (as different from the statistical variable "sex" (i.e., female or male). In this chapter, we use "gender" to denote this fluidity in addition to the data used here (which reflects the statistical variable "sex," i.e., female or male).

Quantitative Studies on Gender and Migration within India

Researchers believe that the scholarship on the history of migration in the Indian subcontinent may be attributed to issues such as caste, joint families, diversity of language and culture, and agrarian and semi-feudal land relations. Since the new economic policy in 1991 (popularly known as the liberalisation of the Indian economy), migration (internal and international) has emerged to be an important phenomenon economically, politically, and socially, but research on migration continues to find low priority in the Indian context. The scant research on intra-national or internal migration in India focuses on available data from Demographic Health Surveys (National Family Health Surveys), the Indian census, and National Sample Surveys. There are very few recent studies on India's internal migration and those that exist are demographic in nature.

Emphasis on migration in Indian contexts is found heavily using an international lens. A significant focus has been made on immigrants from various states in India moving to various parts of the globe. For example, a study on the Punjabi community that has moved from India to Canada can be seen in the work by Dyck (2007). Here, the authors have chosen two groups of migrant women in British Columbia, Canada: South Asian Sikhs from Punjab, India, and Afghan-Muslim refugees. The authors compared the routine practices of such migrant *women*, such as their places of work, and how they create a "healthy space" as they cater to their families' health and food

requirements at the same time. Another example is illustrated by Walton (2004a; 2004b), where the authors have focused on the migrant networks of the Punjab-Canada population. They have studied marriage migration networks to show how the spouse selection processes have now become much more globalised for certain diasporic communities. Examining contexts of gender and transnationalism, Farrales (2020) has studied how movement across national boundaries can create conditions for subjectivity and also highlights how new norms and power relations are formed among different genders and sexualities due to migration and other forms of mobility.

In terms of internal migration in India, the availability of adequate quantitative data has been a restraining factor for research and analysis. Limited and pioneering works in this regard have been provided by Rajan (2018) and Bhagat and Keshri (2020). Bhagat and Keshri (2020) provides a comprehensive analysis of internal migration in India. According to the study, various push factors of migration are the need for employment, education, and marriage. Rajan (2018) provides a statistical analysis of internal migration in the light of feminism in the Kerala Migration Survey. This analysis brings out how women, either wives, mothers, or other primary relatives of male migrants, who stay back in the homeland, become the sole decision-makers in the household.

In India, migration research has generally observed numerous gaps in the literature across multiple domains, causing the under-consideration of the migrant population by the government (Rajan,2020; Rajan et al, 2020). Intra-national migration or interstate migration exhibits a complex movement of people that administrative surveys and census data fail to capture (Datta 2013). However, in recent years, studies have expanded to drawing observations from multiple administrative data and surveys and also been expanding the subject of research from migrants to the migrants' families and those who have been left behind (Rajan 2018).

A general trend of migration is the movement of people within regions or to neighbouring regions (Abel 2014). Observing an exploratory analysis by Akbari (2021) on international migration data taken from the United Nations Global Migration Database (UNGMD) for the year 2017, the author discussed two distinct migration patterns: "International Migratory Highways" and "Migratory Clusters." Some asymmetric migration paths through which the major international migration takes place are termed "International Migratory Highways," and the term "Migratory Cluster" is used for a group of countries that have higher levels of inter-country exchanges of migrants among them (Akbari 2021).

However, such studies have been rather scant with respect to intra-national migration in India. The plausible reasons for this are the unavailability of timely data and insufficient analysis of the pre-existing data source. COVID-19 has also highlighted the need for finding alternative data collection methodologies for migration studies (Kumar 2020) since internal migration in India has largely been ignored in national policymaking (Nizam 2022; Rajan 2020).

Along the lines of improving methods of data collection by taking advantage of digital technologies, the availability of granular data to get an insight into migration is also increasing (Sîrbu 2021). On an international scale, Garha (2019) has constructed techniques to collect data on the Indian diaspora from various countries of destination. This helps to quantify the size of the Indian diaspora population and explore the internal diversity of the diaspora population. Similarly, with the use of online Facebook Network data, selectively available for Meta research, Sahai (2022) has brought out the aggregated and de-identified data to document descriptive findings on spatial mobility in India. But the limitation of the migration study remains the same, i.e., the unavailability of internal migration data and their analysis.

To advance our research by employing computational methods to understand gendered patterns in Indian internal migration, we use one of the readily available datasets (although with their limitations): Census of India. The Census of India is a decadal dataset, which provides an official source of numerical data on the population of India, including the people who have not been living at their place of birth. Based on such parameters, the Census of India captures numerous factors to draw a comprehensive picture of India's migrant population within the country, such as the age of migrants, reasons for migration, and urban/rural areas of the source/destination state. Bhagat (2008), for example, draws a comparison on the survey questions based on migration that had been included in various Censuses (of India) across multiple decades. He also provided an assessment of the various parameters to determine migration status and a comparison of migration data derived from census data and the National Sample Survey (Bhagat 2008). At present, other than the Census of India and the National Sample Survey Organisation, the Indian Human Development Survey (IHDS) and Protector of Emigrants (POE) also provide administrative data that hold a section contributing to Indian population migration. Scholars such as Saikia and Bora (2018) leverage the IHDS data to argue the differences in how healthcare has been utilised by different genders in India. In this research, we turn to the Census of India and contribute to extracting gendered migration patterns across the country through computational approaches.

Computational Approaches to Studying Internal Migration Using Census of India Data: Through the Gender Lens

Research Design

This research examines the interstate analysis of Indian migration and is directed towards identifying migration patterns longitudinally. In doing so, we leverage the national administrative data on migration stocks which bring insight into the socio-spatial characteristics of the interstate migration network and its structure in India. This study is conducted based on primary data collected under the Indian census of 2011 and performed data analysis and network analysis over the migration network of this data.

Through the outcomes, we carve out how the key migration patterns in India vary from 1990 to 2011, and how they differ for male and female migrants.

The Indian census data 2011 categorises migrants based on the number of years they have been living in the destination state, ranging from 1990 to 2010. This holds the classification of migrants based on age, sex, rural/urban area of enumeration, etc. This data contributes to creating a state-wide network of migrants by the application of network theory methods. Our methodology thus turns towards the following main steps: data pre-processing, data analysis, migration network creation, and network analysis. These methods are discussed in detail in the following section.

Data and Methods

This study is based on the Indian migration flow data, Census of India. The data can be accessed from the Census Digital Library.[1] This dataset contains the state-wise count of migrants categorised by place of last residence, age, sex, the reason for migration, and duration of residence. For our reference, Table 18.1 contains the encoding of states and union territories for all the pictorial representations in this document.

In the data, the "duration of last residence" signifies the count of migrants who have been living in the destination state for a certain number of years, dividing the population into the following categories: less than 1 year, 1–4 years, 5–9 years, 10–19 years, 20+ years, and duration not listed. Thus, the census data of 2011 holds the count of people who migrated in the last 0 to 20+ years.

Our research in this chapter is based on two time frames till 2011: "the last year" as stated in census 2011, i.e., 2010–2011, and "the last decade," i.e., 2001–2011. The count of the total number of interstate migrants from one state to another till 2011 in India is pictorially represented in Figure 18.1. From this illustration, one can observe that the migration towards the north-eastern states of India is significantly less, while Maharashtra and Delhi record significantly high numbers. However, one common factor that can be observed from this illustration is that for most of the interstate migration, Uttar Pradesh is the major contributor in terms of the source state.

Figure 18.2 represents the population pyramid that depicts the age range of the population on which this work has been conducted. The pyramid shape is formed because the percentage of young people in a population is high, and the percentage of older people is low. Figure 18.2 provides valuable information about the demographic characteristics of a population in terms of size and age distribution among the migrants.

The methods that we adopted in this research, particularly here, is broadly categorised as: (i) structural analysis of migration networks and (ii) community detection of migration networks.

Table 18.1 State codes used for visualisations

State Code	*State/Union Territory*
01	Jammu and Kashmir
02	Himachal Pradesh
03	Punjab
04	Chandigarh
05	Uttarakhand
06	Haryana
07	Delhi
08	Rajasthan
09	Uttar Pradesh
10	Bihar
11	Sikkim
12	Arunachal Pradesh
13	Nagaland
14	Manipur
15	Mizoram
16	Tripura
17	Meghalaya
18	Assam
19	West Bengal
20	Jharkhand
21	Odisha
22	Chhattisgarh
23	Madhya Pradesh
24	Gujarat
25	Daman and Diu
26	Dadra and Nagar Haveli
27	Maharashtra
28	Andhra Pradesh
29	Karnataka
30	Goa
31	Lakshadweep
32	Kerala
33	Tamil Nadu
34	Puducherry
35	Andaman and Nicobar Islands

Structural Analysis of Migration Networks

Through structural analysis of migration networks, an exploratory network structure analysis has been performed on the Indian census migration data, by creating a "spatial network" (Barthelemy 2011, 1) of the Indian states and union territories. Similar work was initially proposed by Aleskerov (2016, 177–185), for spatial networks and representing all the countries involved in international migration in a graph, whose directed edges represented the flow of people between two countries.

Considering 28 states and 7 union territories of India at the time of census-2011 data collection, an $m \times m$ matrix is formed where $m = 35$. The first

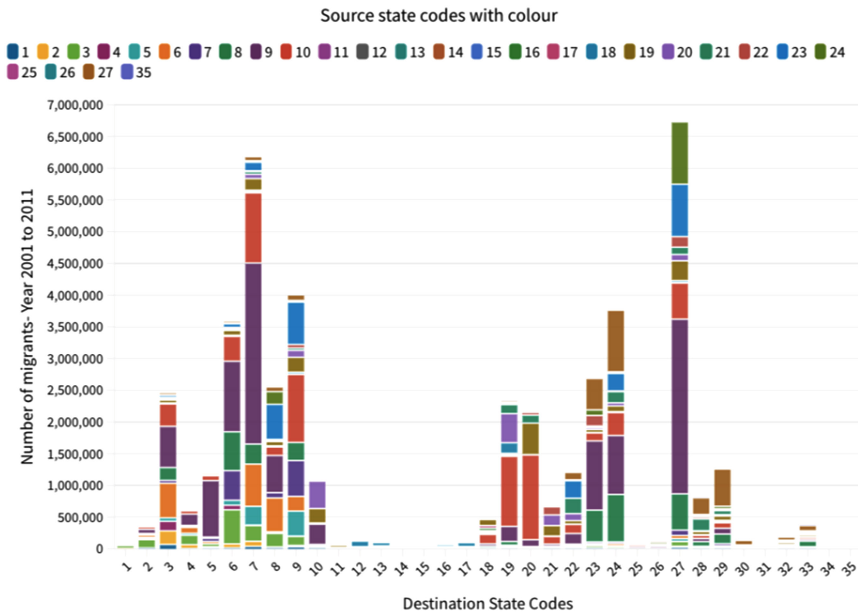


Figure 18.1 An illustration of the interstate migration based on the Census 2011 highlighting the count of migrants.

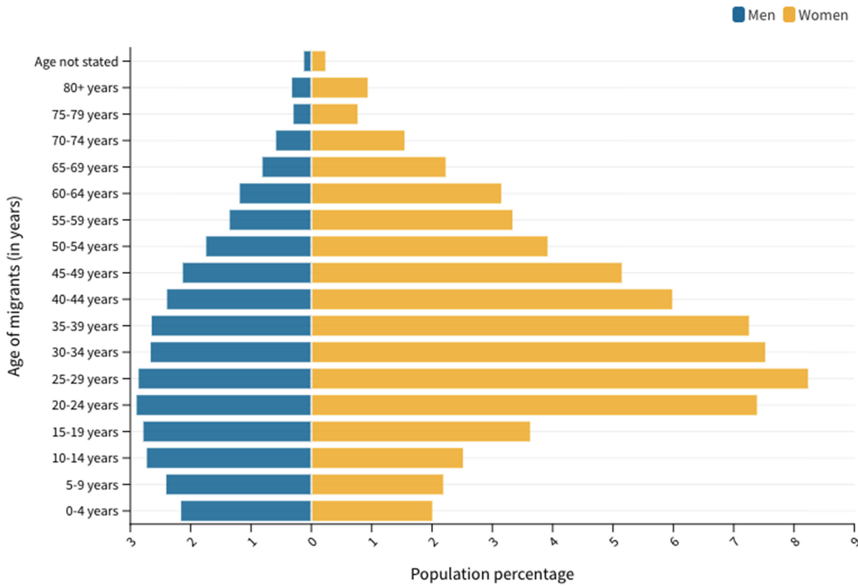


Figure 18.2 Population Pyramid: Indian Census 2011.

row represents the destination state and the first column represents the state of origin of the migrant. In the matrix, a value, $N_{i,j}$, showcases the number of migrants, N, from a source state i to a destination state j. The values i and j range from 1 to 35, that is, $1 \le i, j \le 35$, as the number of states captured in the census migration dataset is 35. Then, this matrix is taken to create a graph for studying the Indian migration network structure.

In a migration network, a node represents the entity of study, which, in our study, is a state/union territory for Indian migration. The Indian migration network created from this data is a graph-based representation of the chord diagram displayed in Figure 18.3. Referring to Table 18.1, nodes 1–35 in our Indian migration network represent the states and the union territories of India. The edges between them display the bi-directional flow of the population. The unidirectional edge "E_{ab}" directed out of node "a" to node "b" represents the flow of migrants from an entity "a" to an entity "b." The weight of this edge is the count of people migrated. The resultant graph is bi-directional and weighted.

Since the migration network in this work is a weighted graph in nature, this graph can be defined as G, such that $G = (V, E)$, where V is the set of vertices and E is the set of edges.

For this graph, G, let $W(u, v)$ be the weight of the edge between the node "u" and the node "v" and $N(u)$ = neighbour set of a node "u." For a node "u," the degree k_u is defined as

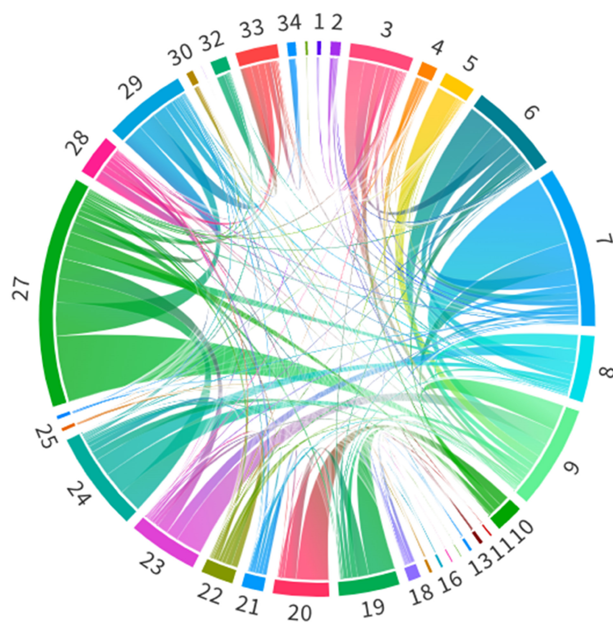


Figure 18.3 Interstate migrant flow till 2011.

$k_u = \sum_{v \in Nu} W_{uv}$

For the Indian migration network, the number of nodes, the number of edges, and the average weight of the edges were calculated. Average weight signifies the average count of migrant flows from one state/union territory to another. The node pairs without edges were also calculated. This represents the number of pairs of states/union territories that have no exchange of people among them at all. Then, the count of asymmetric node pairs was calculated, which signifies the number of pairs of states/union territories that show an asymmetric nature in the migrant flows.

Community Detection on Migration Network

Generally, a community, for a network $G = (V, E)$, denotes a sub-graph of the network containing a set $V_c \subseteq V$ of the network entities that are associated with a common element of interest (Papadopoulos et al. 2012, 515–554). Here, in the context of the Indian migration flow, a common element of interest for defining a community is the count of people exchanged between two union territories/states. Thus, for this study, the weight w_{ab} of an edge "*E*" between two vertices "*a*" and "*b*" is the number of people who migrated from state "*a*" to state "*b*" in a given period, and the weight w_{ba} is the number of people migrated from state "*b*" to state "*a*" in a given period. For a sub-graph to be called a community, the weight of the edges within the vertices of the sub-graph is a significant factor, as the nodes inside a community are intensely connected.

For an integer i, C_i is the ith community of a graph G. For the node "*u*" of a sub-graph "*G*," and the community "*C*," the belonging degree, $B(u, C)$, is the measure of belongingness of the node "*u*" in the community "*C*." Belonging degree, $B(u, C)$, for a node "*u*," in a community "*C*," is defined as follows:

$B(u, C) = (\sum_{v \in C} w_{uv})/k_u$

Once the belonging degree of a node "*u*" has been calculated, the conductance function of a community is one of the parameters for finding community goodness. The conductance of a community C is defined as

$\Phi(C) = \mathrm{cut}(C, G \backslash C)/w_C$,

where $\mathrm{cut}(C, G \backslash C)$ = weight of the cut edges of C,

and w_C = weight of all edges in C

(including the cut edge).

The community detection algorithm suggested by Lu (2013, 179–184) has been implemented for identifying state communities.

Discussions and Inferences

The Indian migration network contains net population increase/decrease as the edge weight. The net population change has captured the number of people who have been living outside their place of birth for 0 to more than 20 years. Identification of the properties of the migrant network across 28 states and seven union territories of India has been shown in Table 18.2. The average weight of edges represents the average number of migrants moved from one state to another for every state pair.

In continuation to this, Table 18.3 shows the analysis of the migrant population till 2011, stating the top 10 states that have the most significant exchange of population till 2011.

The identification of communities proceeds with an application of a conductance-based community detection algorithm, proposed by Lu (2013). This results in 11 sets of communities for the Indian migration network, as shown in Figure 18.4. These 11 communities of states signify that the states within the same community have had a significant exchange of population among them for the last 20 years and more.

Table 18.2 Statistical analysis of interstate migration network in India

Number of nodes	35
Number of edges	1190
Average weight of edges	45,600.629
Pairs without migration	6
Asymmetric Migration Pairs	5
State with highest in-migration	Maharashtra
State with highest out-migration	Uttar Pradesh

Table 18.3 State pairs with the highest exchange of population (sorted from highest to lowest)

Source	*Destination*
Uttar Pradesh	Maharashtra
Karnataka	Maharashtra
Uttar Pradesh	Delhi
Bihar	Delhi
Bihar	Jharkhand
Uttar Pradesh	Haryana
Bihar	West Bengal
Uttar Pradesh	Madhya Pradesh
Bihar	Uttar Pradesh
Gujarat	Maharashtra

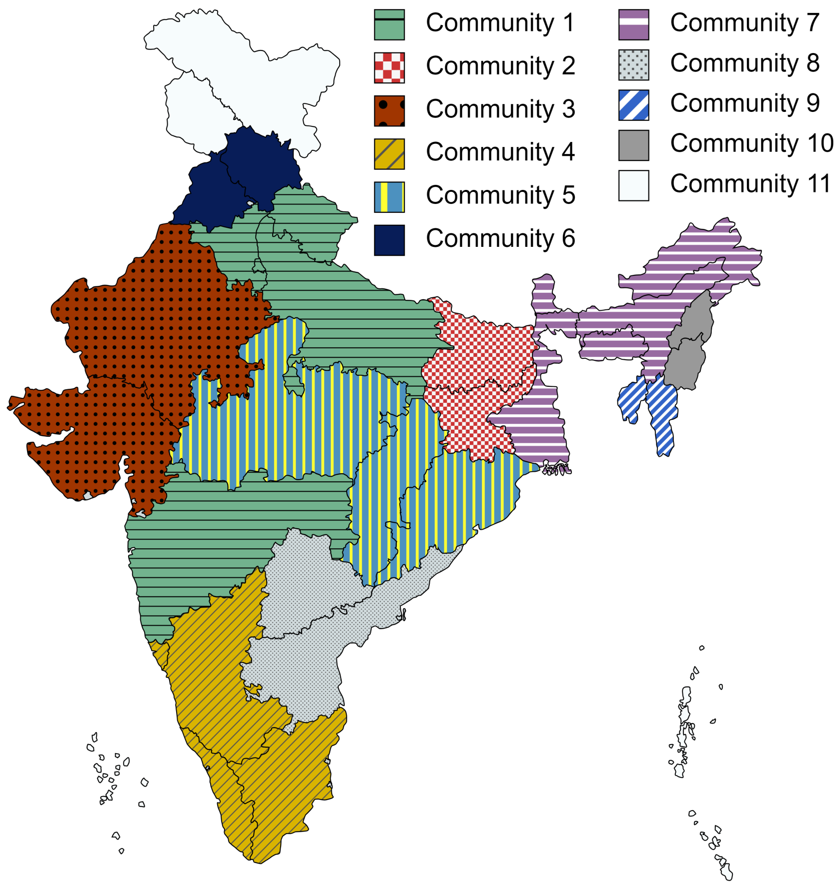


Figure 18.4 Communities of the total migrant population (1990–2011).

Another analysis has been done for the migrant population who has migrated from their state of birth and has been living in the destination state for less than 1 year, as reported by them in the 2011 census. This result is shown in Figure 18.5.

For female migrants, a similar analysis has been done for two distinct time frames. The first one is the communities for those who have been living in the destination state for 0–20 years till 2011, as shown in Figure 18.6. The second, as shown in Figure 18.7, shows the communities of those female migrants who have been living in the destination state for less than 1 year till 2011, i.e., who have migrated in the year 2010.

The communities for male migrants have been represented in Figures 18.8 and 18.9. The results show the comparison between communities of male migrants who have been living in the destination state for 0–20 years vs the

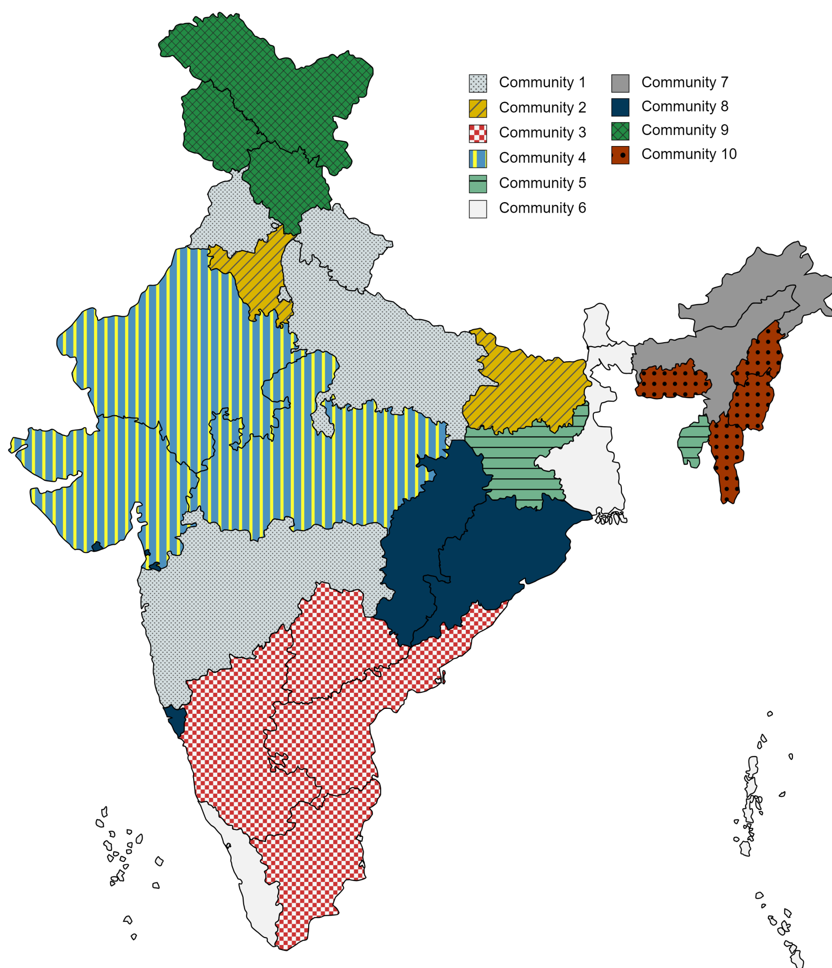


Figure 18.5 Communities of the total migrant population in one year (2010–2011).

male migrants who have recently migrated within one year before 2011, i.e., who migrated in the year 2010.

From these communities, the following conclusion can be drawn:

1. There is a significant increase in the community size over the two decades, from 1990 to 2011, highlighting that female migrants are not only migrating to their "first-neighbour" states but also increasingly migrating to northern and central Indian states.

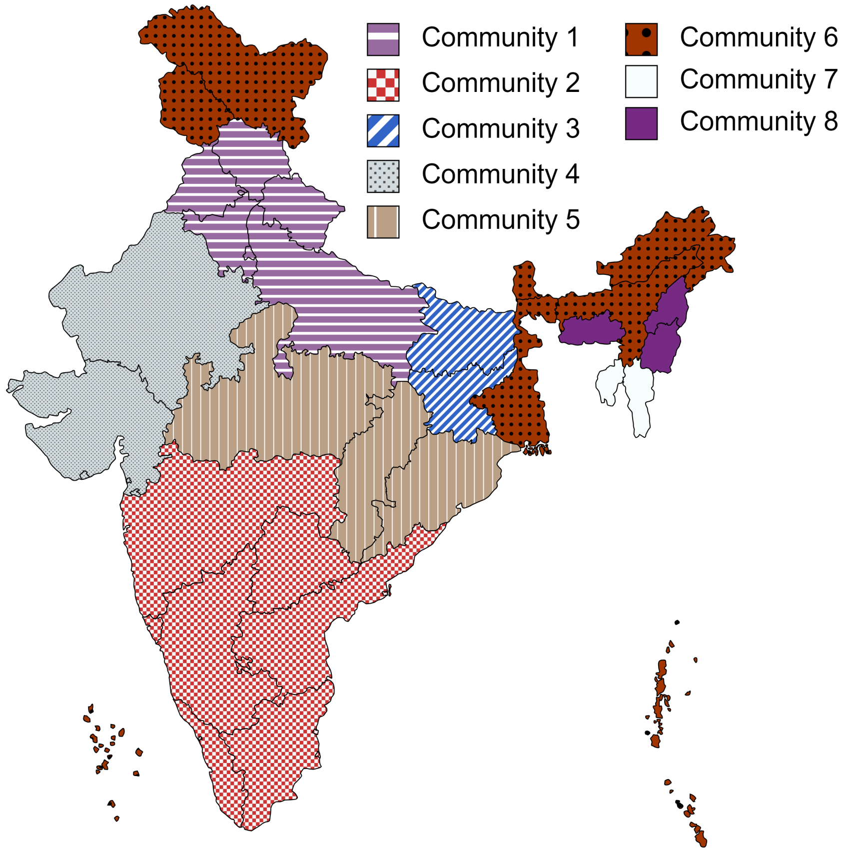


Figure 18.6 Communities of the female migrant population (1990–2011).

2. Majority of the migratory movements happened in the neighbouring states of India, except for two cases: migration between Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra for male migrants and migration between Jammu and Kashmir and some of the north-eastern states for both male and female migrants.

Observing these patterns and taking the Indian census-2011 into account, we can deduce that the increase in the community size from 1990 to 2011 for female migrants is because 78.1% of the total female migrants migrated due to marriage in 1990, and this percentage reduced to 37.69% in 2010. However, this percentage has not changed drastically for men, for whom the primary reason for migration has been work and employment for a population of 30.4% and 32.74% in the time frame of 1990–2011 and 2010–2011, respectively.

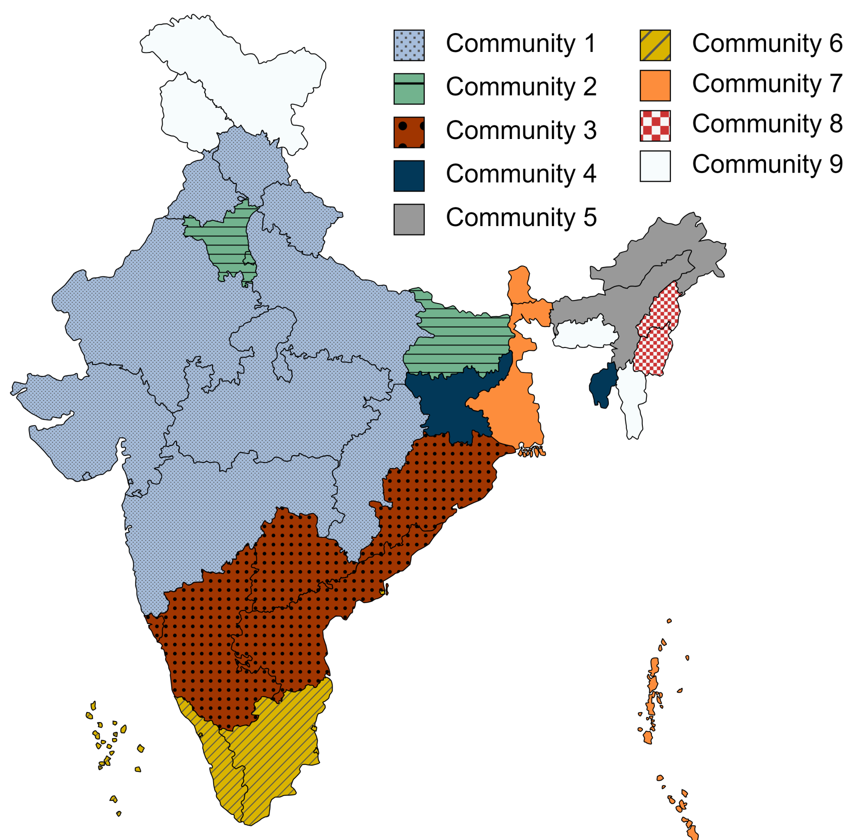


Figure 18.7 Communities of the female migrant population in one year (2010–2011).

Figure 18.10 portrays three pie charts, showing the distribution of the percentage of the reasons for migration in India. The first one shows the reasons for the total population, including male and female migrants. According to that, about 50% of interstate migration is due to marriage. But if we look into the male-to-female ratio of migrants, we can see that the count of female migrants reported under the Indian census is 2.11 times more than the count of male migrants reported in 2011.

Next, we draw a state-wise analysis of reasons for migration and extract a comparison of the reasons for migration "to" a particular state in India. This comparison is shown in Figure 18.11. We can observe a peak in the line graph at Uttar Pradesh, followed by Bihar, Maharashtra, West Bengal, and then to Rajasthan, where the count of females who migrated due to marriage, rises heavily.

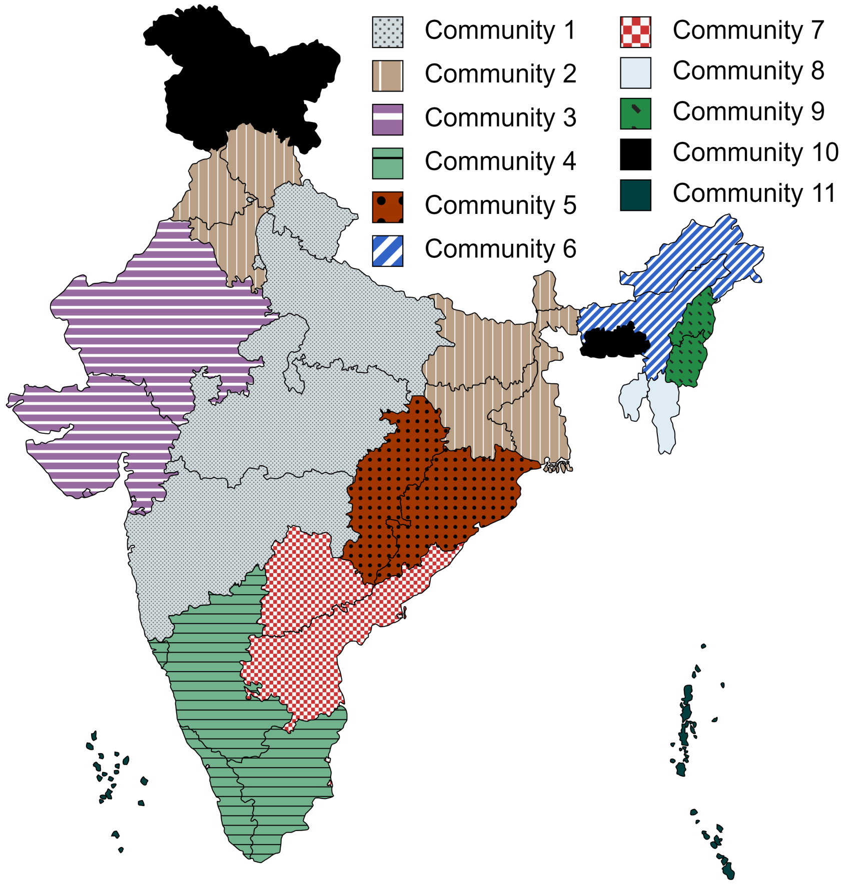


Figure 18.8 Communities of the male migrant population (1990–2011).

Comparing the same with the migration from 2010 to 2011, the trend has been pictorially represented in Figure 18.12. Here also, we can observe a huge rise in the graph for females migrating due to marriage, in Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, West Bengal, and Bihar. This signifies that the top five states to observe the highest number of women in-migrants due to marriage remain the same, but the order of the states (from highest to lowest) has changed.

Another observation that can be drawn from this comparison is that from 2010 to 2011, Maharashtra also witnessed a peak in male migrants who make a temporary home in Maharashtra for work/employment. From 1990 to 2011, Maharashtra was still the leading state for male in-migrants, but the count of male migrants never crossed the count of female migrants, unlike in the last one year.

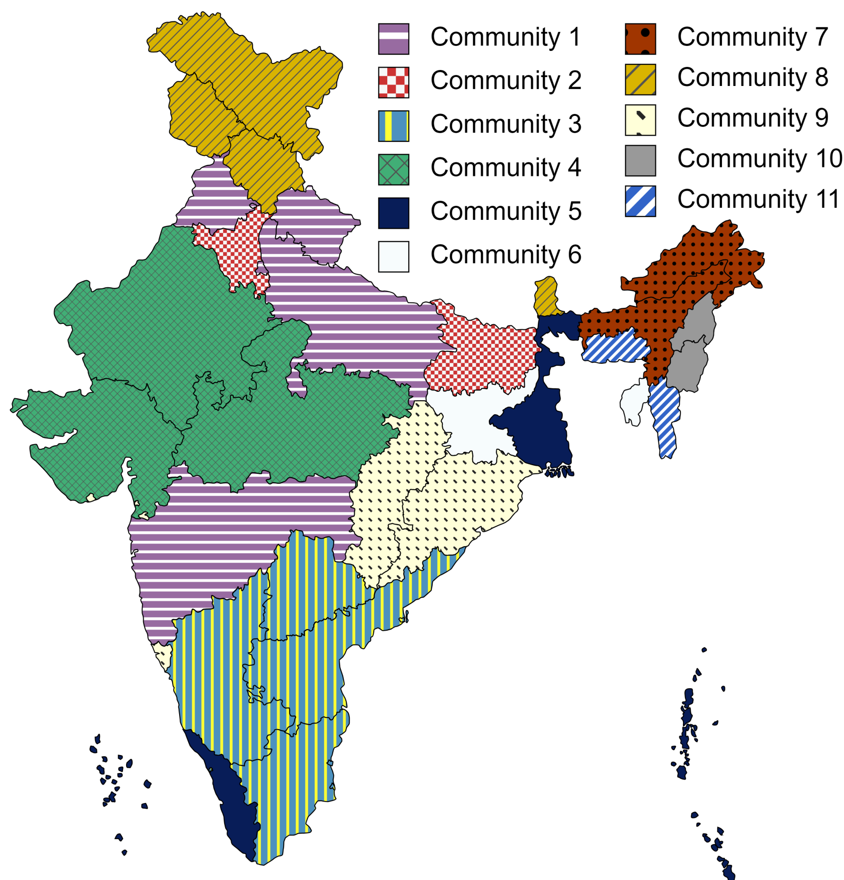


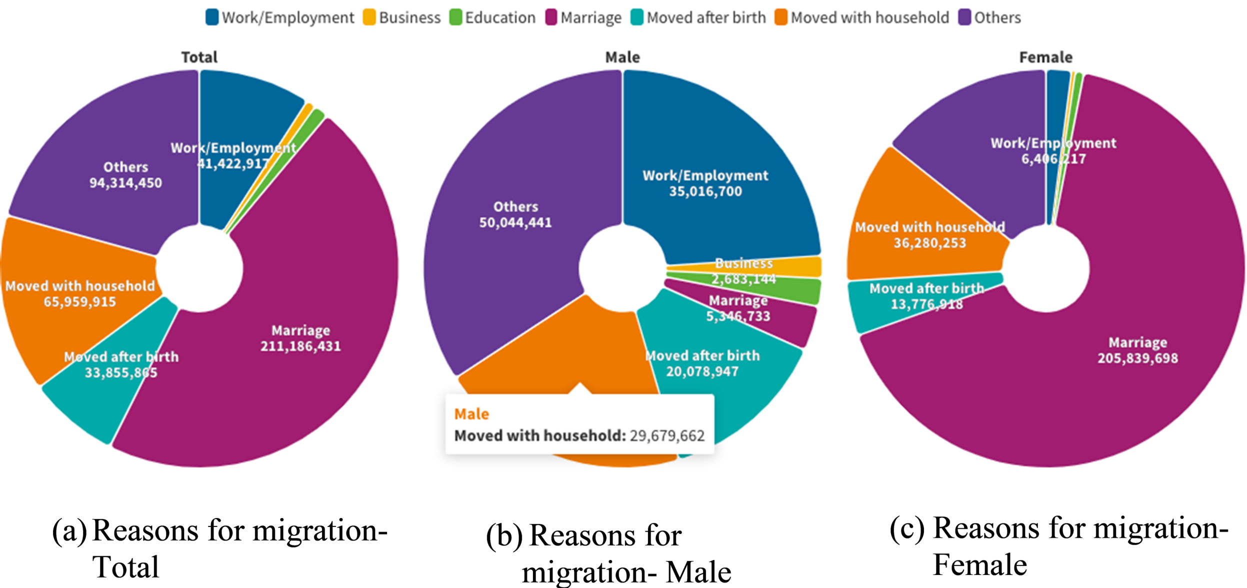
Figure 18.9 Communities of the male migrant population in one year (2010–2011).

In Figure 18.13, we visualise the trends of the top five in-migrant states (migrant-receiving states), viz. Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra, West Bengal, and Rajasthan, for the period 1990–2011 to find out the distribution of migrants' states of birth.

However, we suggest that more evidence is needed in order to derive certain conclusions on why the migratory movement has happened over the years in two particular areas: Jammu and Kashmir and some north-eastern states (for example, Sikkim and Meghalaya).

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have produced an analysis of interstate migration in India using the last available Census of India (2011). We extract the significant



(a) Reasons for migration- Total

(b) Reasons for migration- Male

(c) Reasons for migration- Female

Figure 18.10 Reasons for migration for total, male, and female population based on Indian census-2011.

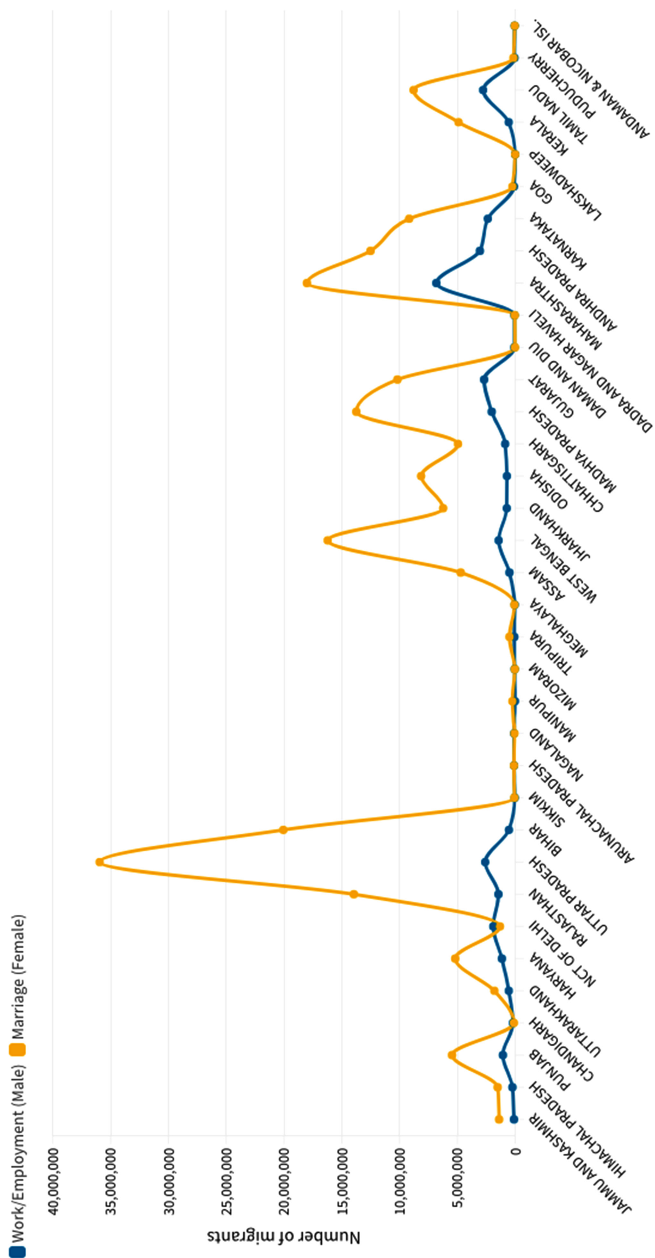


Figure 18.11 Comparison of reasons for migration to Indian states: male vs. female from 1990 to 2011.

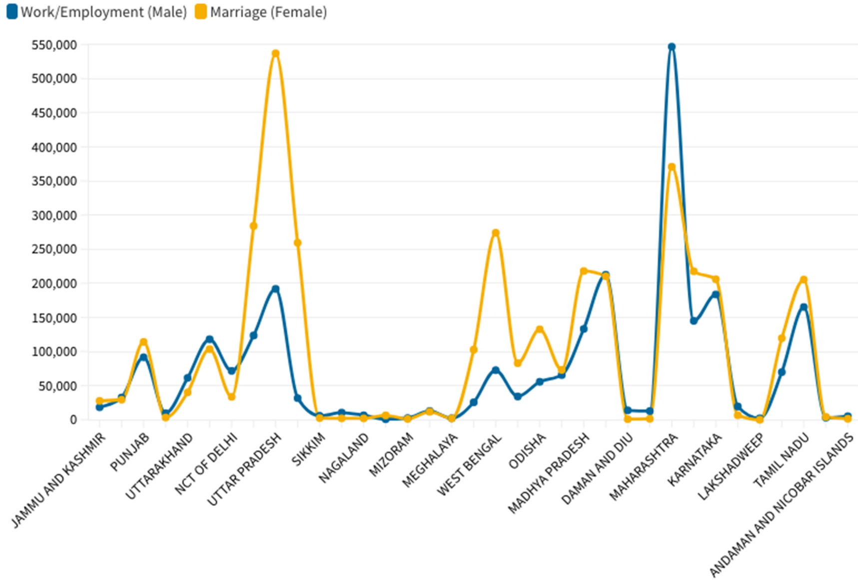
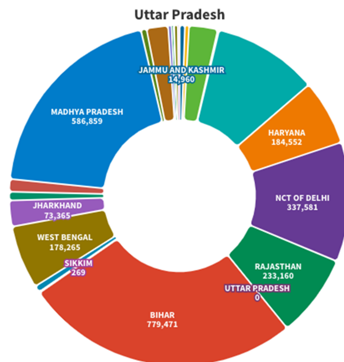


Figure 18.12 Comparison of reasons for migration to Indian states: male vs. female from 2010 to 2011.

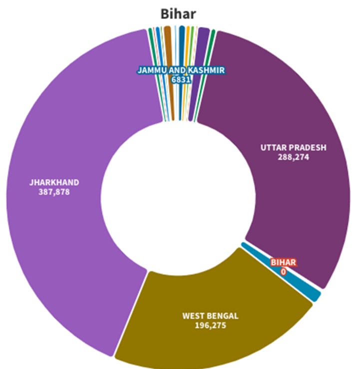
migrant communities of Indian states and union territories and show how these communities differ for male and female migrants. We conclude with the reasons behind these migratory patterns for male and female migrants and see how they have changed from 1990 to 2011.

According to the Indian census, anyone who has not been living at their place of birth for more than one year is considered a migrant. As the work progresses towards fetching the intricate details of Indian migration, the periodicity of the Indian census may cause a challenge. Since the Indian census is conducted after every decade, it can only capture the net migration flow after one decade. If a migrant travels from one state to another, then to a third, the census can only record the migration from the first to the third state within a decade. An improved method for data collection for Indian migration is required that holds the potential to capture these nuanced forms of intrastate migration in India. Since collecting data from a population of over 1.38 billion people can be costly, the census may require an improved data collection method to capture these nuances of migration.

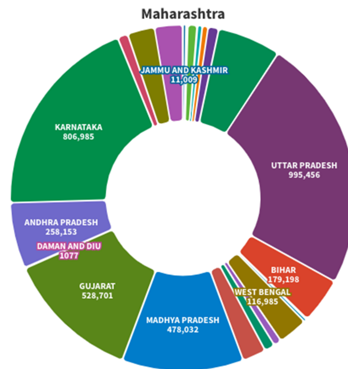
Future plans of this research include a comparative analysis of the migration data for two consecutive decades once the migration stock data of the Census of India 2023 is available. We hope that this analysis and future research will bring in new directions to a comparative understanding between data collection methods and techniques using the Census of India data and employing interdisciplinary perspectives.



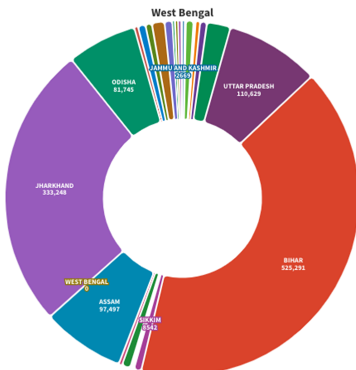
(a) Destination state: Uttar Pradesh



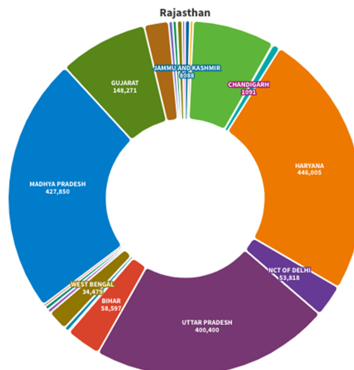
(b) Destination state: Bihar



(c) Destination state: Maharashtra



(d) Destination state: West Bengal



(e) Destination state: Rajasthan

Figure 18.13 Total migrants coming from other states to the corresponding destination states (1990–2011).

Note

1 https://censusindia.gov.in/nada/index.php/catalog/11043. Accessed on: April 26, 2023.

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19 Migration and Urban Informal Labour Market

A Study of *Labour Addas* in the City of Hyderabad

Poulomi Bhattacharya and K Jafar

Introduction and Background

Migration, especially to the urban areas and informal sectors, plays an important role in the urban process in India. The crisis in the farm sector and the limited growth of non-farm employment in rural areas push thousands of families into distress and move out of their villages. While some of them manage to find their livelihoods and live in cities, a large number of them do not have any form of capital or support to access the opportunities. They engage in vulnerable and precarious jobs available in the urban informal sector. Some sectors like the construction sector heavily depend on migrant workers. While migrant workers make the cities liveable, their existence in cities is often a continuous struggle including in the workplace and outside.

The city of Hyderabad is known for its history and the same has played a key role in transforming the city as one of the metropolitan areas in the country. In this process, there are many instances which highlight the uneven and exclusive nature of urban growth. For instance, the development of a high-tech city as the ITC and knowledge hub seems to have reduced the importance of the old walled city and triggered the urban crisis in the old city. Along with the natural growth in the city's population, the steady increase in the number of migrants in the city adds further pressure. The migrated population constitutes a large part of the informal economy of this city and engages themselves in various types of occupations like street food vending, domestic help, working as apartment security guards, seasonal construction workers, etc.

The magnitude of the informal urban economy in the city and the size of the labour force engaged with it can be studied from multiple angles. Our current focus is limited to urban informal workers in *Labour Addas*, where labourers assemble in specific places in the city and are hired on a daily basis to undertake multiple tasks in different parts of the city. Like any other Indian city, Hyderabad also witnesses the steady growth of *Labour Addas*in different parts of the city and its critical role in the urban informal economy. Based on a micro-study conducted in the city of Hyderabad, the chapter attempts (1) to understand the socio-economic and working conditions of workers in *Labour Addas* of Hyderabad, (2) to understand the dynamics

DOI: 10.4324/9781003490234-19

of migrations among the workers in *Labour Addas* in Hyderabad, and (3) to assess the living standards of workers in *Labour Addas*in Hyderabad. Following the introduction and brief background, this chapter presents a review of the literature on migration and the informal labour market in section ‘Migration and Informal Labour Market: A Review’ . Section ‘Data and Methodology’ discusses the data and methodology used, followed by section ‘Results and Discussion’ which presents the results. The final section ‘Concluding Remarks’ delineates the concluding remarks.

Migration and Informal Labour Market: A Review

As the sectoral transformation of the Indian economy indicates, there has been a steady decline in the contribution of agriculture to the country’s national income and employment. Once agriculture turns into an unproductive source of livelihood and the manufacturing sector or other non-farm sectors fail to engage them productively, it eventually leads to the concentration of workers in the urban informal economy. India’s experience with sectoral transformation also indicates the steady growth of the informal economy and its contribution towards output and employment. Almost 58% of workers in the formal sector are informally employed; growth of employment across all sectors has been of this kind (Sharma, 2014; Srivastava, 2012). The link between the informal sector and the supply chain in the formal sector also contributes to its growth; sometimes the informal sector grows faster and wider to accommodate more workers. Other factors like easy access, flexibility, and new opportunities also lead to its steady growth. Informal workers tend to engage more with home-based workers and street vendors (Sripriya, 2022). Besides the rural and agrarian distress, factors like better wages, opportunities in the cities, or personal reasons also contribute to migration. Along with the natural growth in the urban population, the inflow of unskilled or semi-skilled workers from the rural areas builds more pressure on the urban governance and labour markets (Mitra, 1994). Given the low skill base and capital base, most of these workers have to engage in petty activities in the informal sector and may face multiple challenges in surviving in the city. Employers in the informal sector also sometimes choose to remain in the informal sector in order to enjoy the flexibility attached to the informal labour (Maiti & Mitra, 2010).

Distress-driven inter-state migrants are more vulnerable in their destinations. They face challenges in accessing basic services including food, healthcare, and housing and are forced to manage conflicts and disputes at worksites and outside. The majority of them are casual workers engaged in the lower tiers of the urban informal economy, which hardly offers any social and economic safety net. Largely, long-distance migration is dominated by male migrants and most of them migrate without families and live in precarious conditions. Female migration tends to be limited to specific areas like domestic work, care service, and other wage works (Jafar, & Kalaiyarasan, 2022).

Migrant workers play a critical role in cities' growth and everyday living but cities exclude them from accessing most of its benefits; the vulnerabilities and exploitations faced by the migrant workers make cities an exclusionary space against the claims of inclusive urbanisation or cities (Chandrasekhar & Mitra 2019; Kundu 2009; Prasad, 2021).

Several studies have focussed on migration and the informal labour market in India. Some studies have focussed on issues pertaining to street food vendors (Bhowmik (2005),), Mahadevis et al. (2014), McKay et al. (2016), D'Souza (2010)). These have identified the major challenges faced by street food vendors such as long working hours, financial insecurity, threat of eviction, etc. In fact, even after the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act 2014, the fear of eviction and uncertainty prevailed in some states because of the poor implementation of this act (Mahadevis et al., 2014). A set of studies on migrated domestic workers such as those by D'Souza (2010) and , Paul et al. (2011), and have identified lower wages, lack of work security, sexual and physical harassment at workplace, and lack of rights as major problems for the domestic workers. Such concerns were flagged by the National Commission for Women (NCW), which came up with the Domestic Workers Welfare and Social Security Act, of 2010. However, this bill has not been ratified as an Act yet. The studies on *Labour Adda* workers are less in number in the Indian context. However, some studies like the one by Mukherjee et al. (2009) and Motiram and Naraparaju (2014) conducted in the city of Mumbai revealed a comparatively higher degree of caste fractionalisation among *Labour Addas* and there was a lack and social security of the *Labour Adda* (Labour naka) workers.

Hyderabad's recent experience in emerging as a megacity itself is an interesting case to show the uneven urban growth. The city faces challenges in addressing the high dropout rate, poor condition of housing, issues related to safe drinking water and cooking fuel, poor access to formal credit, issues related to gender relations, and implementation of various welfare programmes (Mishra, 2016). The unregulated migration into the urban centres has worsened the urban governance and provision of basic services including shelter, water supply, sewerage and sanitation, healthcare, the public distribution system, and other amenities in India (Kundu, 1993). In Hyderabad, the new migrants entered the city, especially the poorer sections could not find their space except in the old city. Thus, the new urban development and immigration also contributed to the urban crisis and socio-political dynamics within the old city (Engineer, 1991). Within the old city, the unique social and cultural composition and political and economic factors add new dimensions to these patterns.

The development of high-tech city[1] or Cyberabad (depicting cyber towers) has helped Hyderabad in emerging as one of the leading information and communication technology clusters in the country. The state government diverted the major share of the allocation into the development of the high-tech city and prioritising the infrastructure development (like airports,

telephone lines, and railroads) that focuses on the new city (Grondeau, 2007). This reduced the resources available to other areas and thus weakened the public spending in key sectors like health, education, and agriculture in the state and urban development in the older city. Following the larger pattern of migration to the urban areas, many people came to the city in search of new employment opportunities. However, many of them could not find a place that suited their requirement and earnings or the cost of living in the new city was too high for them to manage. Thus, many of these migrant workers found some space outside the new city or within the old city premises and started their lives.

The city of Hyderabad and its experience with migration and informalisation make an interesting case to see how specific processes of urban growth and regional inequality have shaped development in the recent period. Hyderabad with its unique nature of growth attracts a large size of migrants. While migrants constitute 67% of the total population in the city, nearly 7.1% of them are inter-state migrants (Bhagat et al. 2020). This seems to have helped the city in avoiding many issues reported in other megacities in the country. The city of Hyderabad has more than 200 *Labour Addas*, where workers assemble in the morning for finding daily wage work. Some initiatives by organisations such as Action Aid, which tries to support the voices of the urban poor for inclusive development of the city where the demand for providing basic facilities for *Labour Adda* workers has been highlighted. There have been proposals by the Labour Ministry and the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) for providing basic amenities and shelter. On this note, in 2017, the Hyderabad Urban Lab had taken up a study to trace and map the *Labour Addas* and identified the basic facilities available in those *addas* and also roughly traced the place of domicile for *Labour Adda* workers.

Data and Methodology

The chapter is drawn from the primary data collected through structured questionnaire surveys in different *Labour Addas* in the city of Hyderabad.[2] We have conducted the survey on three *Labour Addas* – namely Tolichowki (TC), Mehdipatnam (MP), and Jubilee Hills (JH) in the year 2017. These three addas are located in specific parts of the city with their own history, the pattern of development, social composition, and size. For instance, Tolichowki *Labour Adda* is one of the biggest and oldest addas which has easy access to the high-tech city and new city areas, while it has easy access to the outskirts and old city where most of the workers find their homes. Compared to other addas, Mehdipatnamadda (covering the Vijayanagar Colony road and Sayed Ali Guda) is located within the old city region and hence follows the larger social and cultural dynamics of the old city closely. Being located in one of the prime areas in the city, Jubilee Hills adda also attracts many workers and employers to the adda.

There are some minor differences in the peak hours, beginning and closure of active hours followed in different addas. We conducted the structured questionnaire survey during the active time when a large number of workers assemble in the addas and wait for the work. Hence, we followed a time and space sampling method where units from the target population are sampled during a specific time period at locations where they are likely to assemble (Jain & Sood, 2012). Thus, the study covered a total of 174 *Labour Adda* workers comprising 44 in Jubilee Hills (Near Peaddammagudi Temple), 46 in Towlichowki, and 84 in Mehdipatnam (Near Vijaynagar Colony and Sayed Ali Guda). Broadly, we have covered around 25–30% of the workers gathered during our visits in those *Labour Addas*(between 8.00 am and 11.00 am). The structured questionnaire survey conducted in 2017 focuses on the socio-economic profile of the *Labour Adda*, information on their working conditions, daily earnings, number of days of job availability, and migration dynamics among the *Labour Adda* workers. We use descriptive statistics and frequency tables for reflecting on socio-economic, working, and living conditions for the *Labour Adda* workers in Hyderabad. In order to understand the linguistic, caste, and religious diversity and living conditions, we have also constructed an index of fractionalisation and a living condition deprivation index, as explained in section 'Results and Discussion'.

Results and Discussion

Socio-economic Condition of Labour Adda Workers

The study looked into the socio-economic conditions of workers engaged in the *Labour Addas*. The diversity among the *Labour Addas* in terms of caste religion and mother tongue is quite noteworthy. It can be observed from the table that the majority (78.7) of the workers belong to the Hindu religion followed by Muslims (17.2). A meagre portion of the total workers surveyed also belonged to Christian and other religions (Sikh) (Table 19.1). We can observe that the value of the fractionalisation index is highest in Tolichowki adda as compared to other addas signifying the religious diversity of this adda, which is located close to the highway connecting the old city with the new city of Hyderabad. But the caste composition of the addas does not differ much. Most of the *Labour Adda* workers both Hindu and Muslim belonged to OBC communities.

We have computed the index of fractionalisation in terms of the caste, religion, and mother tongue of the *Labour Adda* workers (Naidu, 1990; Rao, 2016; Motiram and Naraparaju, 2014).

The fractionalisation index (Fi) is defined as: $Fi = 1 - \Sigma(si)^2$

Where the si is the share of workers from the caste (or religion or mother tongue) group in the total population. A higher value of this index indicates greater diversity in terms of caste (religion or mother tongue). Table

Table 19.1 Religion and caste-wise distribution of workers (share in %)

	Jubilee Hills	*Tolichowki*	*Mehdipatnam*	*Total*
Religion				
Hindu	90.9	54.3	85.7	78.7
Muslim	6.8	43.5	8.3	17.2
Christian	0.0	2.2	3.6	2.3
Others	0.0	0.0	2.4	1.1
Index of fractionalisation	*0.19*	*0.52*	*0.27*	*0.34*
Caste				
OBC	47.7	54.3	60.7	55.7
SC	34.1	21.7	22.6	25.3
ST	9.1	6.5	13.1	10.3
Others	9.1	8.7	3.6	6.3
No response	0.0	8.8	0.0	2.7
Index of fractionalisation	*0.64*	*0.64*	*0.53*	*0.62*

Source: Primary survey.

19.1 reveals that the index of fractionalisation in terms of religion is the highest for Tolichowki *Labour Adda* as compared to Jubilee Hills and Mehdipatnamaddas. However, the diversity in terms of caste did not differ much across these *addas*. In a study conducted in the city of Navi Mumbai revealed a little higher degree of caste fractionalisation among *Labour Addas* (Motiram and Naraparaju, 2014). The calculated linguistic fractionalisation index depicts that the linguistic fractionalisation is less in these *Labour Addas* as compared to the addas (Nakas) in Navi Mumbai as reported in Naraparaju's study.

The levels of education show that on the whole 41.4% of the total surveyed workers are illiterate and have not gone to school. In Tolichowki adda the percentage of illiterate is the lowest, whereas in the other addas, the percentage of literates is above 40. About 23 of the *Labour Adda* workers have finished their primary education, 15.5 of these labourers are there in middle school, and 12.2 of the workers have finished their secondary education (Table 19.2). We also found a graduate who has joined this occupation because of non-availability of work; he performs this sundry work.

While looking at the age composition of the workers, we find that most of the workers belong to the age group 31–40 years followed by the age group 21–30 years (42.1% and 35.1%, respectively). The age profile of *Labour Adda* workers in our study corroborates with other studies on migrant workers, which also supports the prevalence of workers aged below 40 as daily labourers (Motiram and Naraparaju, 2014; Srivastava & Sutradhar, 2016).

In several contexts, one's access to the local language helps her or him get into the local labour market and jobs. The majority of the workers follow Telugu as their mother tongue and hence enjoy greater access to the local labour market (Table 19.3). Unlike the *Labour Addas* in Mumbai, the

Table 19.2 Worker's educational status (share in %)

	Jubilee Hills	*Tolichowki*	*Mehdipatnam*	*Total*
Illiterate	45.5	23.9	48.8	41.4
Primary (0–5th grade)	25.0	21.7	22.6	23.0
Middle school (6–8th grade)	13.6	15.2	9.5	12.1
Secondary (9 and 10)	13.6	23.9	11.9	15.5
Senior secondary (11 and 12)	0.0	10.9	2.4	4.0
College dropout	0.0	2.2	4.8	2.9
Graduation	2.3	0.0	0.0	0.6

Source: Primary survey.

Table 19.3 Worker's mother tongue across *Labour Addas* (share in %)

	Jubilee Hills	*Tolichowki*	*Mehdipatnam*	*Total*
Hindi	6.8	6.5	6.0	6.3
Kannada	6.8	6.5	2.4	4.6
Lambari	6.8	2.2	1.2	2.9
Marathi	0.0	0.0	2.4	1.2
Telugu	79.5	82.6	86.9	83.9
Odia	0.0	2.2	1.2	1.1
Index of fractionalisation	0.36	0.30	0.23	0.27

Source: Primary survey.

linguistic diversity in Hyderabad *Labour Addas* is less as evident from the fractionalisation index.

Working Conditions of Labour Adda Workers in Hyderabad

The term 'working condition' covers a wide range of issues including work time, hours of work, time available for rest, remuneration, and physical and mental demands that exist in the workplace. The National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganised Sector (NCEUS) recommended several minimum conditions of work for unorganised workers. These include (i) an eight-hour working day with at least a half-hour break, (ii) one paid day of rest per week, (iii) a statutory national minimum wage for all wage workers and home workers, (iv) penal interest on delayed payment of wages, (v) no deductions from wages in payment of fines, and (vi) the right to organise, etc., adequate safety equipment at the workplace and compensation for accidents, etc. Based on these recommendations for informal sector workers let us now discuss the nature of work performed by *Labour Adda* workers and how far the *Labour Adda* workers qualify these criteria.

Table 19.4 Nature of work across *Labour Addas* (share in %)

	Jubilee Hills	*Tolichowki*	*Mehdipatnam*	*Total*
Mason, mixing, and sand work	61.4	32.6	46.4	46.6
Plumbing	4.5	2.2	1.2	2.3
Tile work	6.8	10.9	2.4	5.7
Wage labourers in construction site, loading, etc.	9.1	28.3	11.9	15.5
Painting	2.3	8.7	15.5	10.3
Supervisory work	0.0	4.3	2.4	2.3
Multiple work (mixing, plumbing, gardening, etc.)	4.5	6.8	6	5.8
Others (driving, household works, driving vehicles)	11.1	4.4	10.3	14.9

Source: Primary survey.

It can be observed from the table that about 46.6% are working as a mason or mixing sand and other building materials and 15.5% work as another type of wage labourers on the construction site including digging the soil and loading trucks. A meagre portion of the *Labour Adda* workers also have some skills for painting and tile (Table 19.4). It was observed during the field survey that many of the Jubilee Hills *Labour Adda* workers migrate from villages and availed the Andhra Jyothi Housing provided by the government. Many of them lack the skills required for moving upward or better-paid work.

On average, *Labour Adda* workers get jobs for 14 days in a month (Table 19.5). During our survey, many labourers reported that they have to wait long hours on some days to get any work. We find differences in the distribution of earnings across these *Labour Addas*. The percentage of workers whose daily earnings is more than Rs. 500 is in Tolichowki (41.3%), highest among the *Labour Addas* and lowest in Jubilee Hills. The average working hours for these labourers are close to 8 hours. Out of the total 174 labourers surveyed only 27 labourers have reported that they have worked above 8 hours and earned Rs. 6718 per month (=14*479.86 as average).

It was observed that those who are in the rented house, especially the Tolichowki *Labour Adda* workers, are spending about Rs. 2500 on rent and Rs. 300 towards electricity and other expenditure and are left with about Rs. 4000 for their daily expenditure. About 56% of the labourers also need to bear their transport expenditure to the worksite from their own pocket (Table 19.6). This also reduces the total money available to them for daily expenditures on food and other necessities. A few adda workers reported that

Table 19.5 Working conditions of workers (share in %)

	Jubilee Hills	*Tolichowki*	*Mehdipatnam*	*Total*
No. of days worked in the last month	14.0	14.57	13.89	14.10
Average daily earnings (Rs.)	473.86 (89.403)	477.07 (149.226)	484.52 (84.035)	479.86
Percentage of workers earning Rs. 200–300 per day	4.5	4.3	3.6	4.0
Percentage of workers earning Rs. 300–400 per day	22.7	19.6	20.2	20.7
Percentage of workers earning Rs. 401–500 per day	59.1	34.8	47.6	47.1
Percentage of workers earning above Rs. 500 per day	13.6	41.3	28.6	28.2
No. of hours of work per day	8.045	8.109	8.149	8.112

Source: Primary survey.
Note: The figures represent percentage within location.

Table 19.6 Transport arrangement for going to the workplace (share in %)

	Jubilee Hills	*Tolichowki*	*Mehdipatnam*	*Total*
Own	36.4	43.5	75.0	56.9
Provided by the employer	27.3	23.9	11.9	19.0
Partial support by the employer	9.1	21.7	6.0	10.9
Sometimes own, sometimes avail employer support, and sometimes partial support	25.1	6.6	7.1	8.5
Other arrangements	2.3	4.3	0.0	1.7
No rest apart from lunch	86.4	93.5	84.5	87.4
Provision of equipment's and safety				
Yes	22.7	8.7	7.1	11.5
No	68.2	80.4	88.1	81.0

Source: Primary survey.

cheap *Annapurna* (Rs. 5 for a plate) food provided by *canteens reduces their food expenditure on their dry days without any job*. As mentioned earlier most of the *Labour Adda* workers earn Rs. 300, which is more than the minimum wage specified for the construction or maintenance of roads and building operations specified by the Government of Telangana (Rs. 275 per day). However, irregularities in getting jobs make their monthly income less than the prescribed level of 7152 per month (Government of Telangana, 2017).

Another important dimension of working conditions is the rest period which the workers get during their working hours. Almost all the workers who were surveyed reported that they get a 1-hour lunch break. So, the basic recommendation of NCEUS at least half an hour break in 8 hours is fulfilled here. About 87% of the workers reported that they did not have any other rest period apart from the lunch break. Since most of the adda workers directly work in the construction site often there are some risks involved. Only 11% have reported that their employers provide safety measures like gloves and helmets during their work. However, the workers also reported that for big private projects and government construction projects, they get these safety gadgets. And the rest responded that either they do not need it (because of the nature of their job) or the employer does not provide the required equipment to them.

Dynamics of Migration

The study also looked into different aspects of migration and found that pattern varies significantly across the three *Labour Addas* covered under the study. We find that the majority migrate as permanent settlers in the city, while others consider it as a temporary to adjust to the seasonal unemployment crisis (Table 19.7). Thus, the seasonal migrants keep changing their workplaces to adjust to the crisis and opportunities emerge in the city and their native places. For instance, during the initial phase of demonetisation, they found it difficult to find jobs and manage their everyday expenditure, many of them left the city and went back to their villages. Most of them go back to their villages during the farming seasons and work as agricultural labourers.

Table 19.7 Nature of migration (share in %)

	Jubilee Hills	*Tolichowki*	*Mehdipatnam*	*Total*
Permanent	59.1	73.9	67.9	67.2
Seasonal	40.9	26.1	29.8	31.6
Hyderabad-Local	0.0	0.0	2.4	1.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Primary survey.

It is interesting to note that nearly 90% of the migrants reported that they migrated with their families and lived in the city, while the remaining respondents migrated alone. Compared to those who migrated along with their families, other migrants have some flexibility in terms of moving across different *Labour Addas*, taking a break from work, etc. Following the demonetisation, the number of work opportunities was reduced, some of the families were forced to go back to their villages and it was reported during the survey that some of them are yet to come back to the city. Among those who migrated alone, unmarried young men and migrants from other states (other than Telangana and Andhra Pradesh) account for a major share and manage such crises smoothly.

With regard to their experience in the city, we find that nearly half of them have 5–15 years of experience in working with different jobs in Hyderabad's informal economy (Table 19.8). The majority of the workers are young and physically strong enough to complete the tasks given to these workers. In the beginning, most of these workers did not have any kind of specific skills or work experience, but they gradually learned some skills and kept moving across different types of jobs in the city.

The literature on workers' migration broadly outlines the 'push' and 'pull' factors that lead to migration. In several contexts, it is difficult to identify a single set of factors for driving the process of migration. The evidence that emerges from our study broadly indicates that it was the crisis that exists in the villages that made these workers migrate to the cities and search for new opportunities. We find that nearly half of the workers reported the irregular nature of jobs and crisis related to agriculture in their villages as the primary reason behind their migration. Nearly 40% of the workers reported that they came to the city for seeking better employment opportunities. Others reported their debt or financial liabilities and family preferences as the main reasons for their migration (Table 19.9).

The origin of the migrants suggests that the majority of them migrated from the villages of Telangana State or Andhra Pradesh state and speak the Telugu language as their mother tongue (Table 19.10). As these workers

Table 19.8 Duration of stay in Hyderabad (share in %)

	Jubilee Hills	*Tolichowki*	*Mehdipatnam*	*Total*
Below 5 years	31.8	21.7	17.9	22.4
Between 5 and 15 years	50.0	56.5	47.6	50.6
Between 15 and 25 years	13.6	10.9	21.4	16.7
25 years and above	4.5	10.9	13.1	10.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Primary survey.

Table 19.9 Reason for migration (share in %)

Reasons	*Jubilee Hills*	*Tolichowki*	*Mehdipatnam*	*Total*
Irregularity of jobs in the villages	30	20	37	30
For better job opportunities	45	46	37	41
Farming-related issues in the villages	9	20	19	17
Debt liability	5	2	1	2
Family and other related issues	11	13	6	9
Total	100	100	100	100

Source: Primary survey.

Table 19.10 Origin of migrants (share in %)

	Jubilee Hills	*Tolichowki*	*Mehdipatnam*	*Total*
Migrant from Ranga Reddy district	7	9	12	10
Migrants from other districts of TS/AP	75	67	71	71
Migrants from other states	14	22	7	13
Migrants from Karnataka	5	2	7	5
Local-Hyderabad	0	0	2	1
Total	100	100	100	100

Source: Primary survey.

are hired for multiple tasks related to construction, cleaning, repair works, and another household work by the local individuals, access to the local language becomes favourable to these workers. Sometimes, there seems to be some kind of informal understanding between the local employees and local employers or the middlemen work between these groups to select or send only local workers to such workplaces. In such cases, the non-local workers also have their own networks and interests in working collectively and negotiating on the rate and other details related to the work.

Social networks play a critical role in shaping and re-shaping the nexus of migration and one's access to it. Along with other forms of capital and personal endowments, they help a job seeker in finding new opportunities and enable her or him to tap them smoothly. Given the complexity of the labour market, the difference in the effectiveness of different social ties also varies. Traditional networks like the family may remain the main factor that helps people in migrating from their villages. Nearly half of the workers reported

Table 19.11 Support for migration (share in %)

	Jubilee Hills	*Tolichowki*	*Mehdipatnam*	*Total*
Agent	0	0	1	1
Family	36	50	52	48
Family and friends	2	9	6	6
Friends and neighbours	52	35	23	33
Others	9	7	14	11
Not applicable	0	0	4	2
Total	100	100	100	100

Source: Primary survey.

having some family member helping them in migration to the city followed by friends and neighbours (Table 19.11). Most of these workers had some family or friends already migrated and living in the city to provide the necessary information and support when they came to the city. It is interesting to note that they strengthen such ties by extending similar support to those who recently migrate to the cities and value the importance of such support.

The majority of the workers reported that they got some help from their families and friends in finding their jobs. A large number of them had to search and find their jobs by themselves or get through some agents (Table 19.12). When agents help the worker in getting a job, she or he charges a nominal fee or takes a specific portion of the wage offered to the workers. In some cases, employers use the agents to find the workers and pay for these services. Though the agent takes some part of the wage, many workers approach the agent on the ground that it increases the likelihood of getting work on a regular basis and avoid standing long hours in the *Labour Addas*.

It is also interesting to see how migrants from particular geographic regions, social groups, or ethnic fractions migrate into the city, concentrate on specific activities of the informal economy, and make a collective life in city space. The fact that migration and livelihood opportunities in the urban

Table 19.12 Support for job (share in %)

	Jubilee Hills	*Tolichowki*	*Mehdipatnam*	*Total*
Agent	9	2	13	9
Family	18	33	33	29
Family and friends	9	9	6	7
Friends and neighbours	41	37	23	31
Others or self-efforts	23	20	25	23
Total	100	100	100	100

Source: Primary survey.

informal economy are the only option available to those workers in rural areas where the crisis in the rural farm sector and lack of non-farm employment growth remain key challenges in the process of development. These shreds of evidence called for strengthening the farm sector and providing supplementary livelihoods may reduce the crisis in rural areas and immediate policy response to manage the flow of workers into the city and urban crisis.

Living Conditions of the Labour Adda Workers in the City

The *Labour Adda* workers migrate to the city of Hyderabad in search of a better livelihood. About 15.6% of the total workers live in their own houses, mostly workers who are residing in Hyderabad for a long period of time (Table 19.13) Some of the workers from Jubilee Hills *Labour Adda* reside in a government housing scheme called Andhra Jyothi and hence the percentage of adda workers who are not paying rent is higher in this particular area. However, the majority of workers stay in rented accommodation and 12.6% of the workers do share the space with relatives/friends (Table 19.13). Nearly 67% of the *Labour Adda* workers live in single-room accommodation and 27% live in two-room houses. Our survey suggests that the average family size of *Labour Adda* workers is about four, which implies that the majority of these workers live in one-room accommodation with their four-member family (generally two adults and two children).

About 40.5% of the workers reported that they have toilet facilities inside the house, whereas 44.3% reported that their toilet is outside the house (Table 19.14). These families do not satisfy the sanitation cut-off used in the computation of the multidimensional poverty index.

The roof hype of houses indicates that 38% of the workers live in houses with roofs made of tin sheets and 30.65% had concrete roofs. It can be observed that although, on the whole, 16.2% live in houses with thatched roofs, a tiny proportion of labourers also live in footpath tents (Table 19.15).

In terms of access to drinking water, we can see that about 80% of the *Labour Adda* workers have access to corporation water as drinking water and hence safe drinking water. While 17.3% use other sources (ask from

Table 19.13 Type of accommodation (share in %)

	Jubilee Hills	*Tolichowki*	*Mehdipatnam*	*Total*
Own (including the house provided at govt at AJ)	37.2	4.3	10.7	15.6
Rented	41.9	89.1	79.8	72.8
Others (staying with friends)	20.9	6.6	9.5	12.6
Total	100	100	100	100

Source: Primary survey.

Table 19.14 Toilet facilities in the houses of workers (share in %)

	Jubilee Hills	*Tolichowki*	*Mehdipatnam*	*Total*
Inside the house/ attached toilets	11.4	36.6	58.3	40.5
Outside the house but shared with others	38.6	60.0	36.9	44.3
Use community toilets	50	4.4	4.8	16.2

Source: Primary survey.

Table 19.15 Nature of accommodation (share in %)

	Jubilee Hills	*Tolichowki*	*Mehdipatnam*	*Total*
Thach	32.6	10.9	10.7	16.2
Clay tiles	16.3	17.4	4.8	11.0
Tin sheet	11.6	43.5	41.7	34.7
Plastic sheet	7.0	0.0	2.4	2.9
Concrete	27.9	26.1	34.5	30.6
Tent	4.7	2.2	6.0	4.6

Source: Primary survey.

nearby apartments, bore, ask neighbours, etc.), 2.3% use canned water for drinking. Interestingly, 52.3% of workers from the Jubilee Hills *Labour Adda* depend on other sources for drinking water.

The analysis reveals that the majority of the *Labour Adda* workers live in rented accommodation and mostly they occupy one room. About 12% did not have access to proper sanitation and had to share their toilets with other households. The majority of the workers had access to safe drinking water. However, a substantial portion of their income had to be paid as rent, and they were left with very little money after meeting their daily expenditure. Since most of these workers have migrated with families often education of children in the city also occupies a considerable share in their total income.

In order to have a holistic understanding of their living conditions, we have tried to construct a composite index of the living conditions of *Labour Adda* workers using five indicators, namely extent of crowding, sanitation, drinking water, roof type, and solid waste management.

According to the OECD definition of overcrowding, a household is considered as living in overcrowded conditions if less than one room is available in each household, for each couple in the household; for every single person aged 18 or more. So, we have assumed that if the number of rooms available per adult is less than 0.50, the household is deprived of less crowded housing conditions. If the ratio is greater than or equal to 0.5, they are not deprived in terms of less crowding. The household is considered to be non-deprived in terms of drinking water if they have access to corporation water

in their housing premises and are deprived otherwise. In the case of sanitation, we have considered the households as deprived if they are using shared toilets and non-deprived otherwise. The workers who live in houses where roofs are made of rudimentary materials (clay, mud, etc.) are considered to be deprived and non-deprived otherwise. Based on the aforementioned criteria, we have identified the deprivation status of each worker in terms of five indicators of their living conditions. The following formula has been used to calculate the living condition deprivation index for *Labour Adda* workers *i*:

$$LCDI_{i=}\sum_{j=1}^{5} DS_{ij} * 0.20$$

where j =1,2,–,5 is the deprivation status of the *i*th *Labour Adda* worker for *j*th indicator, DS_{ij} assumes the value of 1 if the *i*th worker is deprived in terms of the *j*th indicator and 0 if he/she is non-deprived. Each of the five indicators has been assigned equal weights (0.20) while computing this index. Table 19.16 reveals that the living condition deprivation index is 0.56. The index is the highest for the Jubilee Hills *Labour Adda* workers and the least for workers who belong to the Mehdipatnam *Labour Adda*. Among the living condition indicators, deprivation in the form of overcrowding, lack of sanitation, and solid waste management are the most prominent ones across all the *Labour Addas*.

The extent of these living condition deprivations among *Labour Adda* workers is presented in Table 19.17. It can be observed that the majority of the *Labour Adda* workers are deprived in two or three indicators of living conditions.

Concluding Remarks

Using survey data for 174 *Labour Adda* workers in the city of Hyderabad, this study attempts to understand the socio-economic and working conditions

Table 19.16 Deprivation in terms of various indicators of living conditions and mean deprivation index (share in %)

	Jubilee Hills	*Tolichowki*	*Mehdipatnam*	*Total*
Crowding	90.00	61.90	71.79	79.71
Drinking water	56.10	12.50	6.94	21.83
Sanitation	87.80	62.50	42.31	59.15
Roof type	48.78	29.17	23.07	31.69
Solid waste management	51.22	37.50	39.74	42.96
Mean LCDI	0.66	0.43	0.38	0.56

Source: Primary survey.

Table 19.17 Percentage of *Labour Adda* workers deprived in terms of one, two, three, or more than three indicators (share in %)

	Jubilee Hills	*Tolichowki*	*Mehdipatnam*	*Total*
Not deprived	0.0	4.6	9.72	5.80
Deprived in terms of one indicator	12.50	23.81	23.61	19.57
Deprived in terms of two indicators	15.00	33.33	39.75	31.88
Deprived in terms of three indicators	25.00	28.57	25.64	26.09
Deprived in terms of four indicators	22.50	9.52	1.39	8.70
Deprived in terms of all the five indicators	25.00	0.00	1.39	7.97

Source: Primary survey.

of *Labour Adda* workers and their migration dynamics. It was observed the *Labour Adda* workers mainly belong to the OBC caste. The linguistic and religious diversity is not high in the *Labour Addas* in Hyderabad unlike the other cities of Mumbai where the linguistic diversity is quite high. It was also observed that most workers aged below 40 years assemble in *Labour Addas* in search of a job. In terms of the working conditions, it can be stated that though these *Labour Adda* workers do get adequate rest, in most cases, the working hours do not exceed 8 hours, they are not provided with the safety equipment required especially for the construction sector workers. The earnings of workers differ considerably across the addas, indicating the locational diversity of the nature of *Labour Addas*. This locational diversity among *Labour Addas* demands the need for differential policy measures for the *Labour Addas*. In our study workers in Jubilee Hills *Labour Adda* were the most marginalised ones in terms of earnings and living conditions and hence special attention should be paid to the workers of this *Labour Adda*. The most striking finding of the study is that for almost half the month the labourers do not have work and they have to sit idle. So, some initiatives could be taken by the government to identify the jobless adda workers daily and provide them half-day assignments (starting from 12.00 noon) so that they could effectively utilise their time. The second problem which the *Labour Adda* workers face is the payment of rent since most of them reside in rented houses, a housing scheme as proposed by the Telangana Government for slum dwellers. Though we could observe that some of the adda workers reside in Andhra Jyothi Housing provided by the government, they do get lesser wages per day as compared to the other labour nakas.

As the majority of the workers covered under the study migrated from the Telugu states, they have access to the local language and manage to use it effectively. During the monsoon and active farming seasons, many of the

workers go back to their villages and engage in farming activities and come back to the city. Some of them retain their land and other properties in the villages. Thus, the migrants keep close ties with their original places and make regular visits to manage the arrangements. Like elsewhere in the country, the agrarian crisis and shortage of non-farm jobs in the rural areas push these workers to the urban areas and force them to search for other livelihoods. As some of the old workers had already come to the city and explored the possibility of getting new jobs in the informal urban economy, the new migrants used their help in migration to the city and finding jobs. In some sense, this process reproduces the network and nexus of migration between rural and urban areas. Once they come into the city, the cost of living and other difficulties in finding a reasonable place in the new city areas eventually push many of them to the old city and the periphery of the city. Most of them have to travel long distances within the city to reach their workplace and spend a considerable amount of money and time on it. Thus, the study highlights several issues related to the everyday life and struggle of workers in the urban informal economy of the city of Hyderabad and calls for committed and timely engagement to address them.

The poor human and material resource base excludes them from formal employment and push towards the urban informal economy where the uncertain nature and poor earnings from their livelihoods leave very few options for availing the formal financial services. Often, they are forced to make their own arrangements to access credit and manage deposits. The diverse nature of their occupations and collective life (based on different identities) will be reflected in these arrangements. In some contexts, they may function as a complementary to the formal financial sector, while it may remain as a parallel system in other contexts. It is important to see how these arrangements react to the larger policy changes which directly influence the informal economy and living in the city.

Acknowledgements

The authors acknowledge the support of students of MA in Development Studies and Rural Development & Governance programmes, School of Livelihoods & Development, at TISS Hyderabad campus in collecting a major part of the primary data used in the analysis and also extend thanks to Dr Srinivas Surisetti, for his support. The usual disclaimers apply.

Notes

1 A 'Hi-Tec City' (Hyderabad Information Technology and Engineering Consultancy City) has been under construction in an area of about 158 acres (65 hectares). It is a joint venture of AP Industrial Infrastructure Corporation (APIIC) and Larsen and Toubro to create about 1.4 million sq ft of top-class IT space (Ramachandraiah, 2003).

2 A comprehensive mapping of *Labour Addas* was not available till recently. However, in June 2017, Hyderabad Urban Lab have come up with the map of all the *Labour Addas* in Hyderabad.

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20 Transition from Low to High Shades of Precarity among Migrants in Tamil Nadu

Nandini Ramamurthy

Introduction

This chapter studied varying shades of precarious workers employed in the textile and garment factories of Tiruppur, Tamil Nadu, and their implication on the labour market. The chapter offered insight using two labour categories – locals and migrants. For analysing precarity, we treat these categories of workers as belonging to the same working class. The first argument discussed how age, gender, social group, education, and marital status are used by employers and supervisors to execute labour control. The second argument looks at how workers' socio-demographic stratification undercuts trade unions and collective bargaining mechanisms. These debates attempt to contribute to evolving literature on precarity by using economic upgrading as the analytical framework. Tiruppur is an interesting case as it describes the rich context of the unionism struggle and in contrast provides an ironic account of violations and appropriations experienced by workers.

This chapter deliberates on the modalities of appropriation and violation leading to precarity for both local and migrant workers. Under this pretext, there are an overwhelming number of workers in the textile and garment industries who are subject to precarity. This chapter will demonstrate that local workers who once had regular employment are becoming precarious workers. On the other hand, migrant workers while entering the labour market are instantly exposed to precarity. In the long run, we see that there is homogenisation of the workforce that is leading to precarity. In our case, we argue that the presence of robust trade unions distorted the distinction between secured and unsecured employment as precarity is the new norm for both sets of workers. Fragmented trade union structures, mushrooming of industry associations, and changing landscape of migration bring the experiences of workers to the forefront of analysis.

In the textile and garment, it is typically seen that Global South countries used fragmentation, outsourcing, subcontracting, and de-regulation to boost their order volume (Levy, 1995; Grossman and Helpman, 2005; Flecker, 2009). These basic features have further evolved into hyper-production; hyper-competition, and hyper-consumerism, resulting in a fast-fashion mode of production. These aspects provide global brands with commercial

DOI: 10.4324/9781003490234-20

benefits (Gereffi, 1994; Selwyn, 2013; Alexander, 2019). One strand of literature argued that firms that apply economic upgrading could automatically attain social upgrading (Bair and Gereffi, 2001; Gereffi and Stark, 2011). However, the other strand of literature dismisses such claims and discusses that economic upgrading is the reason behind rising vulnerability (Selwyn, 2013; Glucker and Pantiz, 2016). Based on these arguments, it is crucial to reflect on common forms of violations which are squeezing in sourcing practices, dismantling labour market institutions, and exploring power imbalances between buyer (global brands) and supplier units (Caprile, 2000, Sauer and Seuring, 2018; Anner, 2018). Locke (2013) further examined precarity through rigid corporate private voluntary compliances. Mezzadri (2017) illustrated sweatshops as the reason behind exploitation, resulting in verbal and sexual abuse, poor working conditions, low wages, and deprived social security status.

Hence, this study is set against the context of high indices of violation and appropriation, perhaps the contradictory status of trade unions and collective bargaining observed in Tiruppur. It belongs to a body of work that studied factors that caused low and high precarity in labour market institutions. To meet its aims, the chapter analyses a sample of 600 workers from large, medium, small, micro, power-table units, and self-help groups (SHGs). The chapter is organised as follows. This introduction section is followed by section 'The Context', which discusses the context of the study and provides a brief literature review. Section 'Data, Methodology, and Descriptive Statistics' outlines data and methodology, while Section 'Findings and Discussion' describes on findings and discussion. Section 'Concluding Remarks' discusses concluding remarks.

The Context

India directly employed 45 million people in assembling garments for large retailers (PIB, 2021). According to the ILO (2014), there are 28 main producers of textiles and clothing, while young women with relatively low skills comprise a high share of employees. The study also showed that these producers continue to have the lowest minimum wages across the Global South, thus making them the preferred destination for garment making. Currently, Tiruppur's export worth is Rs. 33,525 in 2021–2022 and contributed 54.2% of the country's total exports, recording an all-time high (Chari, 2000). According to the Tiruppur Export Association (TEA), there are about 8350 textile and garment units. Regardless of the economic depth, there is no official data present with the government to ascertain the influx of migrant workers to the dollar city – Tiruppur. According to the Revenue Department of Tamil Nadu, there are around 1.3 lakh migrant workers. However, this number is based on relief measures extended to workers at the time of COVID-19.

The discourse on upgrading is integral to the academic discussion in countries that desperately seek economic development and job creation in an intensely competitive environment. Economic upgrading brings in improved technology, knowledge, and skills, yet there is growing evidence of child labour, vulnerable workers, and abysmal working conditions in many export-oriented clusters (Lund-Thomsen and Lindgreen, 2014; Lund-Thomsen and Nadvi, 2010). In the long run, economic upgrading led to the re-organisation of work from home-based to fast-fashion mode of production. In the short run, economic upgrading created entry barriers for small, micro, power-table, and SHG units. Therefore, simultaneously improving both economic and social upgrading is becoming a problem for various stakeholders. Scholars argued that a key determinant of social upgrading is the governance structure – public, private, and social forms of regulation (Mayer and Gereffi, 2010; Gereffi and Lee, 2016). One advantage of economic upgrading is it can standardise production, eliminate waste, and make value flow through a system that requires all workers to be highly specified, sequence, timing, and aim at precise outcomes (Spear and Bowen, 1999). Therefore, workers perform jobs that are intricately scripted, down to the order. Thus, in the context of textile and garment production, we argue that economic upgrading can offer a better perspective in gaining insights into precarity.

Migration and trade union activities are not new in the context of Tiruppur. Jegadeesan and Fujita (2014) explored the origin and process of migration in three phases – early, middle, and recent migrants. This study pointed to migration as an outcome of inter-caste violence in neighbouring districts of Tamil Nadu, agricultural distress, and SC/ST people witnessing caste oppression. Ota (2014) discusses how agricultural workers in Tiruppur have knowledge of trade union rights while working on farmlands. Therefore, the workers could replicate the knowledge on the factory floors to address the issue of precarity by forming trade unions. Thus, the study of Ramamurthy (2021) showed that up to 1970, the employment status of workers is permanent. However, from 1985 onwards, workers started to experience non-standard employment relationships, which is synonymous with the working poor. Table 20.1 shows the decline in the robustness of trade union activity among the various production units. In the initial six decades (1920 and 1984), trade unions could maintain a passionate approach, thus recording the lowest levels of precarity in the history of Tiruppur's labour market. Ota (2014) debated that the 1984 dearness allowance (DA) strike which lasted for 127 days gathered a lot of attention among the political circle, thus leading to the establishment of fragmented trade union structures. After the DA strike, the owners started to establish several subcontracting units that limited the employment to less than 20 workers in a unit. This practice dismantled solidarity and discouraged workers from joining the trade union. In lieu, the management established a workers' committee, since it is not legally binding it is not an appropriate source to address the issue of precarity. In contrast,

Table 20.1 Workers profile in textile and garment units

Characteristics	*Local*		*Migrant*	
	N	*%*	*N*	*%*
Age				
15–25	–	–	313	52.16
26–45	123	20.50	62	10.33
46–66	77	12.83	25	4.16
Gender				
Male	155	25.83	225	37.5
Female	66	11.00	154	25.66
Education				
Middle	–		17	2.83
High	180	30	400	66.66
Degree	–		–	–
Post-graduation	–		3	0.5
Social group				
General caste	–		52	8.66
Other backward caste	142	23.67	219	36.5
Schedule caste	85	14.17	–	–
Schedule tribe	33	5.50	–	–
Adivasi and Ethnic	–		69	11.5
Marital status				
Married	133	22.17	100	16.66
Unmarried	67	11.17	300	50

Source: Based on primary data (2019).

the workers' committee could only exacerbate the precarity levels among the workers employed in textile and garment factories of Tiruppur, Tamil Nadu.

Review of Literature

Standing's (2011) position on precarity garnered worldwide attention among labour scholars. The main contribution is the emergence of a new class framework that is distinct from the traditional working class. From Standing's (2008, 2011, 2014) viewpoint, the attributes of precarious workers are transformations in production relations, relations of distribution, and the involvement of the state. Although these factors impact workers, Paret (2016), Alberti et al. (2018), and Barnes (2021) argued that Standing's argument is an erroneous representation. The reason being Standing does not take into account workers' historical experience. Wright (2015, 2016) further criticises the relationship between precarity and social class. According to Wright precarious workers emerge from the broader working class context as their interests and rights are conflicted with established workers. Therefore, Wright (1985) argued for a degree of workers' precarity – the extent to which workers are covered or exposed to capitalist society. In this framing, Kalleberg (2009), Kalleberg and Marsden (2015), Vosko (2006),

Campbell and Price (2016), and Pembroke (2019) complemented the study of precarity as it applied vulnerability to instances of lived experiences, general condition of social life and workers individually, and work and employment relations.

The difference between Standing's and Wright's approach to precarity depends on the conceptual deployment of the working class (see Barnes, 2021). Wright used the Marxist idea about the commodification of labour power to invoke a contradictory status of labour that manifests precarity orchestrated by local labour control regimes (Burawoy, 1992; Pattenden, 2016; Baglioni, 2018). This concept will help us link diverse types of exploitation and how labour control is overseen in the precariat studies. In this study, we see that while using the conceptual frameworks Tiruppur's analysis rests on the working class rather than differentiating them. In bringing these insights into our study we showed that economic upgrading is a capitalistic feature that enables the re-organisation of work, dismantling of trade unions and collective bargaining, fragmentation of trade unions, and mushrooming of industry associations. Drawing from these studies, the present study considered the following factors for analysing precarity, which are socio-demographic stratification, labour control, changing landscape of the migration process. All of them explore varying shades of precarity between local and migrant workers. These factors typically tend to undercut the dynamics of labour market institutions and result in transitions of precarity from low to high.

Data, Methodology, and Descriptive Statistics

3.1 Data Source, Sample, and Sample Size

The data for this chapter is extracted from my PhD work conducted in the year 2019. The data is collected using primary data sources. They are units (employers, supervisors, middle management, and top-tier management), workers employed in various units, and informants. These data sources are used based on two objectives: to get insight into varying shades of precarity among the two groups of workers and how employers and supervisors use workers' socio-economic stratification to undermine trade unions and collective bargaining. Therefore, we have to rely on primary data based on the objectives of this study. The study used stratified sampling to collect information on units and workers. The data on workers were collected from 25 units comprising large, medium, small, micro, power-table, and SHG groups. The selection of units is based on purposive sampling. In a large unit, 200 workers were randomly selected. The same technique is applied for selecting 150 workers from medium, 120 workers from small, 80 workers from micro, and 50 from power-table, and SHGs together. The sample size of workers is 600. For further analysis of precarity, the sample is divided into two segments – locals and migrants. Locals have one sub-category – the settlers, coming from other districts of Tamil Nadu. They are settled in Tiruppur for at least

two generations. The migrants, on the other hand, are workers coming to Tiruppur from various parts of India. Currently, Tiruppur receives workers from 16 states, which are Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Karnataka, Kerala, Odisha, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, Nagaland, Manipur, and Madhya Pradesh. The workers' sample is taken from large, medium, small, micro, power-table, and SHG units.

3.2 Methodology

This study applied mixed-method research. First, we provide descriptive data on workers' profiles, followed by examining the evolution of the re-organisation of work between 1920 and 2020. In this period, we take into account various methods of appropriation and violation that emerged to understand their impact on various categories of workers and the labour market. This also highlights the varying shades of precarity that exist among the local and migrant workers employed in global production at Tiruppur. The study uses qualitative data to describe the experience of elder workers, supervisors, managers, and retired owners. The qualitative method allows us to observe how all the units effectively use workers' socio-economic stratification to undermine trade union activities and collective bargaining mechanisms. Through this, we can assess the impact labour market on local and migrant workers employed in Tiruppur, Tamil Nadu.

Findings and Discussion

Workers Socio-demographic Stratification and Its Impact

This section broadly discussed precarity using age, gender, marital status, social group, and education levels of both local and migrant workers. Out of the 600 sample size, 26% are local workers, while 74% are migrant workers, suggesting that the majority of the workforce is migrants. Table 20.1 revealed that the majority of the female migrants are from Odisha. The first instance of migration for female migrant workers from Odisha occurs at the age of 15 and 17 years, making them child labour. According to the supervisors and employers in the last eight years, male migrants are notwithstanding any form of verbal abuse. They do not get back to work until the management apologised for their behaviour. Since they come from the same village they use their collective strength to get what they want. For example, when a migrant worker's father died, everyone (11 workers) wanted to go along with him. The management argued that their demands were unrealistic. Although the management allowed two people, the workers found it offensive and within a month all of them left the job without any intimation. In the case of female migrants, we see that they are willing to withstand verbal abuse, do not react under pressure, do not revolt against the management, and obey the orders of supervisors. Due to these distinctive characterises, employers

prefer to employ female migrants in the workplace. Management requires a submissive workforce in this case it is the females to complete the orders on time. Hence, while collecting the data we observed that some of the medium, small, and micro units employed a high number of female migrants, thus increasing female migration.

In Table 20.1 we see that as the age increases the participation of migrant workers decreases, which is in contrast to local workers. The migrant workforce participation is high between the age groups of 15–35 years and in 38 and 66 years, the local female workforce participation increases by 12.83%. It is because the local female workers are either divorced, single mother, widow, or their husbands are addicted to alcohol. Excessive alcohol consumption is making male local workers unreliable for work especially when garment orders are to be completed on rigid deadlines. It is observed that male local workers consume alcohol on Saturday and Sunday because of which they are unable to return to work on Monday. They probably resume their work on Wednesday. Since the employers operate on a tight deadline they prefer to recruit migrant workers as they are reliable. Hence, it resulted in a decline in workforce participation among males. Among the 349 migrant workers, 14.89% belong to the general caste, 62.75% are from other backward castes (OBC), and 19.77% belong to the Adivasi community or from Ethnic groups in the northeast region of India. The employers use this social group category to check their hostels randomly and physically check them to see if they stole any finished products from the company warehouse. Therefore, the empirical analysis suggests that employers and supervisors can exercise rigorous labour control.

Evolution and Re-organisation of Work

This section deliberated upon fragmented trade unions, changing landscape of migration, and mushrooming industry associations that explored the root cause of vulnerability. We use these factors to draw an analysis of the re-organisation of work that could explain transitions in precarity from low to high. Ota (2014) showed that Tiruppur established its first textile factory in the 1920s, since then it has been 100 years of evolution. The various phases of production exhibit distinctive characteristics. In this case, we consider ownership, which played a crucial role in implementing economic upgrading. For instance, Naidu's built factories that are capital intensive; on the other hand, we have Gounders' that rely on labour-intensive mode of production. The North Indian producers establishing textile and garment units use both capital and labour. In this method, we see that economic upgrading is relatively high. Thus, Table 20.2 captures the transformation and shows the deterioration of labour market institutions when applying economic upgrading. Although economic upgrading enhances the firm's ability to produce garments seamlessly, it adversely impacted workers' well-being (Anner, 2018). The study by Ramamurthy (2021) understood precariousness by exploring

Table 20.2 Evolution of precarity in suppliers' work organisation

WO Characteristics	*Work Organisation Transformations in Tiruppur*			
Depth of value chain	*Home-based*	*Factory system*	*Mass production*	*Fast fashion*
Production phases	1920–1939	1940–1979	1980–2000	2001 onwards
Economic upgrading	Basic production	Basic production	CMT Assembly OBM	CMT Assembly ODM OBM FoB
Industrial relations	No presence of trade unions	A strong presence of trade unions and collective bargaining	Fragmentation of trade unions resulting in low impact, thereby affecting the collective bargaining process	A strong presence of workers committee, NGO participation and third-party intervention. Thus, side-lining trade unions and the collective bargaining process.
Buyers WO.	Retailer	Producer-driven	Buyer-driven	Buyer-driven
Recruitment transformation	Social networking	Social networking	Formal advertisement Social networking	Contractors Social networking Formal and informal advertisements
Ownership	Naidu	Gounder Naidu	Gounder Naidu North India	Gounder Naidu North India Venture Capitalists
Capital structure	Low	Moderate	High	High
Labour and migration	Family labour	Local labour Intrastate migrants Kerala migrants	Local labour Intrastate migrants Interstate migrants	Local labour Intrastate migrants Interstate migrants

Source: Conceptualised by researcher (2023).

the recruitment process and its impact on the employment relationship, and the analysis of trade unions is explained by using the buyers' and suppliers' work organisation structure. Therefore, it is crucial to look at individual production processes across different frames of time.

The chapter begins to explore home-based production in the industrial hub of Tiruppur, Tamil Nadu. Holmstrom (1984) described home-based production as a fragmented, family-owned, and micro-scale mode of production. Thus, there is absolutely no interconnection in the production process and each activity is independent. This table shows that the majority of ownership lies with the Gounder community typically involved in home-based production. Parallel to this, we also see that the Naidu community invests in large spinning mills but in small numbers. The elder and younger men applied technical skills, while women and children washed the fabric on the banks of the Noyyal River. In home-based production, we see that labour comes within the family or from extended family if necessary. Since family labour is involved witnessing trade union functions is impossible. In this stage, the production units are not capital intensive and there is no evidence of migration.

In terms of analysing varying shades of precarity, the factory system laid the foundation. In this phase of production, ginning, knitting, and spinning mills started to mushroom requiring factory workers in large numbers. It provided livelihood opportunities for local families and employment for men. Ota (2014) discussed that trade unions were more successful in urban areas than in rural areas. In Tiruppur, the penetration of trade unions was relatively easy as the men involved in agricultural activity were exposed to freedom speeches and agricultural workers' rights. They were able to translate this knowledge and effectively apply the workers' rights. This could be argued as a first step in analysing work re-organisation, where people came out to work in factories. In this stage, migration was prevalent from the Kerala region. The study of Jegadeesan and Fujita (2014) described the emerging migration patterns, the first, coming from other districts of Tamil Nadu that are prone to drought and caste-based violence, while the second wave of migration emerged from the Kerala region.

By the end of the factory system, many units in Tiruppur had established assembly or subcontracting works. The units produced basic garments (briefs and vests) and exported them. In the beginning of 1980, they started to produce T-shirts in large quantities, which laid the foundation for mass production. Local brands ventured into their own brand manufacturing (OBM) by leveraging the economic upgrading attained from specialising assembly production. In this stage, one can start witnessing the downfall of trade unions and many of the owners belonging to the Gounder community started to establish subcontracting units to evade the labour laws. Many of the small units graduated to medium units and medium units graduated to large units. This allowed for the expansion of micro and small units in Tiruppur. Under mass production, the buyer-driven model was preferred as global brands could

outsource the entire production process to the Global South, thereby making norms of production rigid. Their purpose was to leverage the reserve army of labour, low cost of labour, and where labour relations are underdeveloped. In the process, there is absolute dilution of workers' rights. Therefore, the evolution of suppliers' work organisation describes the transformation in workers' landscape from experiencing the spectrum of precarity, low to high.

Institutional Wage Appropriation

Wage is the most visible form of appropriation that workers experience. ILO (2014) argued that wage has the most tangible and direct effect on the everyday life of workers. In many parts of the world access to minimum wage is not guaranteed. . Table 20.3 discusses the wage structures of Tiruppur, Tamil Nadu. Each of them declares a minimum wage what it does that gives a free hand to employers to apply a minimum wage that is the lowest. Most of the units (large, medium, small, micro, power-table, and SHG women group) consider themselves as hosiery companies; therefore, they apply Hosiery Minimum Wage Notification. In reality, it downplays the efforts of trade unions that participate in a tripartite wage structure and come up with a decent minimum wage. The chapter showed that this kind of wage-setting arrangement is a major source of precariousness that workers experience. This results in uniform precarity at the workplace and causes wage theft among the workers. It adversely impacts the workers while calculating the overtime wage rate. The workers (locals and migrants) are incognizant of the fact that such wage structures exist.

Table 20.3 Wage-setting mechanism in textile and garment industry

Occupation	*Tailoring Industry*	*Hosiery Industry*	*Tiruppur Bilateral Wage Agreement*	*Tiruppur Bilateral Wage Agreement*
	2016	*2016*	*2016*	*2017–2018*
	(in Rs.)	*(in Rs.)*	*(in Rs.)*	*(in Rs.)*
Tailors/operators	8864	7507	8970	10,620
Cutters	8992	7507	8970	10,620
Ironing	8587	7507	8970	10,620
Packing	8481	7507	8970	10,620
Fabrication	NA	7507	NA	NA
Checking	8992	5707	6864	7920
Labelling	NA	5407	6604	7620
Hand folding	8481	5257	6526	7542
Fold assistant	8481	5107	5486	6990
Apprentice/trainee	NA	NA	NA	6345
All other categories	NA	NA	NA	9666

Source: Compiled by researcher on primary fieldwork, 2020.

Provident Fund, Insurance, and Bonus Violation

For workers apart from wages the other important sources of income are provident funds, insurance, and bonus payments. These three sources are put together to act as a shock cushion in case of a short-term or long-term economic crisis. An employee is eligible to receive a bonus if they have worked for 30 days in that accounting year. Broadly the bonuses are paid on surplus the company can apply either the maximum or minimum method. Under the minimum method, the government allocates the bonus per cent, which is 8.33 per annum. Maximum bonus payment is decided by the company; however, the rate of bonus is higher than the fixed government rate. The field observation indicates that large companies adopt the maximum method, while medium, small, and micro adopt the minimum method. A compliance officer of a large company said that their bonus rate is 20%, which is the highest in the industry. A deeper investigation revealed that units (large, medium, small, micro, and power-table) introduced informal eligibility criteria that the workers must fulfil. They are workers who must be on the payroll while the bonus is being paid. For instance, if they are on leave for a festival or emergency, the workers will not receive a bonus. The same worker can join work but their candidature will be considered as a new application and hence a new employee. As a result, the workers have to wait for another year to receive the bonus. In Tiruppur, the bonus is paid during the Deepavali festival.

The garment-textile units alternatively come up with complex calculations to reduce the payment of bonuses. For instance, the pay-out on bonuses depends on working days and working hours and then applied the bonus rate. If the worker received Rs 12,000 per month, the actual bonus to be received is 6996; in reality, the worker received Rs 5830. This analysis can be categorised according to skills. For instance, a low-skilled worker receives bonus 30% less than a multi-skilled worker; multi-skilled worker receives 66% less a skilled worker.. This shows the level of violations taking place in the textile and garment industry and the vulnerability it can impose on migrant workers. In the case of insurance, we see a varying level of appropriation leading to a precariat situation for workers. For example, in large units employers established units outside the municipal limit thus exempting them to provide insurance to the workers. The medium, small, and micro units are started within the municipal limits, but the employers evade the payment of insurance by colluding with government agencies. The large units provide PF to the workers, but problem arises when workers leave the job. A labour contractor said that the company takes at least one year to clear the dues. In some cases, the companies have taken three years. The settlement process of PF depends on workers' behaviour and the contractors' relationship with the company. If any one of the factors is strained, then the employees face undesirable economic consequences. Typically, the medium, small, and micro units do not pay the provident fund instead the owners corrupt the government officials.

Factory Appropriations

The factory appropriations are both visible and invisible. Wages, working hours, provident fund, insurance, and provident fund are all visible appropriations. Leaves, employment contracts, working days, and labour minutes are all invisible forms of violation that could impact labour welfare. Table 20.4 highlights that workers are not allowed to avail of the public and Sunday leaves that are mandatory. They are forced to work as employers cite reasons of lead time pressure that they receive from global brands. Depending on the type of activity mode of employment contract varied and it had nothing to do with skill. For example, low-skilled and super-skilled workers received spot-contract employment, whereas skilled and multi-skilled workers got contractual employment. In a spot contract, there is no fixed workplace, limited work

Table 20.4 Various Appropriations on Workers' Entitlements

S. No	*Factor Inputs*	*Units in Textile Industry*			
		Large	*Medium*	*Small*	*Micro*
1	Employment contract	Contract Spot contract	Contract Spot contract	Contract	Contract
2	Public holiday (Tamil Nadu)	23	23	23	23
3	Paid public holiday	5	–	–	–
4	Provident fund	12%	–	–	–
5	ESI	–	–	–	–
6	Bonus	8.33%	No	No	No
7	No of working days	365	365	365	365
8	Legal allowed paid leaves (public holiday + Sunday)	75	75	75	75
9 (7–8)	Working days deducting (Sunday and public holiday) excluding CL, PL, SL, and ML	290	290	290	290
10	To visit the home town in a year	35	35	35	35
11 (7–10)	Actual working days	330	330	330	330
12	Labour minutes (legal) 8 hours (8*60*290)	139,200			
13	Labour minutes (actual) 12 hours (12*60*330)	237,600			
14	Unpaid labour minutes	98,400			

Source: Computed by researcher, based on fieldwork, 2020.

days, and wages are inconsistent. However, in contractual employment, the workplace, employment days, and wages are fixed. The data suggest that a worker with the highest skill level could experience greater levels of precarity. The workers elaborated that they do not leave on public holidays. During independence, the manager closes the factory gate, but the workers are made to do the work. A similar practice is applied across the industry. In Table 20.4, we see that the legal working days are 290 but the labour work for 330 days. This table suggests that labour minutes put in by each worker is 41% more than legally sanctioned time. In the process, the workers are inadequately compensated, which builds pressure on them, thus impacting the overall welfare of workers employed in the textile and garment industries.

The factory, wage, and social security appropriations highlighted are linked to the functioning of trade unions. The studies of Krishnaswami (1989), Cawthorne (1993), Vijayabaskar (1999), Neetha (2002), and Chari (2004) indicated the significant contribution made by trade unions between the period 1920 and 1985. In these 65 years, workers could enjoy the popularism of trade unions as they were successful in unionising 90% of the workforce (Ota, 2014). Some of the significant outcomes are the national struggle for a living wage (1940), factory-level strikes for wage increases, and employment benefits (1960). During the 1970s and 1980s, there were a series of strikes opposing the casualisation of employment, implementation of insurance, provident fund, working hours, overtime wage payment, and dearness allowance (DA). The witnesses described the DA strike as a great success as they were able to bring the entire production to a standstill for 127 days. They burnt 30 bull carts that carried finished goods to the seaport. Families including children experienced starvation despite it the strike continued. Trade union activists and some workers lost their lives in the pursuit of DA. Therefore, the success of the DA strike started to threaten production at Tiruppur thus becoming the tipping point and set off the subcontracting practices.

As a counter to this, in 1933, a few employers came together and formed the Southern India Mills Association (SIMA). Between 1937 and 1969 some of the major milestones achieved by SIMA were bringing the standard 26 days' work norm with night shift, allowing six days of casual leave and seven days of sick leave, providing guidelines for job descriptions, work norms, wages, and incentives structures for workers and implements bonus formula. One of SIMA's successful missions is implementing the piece rate, which is the cornerstone of modern-day work organisation. However, in 1981, Tiruppur Exporters' Association (TEA) was established as they were not happy with SIMA functioning. In fact, TEA signed the DA agreement to end the strike. By 2000, TEA became a powerful employers' organisation. The employers started subcontracting jobs to workers who were loyal to them due to the DA strike. This led to the mushrooming of micro units and power tables in Tiruppur. In this method, the labour requirement was below 20. Ota (2014) argued that multi-unionism is a distinctive characteristic of the

failure of trade unions. Added to this, there were at least 22 commerce and industry associations in Tiruppur. The presence of excessive trade unions and associations dissolves the purpose of preventing precarity, it only accentuates precarity among the workers.

The labour department of Tamil Nadu indicated that between 2000 and 2019, the strike rate dropped from 94 to 14 and lockouts decreased from 41 to 1. In both these cases strikes and lockouts plunged to 84% and 98%, respectively. At present the trade union meeting takes place outside the factory gates and is commonly referred to as gate meeting. These discussions thus show low and high shades of precarity post-1984.

The various forms of violation and appropriation highlighted here are possible when owners have extreme control. Control is generated from two aspects economic upgrading and socio-economic stratification. Economic upgrading makes unit efficiency and productivity and to keep it lasting the units need workers that have weaker socio-demographic stratification. This is, however, not possible with local male workers as they indulged in trade union activities thus resulting in the loss of man-days and delaying the production process. The factors that attribute to fragile socio-economic status are age, gender, social group, marital status, and education. Therefore, the units use these factors to control workers and make them abide by the supervisor's instructions. In the case of home-based production, children participated but it was purely voluntary and there was no violation attached to it. However, during the factory system, mass production and the fast-fashion age became desirable attributes. It gives supervisors the free hand to abuse them verbally and sexually. In this data set, we see that 32% of the workforce is below the age group of 20 years. Up to the factory system, the majority of workers below 20 years are from the local region, and from mass production onwards migrant workers below the age group of 20 years witnessed an increase. If these workers did not listen to the orders of the supervisor then they were removed from work and put on the streets without food, water, shelter, and wage. The occurrences of such instances became higher with the involvement of contractors. The contractor abandoned these workers once he got the commission from the unit. In such circumstances, the workers are left with no option but to withstand the violation and appropriation as an outcome.

In the textile and garment industry, 62% of the workers are male while female employment comprises 38%. The units indulge in recruiting local females who are divorced, single mothers, separated, widows, or elderly women. They are employed in doing menial jobs. It becomes easy for the supervisor to control them because of their social background. Even though the supervisor uses abusive language the females still come to work, and they do not become aggressive as males and they do not complain. If the same approach is applied against males the impact is different. For instance, males stop working until the supervisor apologises. In some cases, male migrants wait for the right time and take mass leave at the crucial time of production.

In a large unit, the female workers were embarrassed to ask permission for a toilet; hence, they avoided drinking water for 8 hours resulting in headaches. The units find it easier to make female labour work during public and Sunday holidays. This is absolutely possible when the females stay in the company hostel. Therefore, these factors contributed to efficient surveillance and control of workers at the factory level. Increasingly, these factors have contributed to the surge in female employment.

Large units have a warehouse that stores finished products because of which the surveillance levels are high. The entire warehouse is equipped with cameras to detect the theft that could possibly take place. Management assumes that since migrant workers are employed in this area, the scope for theft is high. Using this reason the management asks male employees to strip off their clothes to ensure that goods are not stolen. The male migrant workers have to endure this embarrassment daily. In addition to this male wardens (local workers) check the luggage of migrant workers to see if workers are consuming or hiding alcohol. The management is able to impose this because of their migration status. Migrant workers who endure this humiliation belong to the Adivasi community from Jharkhand. Due to this abusive nature of work labour from other state or local workers do not prefer to be employed in a warehouse.

Concluding Remarks

Competing theoretical views erroneously steered the understanding of precarity. It led to a dilemma of whether to treat workers as a separate social class or discuss within the context of the broader working class. In this chapter, we chose a broader working class framework to bring varying shades of precarity argument. When economic upgrading is applied in the factories, it requires firms to undergo re-organisation of work, thus impacting the structure of labour market institutions. It creates a labour market in which the notion of secured employment is no longer available to local workers who were privy to social security entitlements. The debates of fragmented trade union structure, changing landscape of migration, mushrooming industry association, and workers' socio-demographic stratification make the labour market homogenous by causing precarity. Therefore, precarious workers fall under the ambit of the broader working class.

The empirical evidence suggests that workers' socio-demographic stratification contributes to the varying shades of precarity debate. The local workers experienced transitions from low to high levels of precarity and are converging towards a precariat workforce, which is dominated by migrants. In the long run, we see that the degree of precarity is increasing for local workers and for migrants precarity is high from the beginning. Therefore, treating the precariat within the working class construct puts the analysis of precarity in a stronger position to address variegated macro- and

micro-institutional structures that shaped the lives of workers and their circumstances.

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