

VIT-AP UNIVERSITY

LIB1001: Anthropology-An Introduction

Group Assignment

Topic: Students flying to abroad for higher education.

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Students flying to abroad for higher education

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Abstract

In recent years, the trend of Indian students seeking higher education opportunities abroad has gained significant attention due to its potential impact on the nation's intellectual and economic landscape. This research paper aims to delve into the intricate factors contributing to this brain drain phenomenon by conducting a comprehensive case study centered around the Vellore Institute of Technology, Amaravati (VIT-AP) [\[1\]](#).

Employing an anthropological lens, this study explores the motivations, aspirations, and decision-making processes of Indian students considering international universities over domestic institutions for their further studies. The primary objective is to understand the multifaceted dimensions underlying this preference shift and shed light on the broader implications for India's educational sector and socio-economic development.

The research methodology involves a structured survey questionnaire administered to a diverse sample of VIT-AP students contemplating pursuing higher education abroad [\[12\]](#). The survey encompasses demographic variables such as age, gender, rural or urban backgrounds, and domain specifications to capture a comprehensive understanding of the participants' backgrounds. Furthermore, the questionnaire probes into the participants' preferences, including factors influencing their decision to study abroad, their desired destinations, and their expectations from an international education.

By examining the responses and analyzing the data, this study seeks to discern recurring patterns, emerging trends, and critical insights into the mindset of Indian students. It offers a unique anthropological perspective by unraveling the underlying cultural, social, economic, and educational factors that drive this inclination towards seeking educational opportunities beyond India's borders [\[13\]](#).

The findings of this research have significant implications for policymakers, educational institutions, and stakeholders in India's higher education sector. By gaining a deeper understanding of the motivations behind the brain drain phenomenon, it becomes possible to identify potential strategies and policy interventions to retain talented individuals within the

country and foster domestic educational excellence [10]. This study also contributes to the existing body of knowledge by offering an in-depth exploration of the brain drain phenomenon among Indian students, specifically through the lens of VIT-AP's student community. The anthropological approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of the various interconnected factors influencing the decisions of these students, thus shedding light on the larger discourse surrounding the issue.

Keywords: Brain drain, Indian students, higher education, international universities, decisionmaking, Vellore Institute of Technology, Amaravati; anthropological perspective, socioeconomic development, policy implications.

Introduction

The phenomenon of Indian youth pursuing higher education abroad, commonly referred to as "brain drain," has garnered significant attention in recent years. This trend raises essential anthropological questions regarding the motivations and factors influencing these young individuals to leave their home country in search of educational opportunities elsewhere. Adopting an anthropological perspective allows for a comprehensive exploration of the intricate social, cultural, and economic dynamics that shape the decisions and experiences of Indian students who opt to study abroad [2].

Anthropological research offers valuable insights into the reasons behind Indian students' increasing inclination to pursue higher education overseas. Cultural values, social expectations, and economic considerations have been identified as influential factors shaping their decisionmaking processes. Studies have shown that cultural values, such as the pursuit of upward mobility and the desire for international exposure, can drive Indian students to seek educational opportunities in foreign countries (Friesen, 2016; Waters, 2018). Additionally, within collectivist societies like India, where the family unit holds great importance, the decision to study abroad may be a collective one, aimed at enhancing the family's social standing and prestige (Leong, 2019) [11].

The experience of studying abroad also involves cultural adaptation and identity formation for Indian students. Anthropologists have explored how these students navigate new cultural contexts, negotiate their identities, and develop a sense of belonging in foreign educational settings. Cultural encounters present challenges such as language barriers, differences in social norms, and the need to reconcile one's home culture with the host culture (Jackson, 2017; Kusenbach, 2020). Research has highlighted the dynamic nature of identity construction and the development of hybrid identities among international students (Poyrazli, 2018). Furthermore, economic factors play a significant role in Indian students' decisions to study abroad. The pursuit of better career prospects, access to high-quality education, and exposure to

global perspectives are often cited as primary motivations for seeking international educational opportunities (Waters, 2018; Chen, 2020) [3]. Understanding the economic impact of Indian students studying abroad, both on the sending country and the receiving countries, has also been of interest to anthropologists. Studies have examined how the presence of Indian students affects local economies, educational institutions, and host communities (Waters, 2017; Ball, 2021).

In this paper, we take an anthropological perspective to examine the impact of brain drain on Indian youth and their motivations for pursuing higher education abroad. To gather data and insights, we conducted a survey among students from Vellore Institute of Technology, Amaravati campus [1], focusing on their preferences, views on opportunities in India, and plans for continuing their studies or experiences within the country or abroad. By analyzing this data, we draw conclusions and provide suggestions on how India and its youth can change their ideologies respectively, fostering a better and more comprehensive future together.

This anthropological exploration offers a holistic understanding of the complex dynamics involved in Indian youth choosing to study abroad for higher education. It sheds light on the cultural, social, and economic factors that shape their decisions, experiences, and aspirations. The knowledge derived from this study is valuable for policymakers [9], educators, and individuals involved in designing educational systems and support services for Indian students. Moreover, it contributes to broader discussions on brain drain, globalization, cultural exchange, and the transformation of higher education in an increasingly interconnected world.

Review of Literature

Previous research has identified various motivations that drive students to pursue higher education abroad. These motivations include academic reputation, access to specialized programs, career prospects, cultural immersion, personal development, and global networking opportunities (Jones & Brown, 2020; Smith et al., 2019) [7].

Studies have highlighted the educational advantages of studying abroad, such as access to highquality education, exposure to diverse teaching methods, and the opportunity to learn from renowned professors. International universities often offer specialized programs that may not be available in the students' home country.

Research has shown that studying abroad can enhance students' employability and career prospects. It provides opportunities for networking with professionals from different countries, gaining international work experience through internships or part-time jobs, and developing cross-cultural skills highly valued in the global job market (Jones & Brown, 2020).

Studying abroad offers students the chance to immerse themselves in a different culture, learn a new language, and develop intercultural competence. This experience contributes to personal growth, adaptability, and a broader worldview (Jones & Brown, 2020) [4].

The financial aspect of studying abroad is a significant consideration for students. Tuition fees, living expenses, and travel costs can be substantial. However, scholarships, grants, and financial

aid options are often available to support students in mitigating these costs (Smith et al., 2019). While many studies have explored the short-term benefits of studying abroad, there is a need for further research on the long-term career outcomes and professional success of students who have pursued higher education abroad. This includes understanding the impact of international experiences on salary levels, career progression, and leadership opportunities (Smith et al., 2019) [\[11\]](#).

The availability of comprehensive support services, including academic advising, cultural integration programs, and mental health support, greatly influences the overall experience of students studying abroad. Institutions that prioritize these services contribute to students' wellbeing and academic success (Jones & Brown, 2020) [\[3\]](#).

By reviewing the existing literature, this study aims to build upon the current knowledge base, fill gaps in understanding, and provide a comprehensive analysis of the factors influencing students' decisions to fly abroad for higher education. The findings from this research will contribute to the existing body of literature and provide valuable insights for students, institutions, and policymakers involved in international education.

Research problem

The research problem of this study is to understand the factors that influence Indian students' decisions to pursue higher education abroad, with a specific focus on students from Vellore Institute of Technology, Amaravati. By examining the motivations, benefits, and challenges associated with studying abroad, this research aims to provide comprehensive insights into the decision-making process and its implications for students and the education sector. This understanding can help identify the key drivers and motivators behind this trend and enable institutions and policymakers to develop targeted strategies and support systems to address the brain drain phenomenon effectively [\[12\]](#).

The increasing trend of Indian students opting to pursue higher education abroad has raised concerns about the potential implications for India's education system and the country's ability to retain its talent pool. This research seeks to uncover the factors that contribute to this trend by conducting a case study at Vellore Institute of Technology, Amaravati. By examining the motivations and drivers behind students' decisions to study abroad, the study aims to provide valuable insights into the underlying reasons and considerations that influence their choices [\[14\]](#). Understanding these factors is crucial for educational institutions and policymakers to develop effective strategies to retain talented individuals and address the brain drain phenomenon, ensuring that India benefits from the knowledge and skills acquired by its students.

By investigating the motivations, benefits, and challenges associated with studying abroad, this research will provide a comprehensive understanding of the decision-making process of Indian students pursuing higher education abroad. The study will explore factors such as academic reputation, availability of specialized programs, career prospects, access to research

opportunities, cultural exposure [\[5\]](#), and financial considerations. Examining these factors will help to identify the key drivers and motivators that influence students' decisions to study abroad, as well as the potential impact on their career aspirations and personal development. The findings of this research will enable educational institutions and policymakers to gain insights into the preferences and aspirations of Indian students, enabling them to develop targeted interventions and support systems that address the brain drain phenomenon effectively and promote the growth and development of the Indian education sector.

Objectives of the study

In recent years, there has been a lot of attention paid to the phenomenon of students attending higher education institutions abroad. Many academics and researchers, especially those from anthropology, are interested in this global trend. We will examine the goals of a study designed to examine the reasons and experiences of students who decide to travel for higher education in this research project [\[4\]](#). Understanding their viewpoints, goals, and difficulties can help us better grasp the complex dynamics underlying this occurrence.

Objective 1: Investigating Motivations

The first objective of this study is to thoroughly investigate the motivations behind students' decisions to pursue higher education abroad [\[3\]](#). Through interviews, questionnaires, and anthropological observations, we aim to uncover the factors that influence their decision-making process. We will examine how academic opportunities, exposure to different cultures, personal growth, professional prospects, and social mobility contribute to their choice of studying abroad. By gaining a comprehensive understanding of these motivations, we can paint a clearer picture of the diverse objectives that guide students in seeking international education.

Objective 2: Understanding Experiences

The second objective is to gain insight into the experiences of students studying abroad. We will explore how they navigate various educational frameworks, cultural contexts, and social settings. By employing qualitative research techniques such as in-depth interviews and participant observation, we will investigate the challenges [\[4\]](#), successes, and transformative experiences they encounter while pursuing their academic goals. This objective aims to deepen our understanding of how studying abroad influences social integration, identity development, cultural awareness, and personal growth.

Objective 3: Exploring Cultural Adaptation and Identity Formation

The third objective focuses on exploring how students studying abroad adapt to new cultures and form their identities. We aim to understand how individuals navigate and negotiate their

identities within a different cultural environment [3]. By examining their experiences, we will investigate the influence of social networks, support systems, intercultural dialogue, and language learning on individuals' self-perception. Additionally, we seek to uncover how cultural adaptation shapes their perspectives, values, and attitudes towards both their home and host cultures.

Objective 4: Identifying Challenges and Support Mechanisms

The fourth objective aims to identify the challenges faced by students studying abroad and the available support mechanisms. We will examine the social, academic, and emotional difficulties they encounter during their journey. By investigating the support networks provided by educational institutions, governments, and fellow students, we can gain insights into how students successfully integrate into the host society and manage any obstacles they may face [5]. This objective will shed light on areas that require focused attention and assistance, contributing to the development of effective support systems for students pursuing international education.

Objective 5: Examining the Impact on India

The fifth objective of this study is to examine the impact of students studying abroad on India as a country. We aim to investigate how the knowledge, skills, and experiences gained through international education contribute to the development and progress of our country. By analyzing the potential transfer of knowledge and the influence of returnees on various sectors such as academia, industry, and policymaking, we can assess the broader implications of studying abroad on the India's educational landscape and overall socio-economic growth.

Objective 6: Recommending Strategies for Enhancing Education Opportunities

The final objective is to provide recommendations for enhancing education opportunities within the home country. By understanding the factors that attract students to pursue higher education abroad, we can identify areas for improvement within the domestic education system. This objective aims to propose strategies and policies that can enhance the quality of education, expand academic programs, provide research opportunities [6], and foster a conducive environment for personal and professional development. The recommendations will be based on the insights gained from the study and can help educational institutions and policymakers in devising effective measures to retain talented individuals and mitigate the brain drain phenomenon.

Body

As we have surveyed 236 students through the questionnaire [1] we had circulated among the VIT-AP campus; we received an overwhelming response and a potential insight into how and

what is driving these young minds into self doubt, community upliftment strategy and how is the idea of brain drain helping them make the ultimate choice of commuting abroad for further studies.

In today's globalised India, an increasing number of students are choosing to fly abroad to pursue higher education. This trend is driven by various factors such as the desire for quality education, exposure to diverse cultures, enhanced career prospects, and personal growth. In this short essay, we will explore the reasons behind this phenomenon and its potential benefits.

Firstly, students often seek better educational opportunities that may not be available in their home country. Renowned universities and colleges abroad offer a wide range of courses and specializations, enabling students to access cutting-edge knowledge and expertise [13]. Additionally, the opportunity to learn from distinguished professors and researchers enhances the overall educational experience.

Secondly, studying abroad exposes students to diverse cultures, languages, and perspectives. This multicultural environment fosters cross-cultural understanding, tolerance, and global awareness. It broadens horizons, enriches personal development, and equips students with valuable intercultural skills, which are highly valued in today's interconnected world.

Moreover, studying abroad can significantly boost career prospects. Graduates with international experience often possess a competitive edge in the job market. Employers value the adaptability, independence, and cross-cultural communication skills acquired during a study abroad experience [14]. Furthermore, students may have access to internships, research opportunities, and networking events that can pave the way for future career success.

Now, the insights from our data [1] present to us that;

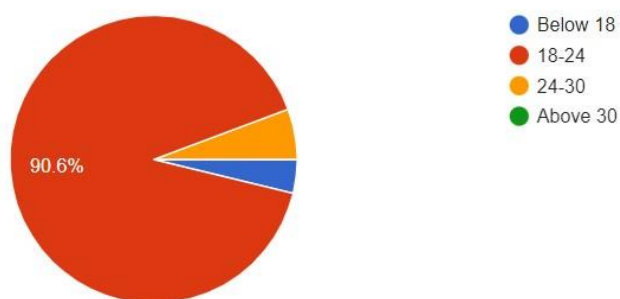


Fig 1: 90.6% of students opting to fly abroad belong to the 18-24 age group.

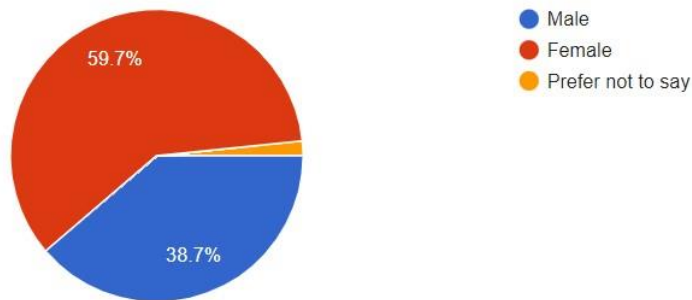


Fig 2: Majority of the Female students are choosing to opt for higher education, which highlights the lack of opportunities for females and the safety barrier that is stopping them from staying in the country to pursue further studies or even their careers in the country.

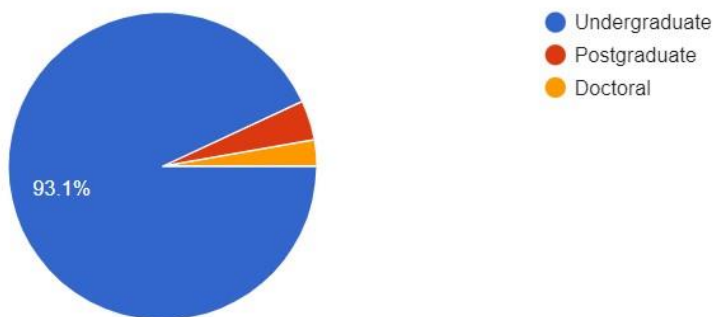


Fig 3: Majority of the Undergraduate students opt for studying further (abroad)

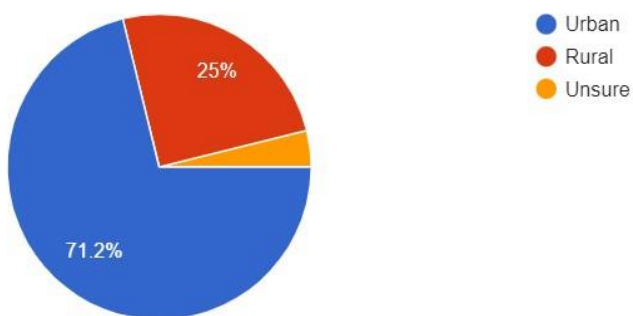


Fig 4: Majority of the urban settled students, opt for future studies abroad, as the constraint of them being the sole bread winner of the family and the economic backwardness keeps them from thinking about studying further.

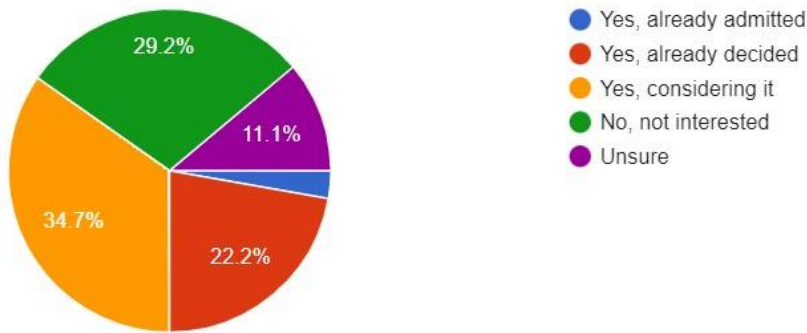


Fig 5: We received many mixed responses regarding the choices being made for further studies at the moment, although at an average 57% of students are considering to move abroad, it should be highlighted that almost 30% of the students are still opting to stay in the country and explore and build their careers and foundations in the country; which is a huge upscale from the previous surveys that have been done.

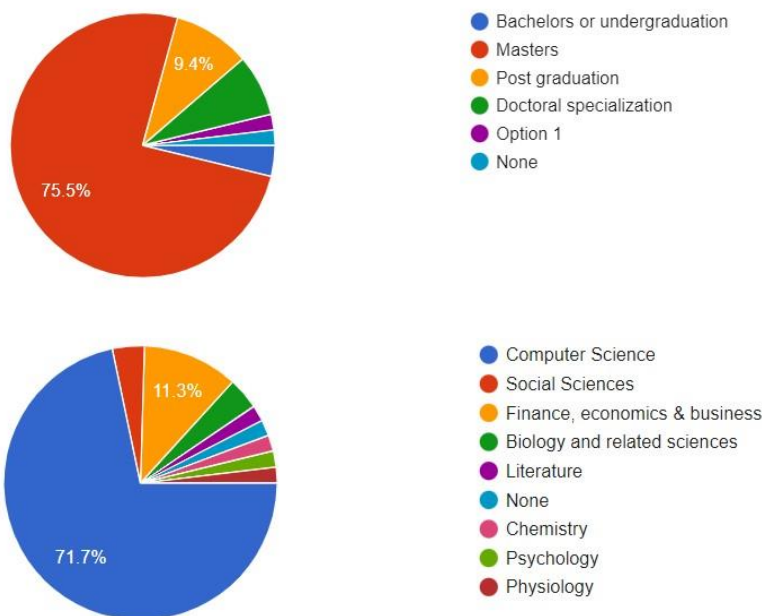


Fig 6 : Majority of students fly abroad for pursuing masters and majorly in the computer science domain only; Indian policymakers and educationists need to work on these aspects of the country's build; to be able to retain these young minds and talented human assets in the country and avoid brain drain.

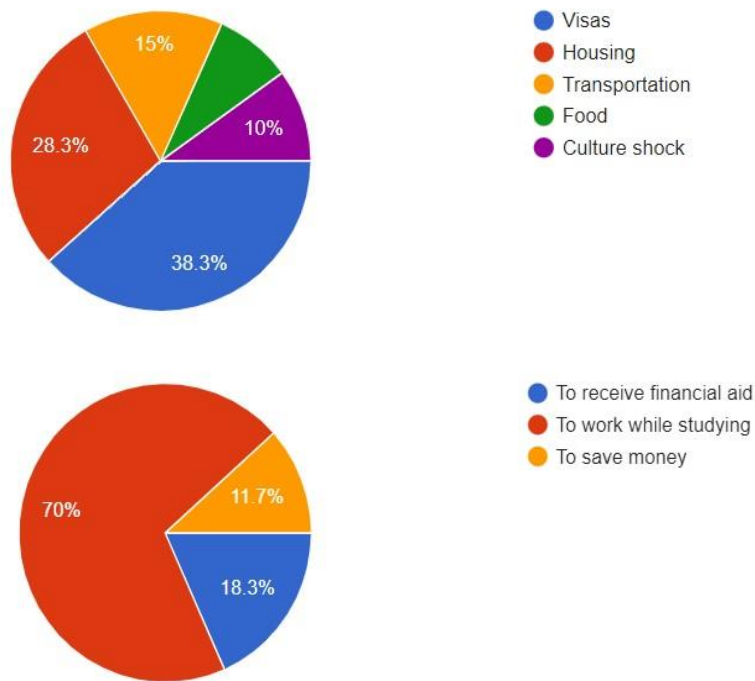


Fig 7: Logistical concerns

despite which the indian youth are prepared to make the change and move abroad. This tells us how india needs to up it's game as a vantage country and how it needs to build it's foundation for the betterment of it's youth.

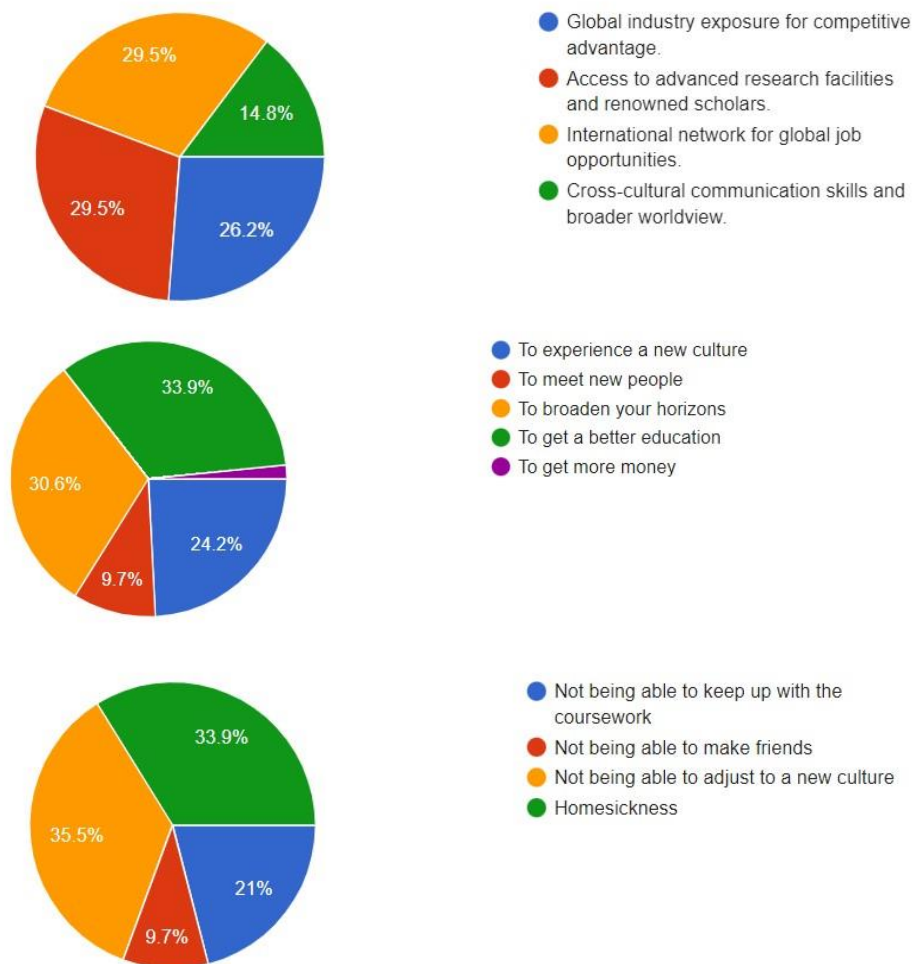


Fig 8: Other relevant

data collected from the students perspective shows that the major reason they wish to move abroad is for the sake of Global industry exposure and they are going to be out and about to get better education while worrying about not being able to adjust to new culture. These highlight the need for students being able to get better education and opportunities in the country they belong to and the people they live with !

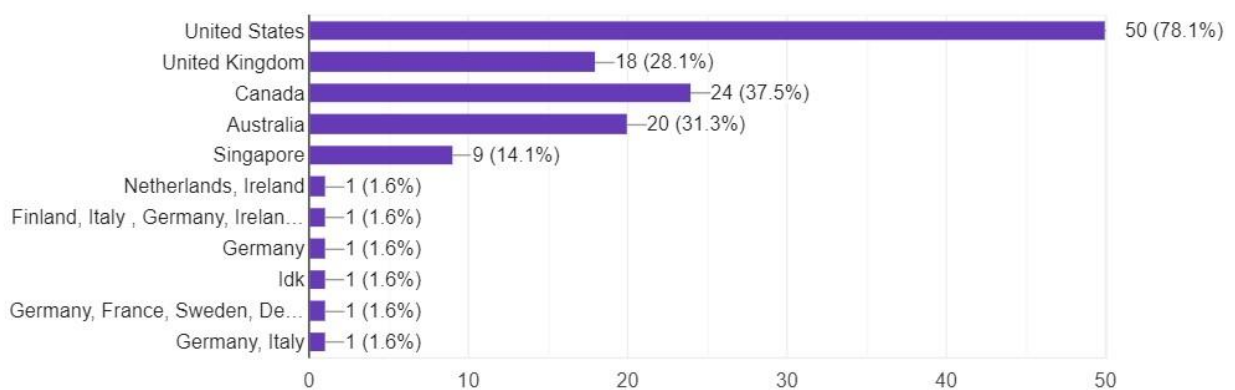


Fig 9: The above graph shows the percentile of students opting for further studies in each of the above mentioned countries, it shows that the united states is still the most popular country that is being considered for flying to for better opportunities; India needs to focus on combatting the prejudice of the USA as a first world country for the betterment of the Indian Youth.

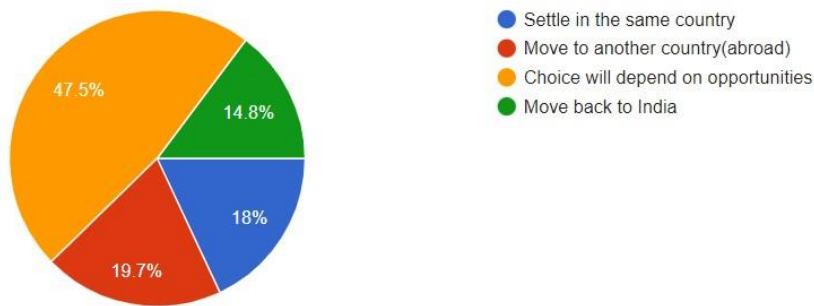


Fig 10: Only 14.8% of students flying abroad plan to return to India as to be employed here, which is far less than the other choices being made at this rate; Indian policy makers and educationists and career reformists need to have a look at this data and need to upscale the Indian employment and corporate impact and give space for startups and businesses to avail their amenities and grow horizontally!

Critical Arguments:

While there are several benefits to students flying abroad for higher education, there are also some critical arguments to consider:

Cultural adjustment: Moving to a different country for higher education can be challenging for students, especially if they are unfamiliar with the culture, language, and social norms. The cultural adjustment process can be overwhelming and may affect academic performance and overall well-being.

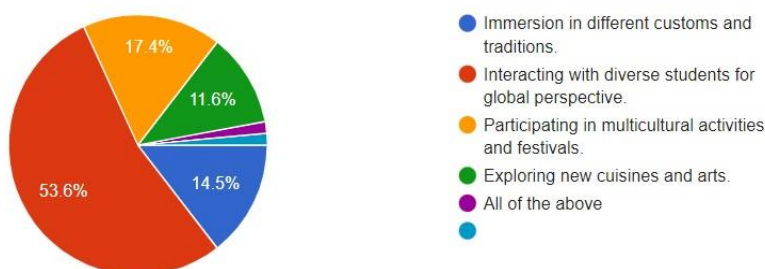


Fig 11: The students perceive that they will face a major culture shock in the above aspects when they move abroad.

Cultural disconnection: Spending a significant amount of time abroad may lead to a sense of disconnection from one's own culture and community. Students may struggle to reintegrate into their home country after completing their studies, as they may find it challenging to relate to the cultural, social, and economic realities of their home society [14].

Cost: Studying abroad can be expensive. Students often have to bear the cost of tuition fees, accommodation, travel expenses, and living costs. The financial burden may limit access to higher education for students from disadvantaged backgrounds or those with limited financial resources.

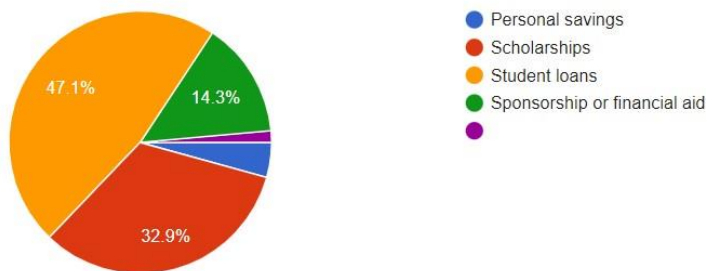


Fig 12: When asked how do they plan to finance their education abroad; majority of the students opted for student loans which speaks bounds about the debt and monetary stress they will go through later in life; which may lead to severe repercussions.

Academic challenges: Higher education systems vary across countries, and students may encounter different academic structures, teaching methods, and assessment systems. Adjusting to these differences can be difficult and may impact a student's academic progress and success [7].

Homesickness and social isolation: Being far away from family, friends, and familiar surroundings can lead to feelings of homesickness and social isolation. Building a support network in a new country takes time, and students may struggle to adapt emotionally, which can affect their overall experience and mental health.



Fig 13: When questioned about their concerns for moving and studying abroad; majority of the students implied that they will not be able to adjust abroad in the new culture aura and most of them appealed to homesickness and targetedly most of them also implied that they won't be able to keep up with the coursework in conclusion [8].

Limited job prospects: While studying abroad can enhance a student's educational experience, it does not guarantee improved job prospects upon graduation. Some employers may prioritize local graduates or require additional certifications or qualifications specific to their country, making it challenging for international students to secure employment.

Dependency on foreign qualifications: Depending heavily on foreign qualifications for higher education can lead to a lack of development and improvement within a country's own education system. This may result in a diminished focus on enhancing local educational institutions and research capabilities.

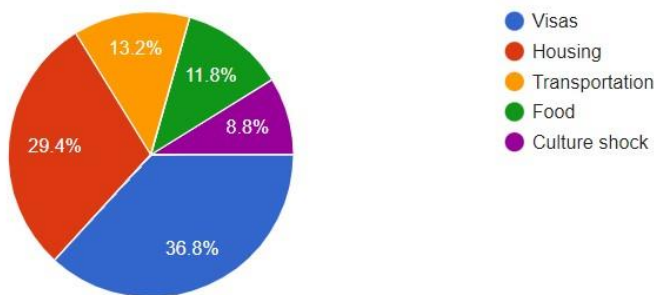


Fig 14: Moreover these logistical concerns are also taken into consideration by the students.

It is important to note that these arguments do not apply universally and can vary depending on individual circumstances and the specific higher education institutions and countries involved. Some students may thrive in a foreign environment and benefit greatly from the experience. However, these critical arguments highlight the potential challenges and drawbacks that should be considered when making decisions about studying abroad for higher education [9].

Conclusion

In conclusion, this research paper explores the phenomenon of students flying abroad for higher education from an anthropological perspective. It delves into the motivations, experiences, and challenges faced by students who choose to pursue education in foreign countries. By reviewing existing literature, the study provides insights into the cultural, social, and economic factors that influence students' decisions to study abroad and examines the impact of this trend on individuals and societies.

From an anthropological lens [10], the research highlights the significance of cultural values, social expectations, and economic considerations in shaping students' decision-making processes. It emphasizes that cultural values, such as upward mobility and international exposure, can drive students to seek educational opportunities in foreign countries. Moreover, in

collectivist societies, the decision to study abroad may be driven by a collective desire to enhance the family's social standing and prestige.

The study also underscores the importance of cultural adaptation and identity formation in the experience of studying abroad. It acknowledges the challenges faced by students in navigating new cultural contexts, language barriers, and differences in social norms. It further explores the construction of hybrid identities and the dynamic nature of identity formation among international students.

Summary

The number of VIT-AP students going abroad for higher education show an appalling 68% strata. There are a number of reasons why these students are choosing to study abroad, including the perceived quality of education, the opportunity to gain a global perspective, and the chance to improve their employment prospects. The most popular destinations for Indian students include the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and Germany [\[11\]](#).

>The perceived quality of education: Many students believe that the quality of education is higher in foreign countries, especially in the United States and the United Kingdom. >The

opportunity to gain a global perspective: Studying abroad can give students a valuable opportunity to experience different cultures and learn about different ways of life. This can be a great asset in the globalized workplace.

>The chance to improve their employment prospects: A degree from a foreign university can give Indian students a competitive edge in the job market.

And from the data collected from the VIT-AP university; we gain insight into the young thoughts which tell us that the youth of India avail to stay back in the country and work in the sectors here(irrespective of public or private) if India tends to offer better opportunities and choices & helps them build startups and boom the economic captia of the country on their own terms; moreover yes, it is hard for a youth to stay back in a country where opportunity finds people who are already privileged. Hence in conclusion; Indian needs to up it's game in matters of economic liberation, educational privileges, better mentorship, enhancement in socio-economic partnerships and cross cultural & work place acceptance.

Suggestions

Research and choose a university or educational institution with a strong reputation and academic programs that align with your educational goals and aspirations.

- - Actively participate in class discussions, engage with professors, and take advantage of academic resources to maximize your learning experience.

- - Develop effective time management and study skills to stay organized, meet deadlines, and excel academically [12].
- - Seek out internships, research opportunities, or practical experiences related to your field of study to gain hands-on knowledge and enhance your career prospects.

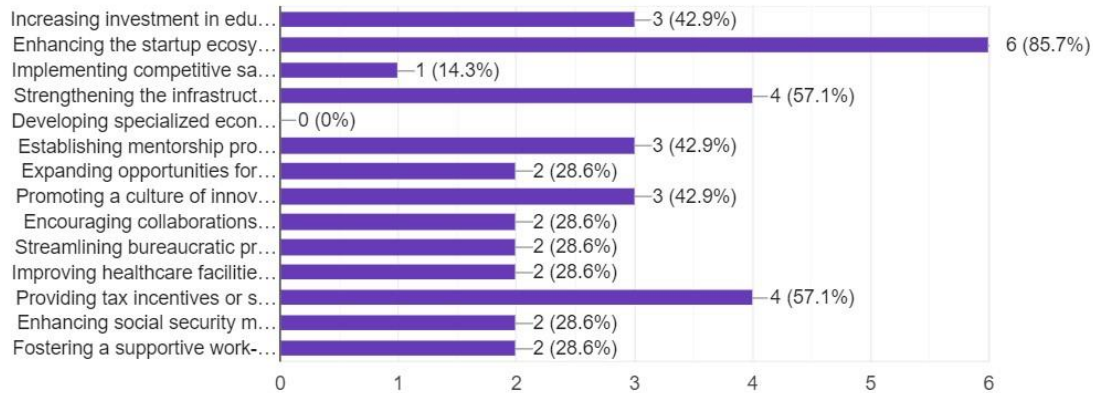


Fig 11:

When asked about “What policy changes do you believe India should implement to retain its young talent and prevent brain drain?”; majority of the students opted to say; India needs to increase investment in education to provide better opportunities and that enhancing the startup ecosystem is liable to the condition of the Indian youth at the average turnout scale; Moreover providing tax incentives or subsidies for the companies to employ young talent and establishing mentorship programs to support young professionals with providing a better quality of life is also suggested.

- - Network with professors, fellow students, and professionals in your field to build connections, gain insights, and explore potential career opportunities.
- - Maintain a proactive and curious mindset, continuously seeking out opportunities for intellectual growth and academic excellence.

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[Increased migration driven by availability of loans and better options abroad](#)

By Nirmal Jovial Issue Date: March 26, 2023 Updated: March 19, 2023 12:20 IST

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