



The Role of Globalisation in Educational Migration

Beera Curie¹

Abstract: Educational migration is a phenomenon associated with the rise in student migration for education. Students migrate for education from underdeveloped and developing nations. These migrations are affected by globalisation. Globalisation, which created borderless nation-states, has played a pivotal role in student migration. It helped attain both brain drain and brain gain in the home and host countries. An analysis of the impact of globalisation on educational migration shows the economic and social impacts on students. This raises the need for a comprehensive policy framework for maximising benefits and reducing inequalities. This paper discusses the various factors that cause educational migration, their relation with globalisation, and the recommendations to maximise the benefits of educational migration through globalisation.

Keywords: Educational Migration, Globalisation, Immigration Policy, Brain Drain, Brain Gain, Employment Opportunities, Opportunities for Innovation

Introduction

Global Trends in Educational Migration

Educational migration is a phenomenon that has grown rapidly ever since globalisation started. Economic and social factors and changes in policies have greatly impacted educational migration. In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of students who are moving abroad from emerging economies, especially from countries like India. In the 2023-24 academic year, the *Times of India* reported that India became the largest source of international students sent to the United States because of a more welcoming U.S. policy. In 2023, Indian students contributed about \$11.8 billion to the U.S. economy through educational migration.

In 2025, the trend of migration to the US changed, and according to the 'ApplyBoard Trends Report 2025,' there has been a decrease

in applications to countries such as Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The reason is partly because of stricter visa rules, requirements for proof of funds, and emphasis on English language proficiency, among other things. Students are now more concerned about career opportunities after graduation, the skills they gain, and how well those align with future job demands. Countries with work visa policies that are more congenial and allow students to stay and work after completing their studies are becoming more appealing to international students.

In recent years, migration patterns have shifted towards more diverse and flexible flows, with a greater emphasis on temporary migration. There has been an increase in both the movement of students to host countries and their return to their home countries or further migration to other destinations, as noted by Dustmann and Glitz (2011).

¹ Lecturer in Political Science, Government College for Women (A), Guntur - 522001 Andhra Pradesh & Research Scholar, Department of Political Science and Public Administration, Andhra University TDR Hub, Visakhapatnam; ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0009-0000-0570-6799>

Studying the role of globalisation on educational migration is important because it shows how student migration has grown over the years. It is leading to the reshaping of higher education into a global market (ICEF, 2012). It helps governments and universities understand the economic and social effects of sending and receiving students, such as tuition revenue, skills transfer, and remittances. This knowledge also reveals inequalities in access, showing which groups benefit or are left behind, and helps design fairer policies (OECD, 2022). It makes us understand the influence of international study in terms of identity, cultural exchange, and the becoming of a global citizen. It also shows the lacuna in the home country, either in terms of policies related to education or the infrastructure and the job market.

Definition of Globalisation and Educational Migration

Globalisation is the process by which the world's economies, societies, and cultures become more connected through trade, investment, finance, technology, ideas, and the movement of people. It reduces barriers between countries so that goods, services, money, and knowledge can flow more freely across borders (Stiglitz, 2002, pp. 9–10). Globalisation involves increased interconnectedness and interdependence among countries, forming a borderless world where there shall be easy exchange of goods and services, capital, people, information and culture, and ideas. This leads to migration of people to different countries due to various reasons. One of the impacts of globalisation is educational migration.

Globalisation and its relation to Educational Migration

Globalisation has promoted educational migration through its interconnectedness. The increase in global interconnectedness created more opportunities and incentives for students to study abroad. Globalisation has made it easier for students to migrate to developed countries for higher education and chase their dreams for better career prospects. Availability of information along with awareness on

procedures and information on scholarships and the zeal to study in world-renowned universities led students, especially from third-world countries to seek admission. A large number of Indian students also sought admission in foreign universities.

The relation between globalisation and educational migration is multifaceted and symbiotic. According to Dustmann and Glitz (2011), migration and education are indeed intertwined in many respects because students migrate to acquire skills, and only those who have skills can go abroad and study in prestigious institutions. Education and skill acquisition play an important role at many stages of an individual's migration (Dustmann & Glitz, 2011, pp. 328–360).

Globalisation basically brings in commercialisation of education, competition, and brain drain from the home country and brain gain for the host country. Invariably, it nurtures skilled students in the host countries who mostly settle down in these countries, the host countries being mostly developed countries.

Educational migrants contribute positively to the host country. They pay tuition fees and also contribute to the labour market. The majority of students take up part-time work to support themselves in these foreign countries. After graduation, these students prefer to work in host countries, thus contributing to their economy. Educational migration promotes diversity and knowledge through knowledge sharing. Educational migration benefits host countries by strengthening the economy, increasing skills in the labour market, and lending cultural diversity. They significantly fill the gap in which the host country is in deficit.

This paper analyses how globalisation shapes the drivers of international student migration and suggests the strategic framework that could be brought in to maximise the benefits for home and host countries.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of this article are:

1. To analyse the drivers of educational migration.
2. To assess the role of globalisation on international student educational migration.
3. To propose strategic recommendations that optimise the benefits of educational migration, as well as strategies for return migration in a globalised world.

These objectives emphasise understanding the causes and effects of globalisation on educational migration and the policy response thereof.

Methodology

This paper is based on qualitative research with data being taken from primary resources like newspaper reports, government reports, reports by non-governmental organisations and secondary sources like books and research articles published. These qualitative data is analysed to understand and analyse the drivers of educational migration; study how globalisation impacts student migration, and evaluate policy responses to maximise the benefits of educational migration in the globalised world. This paper observes the impact of educational migration through a theoretical approach.

Core Concepts

The important concepts to be understood in the study of the impact of globalisation on educational migration are the Push and Pull factors, the knowledge economy, and the policy environment. Educational migration is driven by a mix of economic opportunities, quality of institutions, cultural/social support, policy environments, human capital investment, and push/pull motivations. These drivers are interacting in different ways and shaping the decision of students to migrate for international education. (Fayda-Kinik & Kirisci-Sarikaya, 2022, pp. 73-106). Research on International Student Mobility (ISM) looks at how people move across borders for education. The ISM at the macro level examines how higher education is more international; at the middle level, it focuses on how universities encourage

student mobility, and at the micro level, it looks at students' personal goals towards building their skills and careers (Lipura & Collins, 2020).

Most of the research studies try to understand the reasons, motivations or determinants of ISM. Studies show us three main frameworks for studying ISM, which are (a) push–pull factors, (b) transnationalism and social networks, and (c) capital accumulation, social reproduction, and becoming.

These terms explain the patterns of ISM linking global, national, institutional and personal factors that determine student mobility.

Drivers of Educational Migration

A. Push and Pull Factors

Push Factors

Push factors are those factors that encourage or, rather, negatively motivate a student to migrate to other places in the same country or internationally. Some of the push factors because of which students to migrate are as follows.

1. Global Economic Opportunities

Students often move to countries where education is offered through scholarships, which increases their employability and skills, and they have access to a strong job market, which may be absent in their home country. Post-study work visas make the countries more attractive.

2. Quality of Education and Institutions

High-quality education, especially in reputed institutions, attracts students to receive transnational education. This quality education helps them ameliorate their skills, thus increasing their credibility and probability of being employed in a prestigious workplace and a handsome paycheck.

3. Absence of good Infrastructure

Absence of good institutional infrastructure like buildings, libraries, computers, and other lab facilities may be pushing students with the zeal to learn seek better options in other places.

4. Discrimination

Discrimination and lack of encouragement also encourage students to leave their current place and move to safer places where their work is assessed without any discrimination.

5. Lack of Specialised Courses

Lack of specialised courses in the home country may also lead to international student mobility.

Pull Factors

Pull factors are the benefits and advantages offered in destination regions or countries. These factors comprise better educational infrastructure, job opportunities, and scholarships for education, and the fame of the university. Pull factors are those factors that provide incentives and, hence, look attractive to the student.

1. Access to better infrastructure and curriculum

Access to world-class universities and prestigious institutions offering advanced curricula, interdisciplinary research opportunities, and wide career opportunity services attracts students. These features make them highly attractive to both international and domestic students. The research and development opportunities provided by these institutes became a haven for those interested in research.

2. Better Placement opportunities

Many students migrate internationally because of the opportunities available after education. Post-study work visas make studying more attractive. Early opportunity to earn helps them relieve themselves of the burden of educational investment to some extent. The opportunity to earn better, along with personal growth, drives some students to educational migration.

3. Greater exposure to global networks

International mobility of students or inter-regional mobility of students helps students in career growth and increases the quality network.

Thus, both push and pull factors shape educational migration patterns. While push factors point to problems in students' home regions, pull factors highlight the promise of upward mobility and improved life prospects elsewhere (Institute of International Education, 2023).

B. Transnationalism and social networks

Transnationalism encompasses social, economic, or cultural processes and relationships that operate beyond the boundaries of a state. It involves connecting people, groups, and institutions beyond traditional national borders. Understanding transnationalism helps us perceive the impact of globalisation on education mobility. Transnationalism focuses on linkages and networks that transcend specific national boundaries but maintain close ties to both their country of origin and their country of residence, forming identities, networks, and allegiances that cross national boundaries.

Transnationalism demonstrates how modern societies, identities, and practices increasingly transcend singular national frameworks, creating new forms of connection and interaction.

Social networks, which include strong ties like close friends and family, initiate education mobility by sharing experiences and encouraging them, while weaker ties like acquaintances and social media provide information about studying abroad. Social network is the main channel through which agents exploit new opportunities (Duernecker & Vega-Redondo, 2012). Social networks make it a point that studying abroad is the norm of the day, and for some families, it is an issue of prestige.

C. Capital accumulation, social reproduction, and becoming

Capital accumulation

Capital, according to Bourdieu (1986), is not just economic capital, which involves money and property, but it also encompasses cultural capital, which includes skills, education, credentials, cultural know-how, social capital based on networks and connections, and symbolic capital based on prestige and recognition. The accumulation of these forms of capital over time and across generations helps achieve better social positions either at home or abroad. Studying helps attain higher human capital and opportunities for future career mobility.

Social reproduction

Social reproduction theory helps us understand the impact of existing social structures, like class and hierarchy, on educational migration. These hierarchies are maintained across generations through education. Access to quality education is based on the status of the family, their assets, and state policies. Migration for education becomes a tool to reproduce one's social position. Students from families with greater capital can move easily across migration barriers, while others may face administrative or financial hurdles that limit mobility and reinforce existing inequalities.

Becoming

'Becoming' is that aspect where students decide to acquire an identity based on achievement, outward mobility, or cosmopolitanism. These subjectivities influence the decision to migrate. The concept of "becoming" in student migration emphasises how migration is a transformative process. It is about forming new identities, networks, and forms of subjectivity. Migration shapes students as both economic agents (accumulating capital) and socially situated beings (reproducing and transforming social identities) (Albien & Mashatola, 2021).

Impact of Globalisation on Student Migration

One of the major driving factors for educational migration is the *Push and Pull* factors, which are mostly determined by the gaps in quality education, limited prospects in terms of career, the funding received by public universities, and discrimination in the home country with respect to opportunities based on class and social status. These factors impact student migration and, in this context, we can say that globalisation, with its revolutionised dissemination of information, intensifies the dissatisfaction with local opportunities and the attractiveness of opportunities in the host countries. The ease of travelling brought by globalisation and the easy availability of information have made it easier for students to migrate. Push factors work in countries where there are unstable governments or limited education opportunities, like Turkey, Albania, and other developing and underdeveloped countries. The local problems, unavailability of competent universities and institutions, and opportunities force students from these countries to migrate. Students having high calibre and skill, but who are discriminated against in the home country, also tend to relocate themselves to other states by attaining scholarships for education.

Along with push factors, globalisation also impacts the pull factors. The pull factors impacted by globalisation for student migration are access to better quality education and research opportunities, employment and career opportunities, economic opportunities, social and cultural exposure, technological advancement, and favourable policies. Countries like Germany, France, and Switzerland have been offering courses at prestigious universities along with scholarships and future employment prospects. Students who are in financially stable families tend to migrate for better opportunities. Globalisation has made exposure to global opportunities available to students.

Globalisation impacts student migrations through the concepts of transnationalism and social networks. Globalisation intensifies the transnational flow of people, information, and ideas, thus making student mobility more accessible by expanding educational

opportunities and by connecting students to various institutional networks and knowledge systems.

Globalisation affects educational mobility through capital accumulation, social reproduction, and becoming. Globalisation makes it easier for people to live, work, or study in more than one country and stay in touch with others at home and abroad (Held et al., 1999). Globalisation has made educational migration cyclical by letting financial investments in the form of tuition fees in universities and schools, and living expenses abroad, thereby turning students into human capital and also building the economy by allowing the migrant students to work in host countries, thus contributing to their economies. They also contribute to the home economy by sending money to their families.

Globalisation affects capital accumulation, social reproduction, and impacts student migration in several ways. Globalisation led to the expansion of international education markets, offering scholarships, loans, and work–study options. These opportunities allow students from countries such as India to gain credentials and experience abroad, thereby increasing their employability and status (Choudhury & Gill, 2022). According to Findlay et al. (2012), students gain skills in foreign languages, strengthen their connections, and develop cultural competencies, which are forms of “global capital” valued in labour markets. In the international market, more capital leads to greater mobility. Indian engineering students in Germany build both technical knowledge and European work experience, which boosts their global employment prospects (Findlay et al., 2012). Globalisation also encourages student migration through social reproduction. It supports activities and institutions that reproduce people, values and skills needed for the economy and society.

For example, in the Philippines, millions of women migrate to work as domestic helpers, nurses, and caregivers. Their payments support their families in their home country while their labour helps in the functioning of households

in host countries, which is an example of social reproduction (Parreñas, 2000). Similarly, India has a large number of women working in the Gulf as domestic helpers, caregivers, and so on. The demand in Gulf countries for domestic/care workers is being met partly by female migrants from India and South Asia. In the first quarter of 2025, domestic workers constituted 25.2% of Kuwait’s expatriate labour, totalling 745,000, a 5.6% decrease from last year. Indians lead in both domestic (42.2%) and overall expatriate employment (35.3%). Workers from India, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, and Bangladesh comprise nearly 90% of the domestic labour force, reflecting shifts in Kuwait’s labour market (*The Times of India*, August 04, 2025).

Globalisation also accelerates ‘becoming’ by creating new pathways for education, work, and identity—but also new risks and inequalities. Who one can ‘become’ depends on one’s resources, social position, and access to global networks. Exposure to multiple cultures influences the future personality of the students. The education and skills acquired transform how the students view themselves, especially as potential global professionals and as members of the global middle class. However, access to the benefits of globalisation is also limited, leading to exclusion of some from the benefits of becoming.

Advantages of Educational Migration

Educational migration influences lives and societies worldwide. Below are key benefits, touching learning, growth, finances, and progress—helping movers and their homelands alike.

- It gives exposure to high-quality education because students often migrate to institutions with superior resources, research, and faculty, which may be lacking in their home country.
- Studying abroad and living abroad develop adaptability, cultural awareness, improve global network, and hone language skills. An international degree improves the prospects of employability abroad and a chance

for permanent migration. A concept defined by *Brain Gain*.

- The financial support given by the migrants to families at home facilitates the education of others and also improves educational infrastructure in the home country.
- The students who return to their home country after studying abroad become human capital for the home country, contributing to creating knowledge, technology, and new skills.

Disadvantages of Educational Migration

Although it offers advantages, studying overseas also brings issues needing attention. These aspects look at downsides, covering individual, social, financial, and nationwide concerns tied to learning in foreign countries.

- High financial liability will be there for the student and their family. Even though students often go on scholarships, they have to endure living costs, which is a problem for them, forcing them to work while learning.
- Students experience language and cultural shock, and it may take time to adapt to the new social norms. And, sometimes, psychological pressures may bear down on the student.
- Differences in teaching styles, evaluation, curriculum, and qualification may not be equally recognised in the home country. Visa restrictions and other legal permits required to stay abroad may become more stringent and exacerbate the problems of the students.
- Further, the concept of Brain Drain, when students choose to stay abroad and earn in foreign countries instead of their home country, causes a loss of talent to the home country.

Impact of Globalisation on Educational Migration and Suggestions on Policy Interventions

Globalisation has greatly increased educational migration worldwide through greater access, diversity, and opportunity. At the same time,

there is a gap that is created between those who have access to and awareness to pursue education beyond borders based on their financial and social status. A student with an unsound financial background may not risk the investment in human capital. There are policy gaps concerning migration, as well as policies that could help stop brain drain. There were approximately 6.9 million international students worldwide in 2024, up from 4.5 million in 2014 and 2 million in 2000 (Institute of International Education, 2024).

Students go abroad to gain talents and skills that they cannot obtain in their own countries. Therefore, creating frameworks that could accommodate students from different cultural and class backgrounds. Frequent changes in visa policies contribute further to their woes. Digitalisation of education has made globalised education accessible to the poorest of the poor and also to students in remote areas, creating new learning paths.

Policy Interventions

To address these challenges, countries may prioritise investment in education and impart quality education and establish educational institutions at affordable costs in the remotest areas, as well as create opportunities for the disadvantaged. For example, India has prestigious Central Universities, which are highly sought after and show intra-migration.

The home countries may try to create opportunities by expanding their economies and creating employment opportunities so that those who studied abroad and gained skills can impart their knowledge in their home country. Apart from this, the home countries may make a Memorandum of Understanding with a few prestigious academic institutions in the host countries and develop a branch in these countries without compromising on the quality. The home countries may develop infrastructure facilities and lab facilities that promote innovation and technology.

Home countries may work towards providing employment opportunities and an

environment for self-growth that may lure return migration. Simplification of visa policies may also improve bilateral relations between states, which may be advantageous for growing human capital as well.

Educational institutions may be clearly developed in such a way that there are vocational courses and courses with academic interests, even at the undergraduate level. Those who are skilled but not academically vibrant may choose vocational colleges, while those who want to pursue academic courses should pursue education in colleges meant for them. This way, the quality of education may not be compromised. This can be done by inviting global investments both in education as well as industry. Globalisation eases this.

Conclusion

In summary, globalisation has transformed higher education by expanding opportunities for international mobility, promoting innovation, and deepening cross-cultural competencies. However, this process has also brought new challenges like draining of talent, high costs of education, and the social, cultural, and economic burdens on the student. Therefore, policy responses should aim for balanced integration, strengthening domestic education while supporting those who pursue global pathways.” Especially in the current scenario, where the majority of traditional educational migration destinations have made stricter rules, we need alternatives to meet global educational demands.

References

- Albien, A. J., & Mashatola, N. J. (2021). A systematic review and conceptual model of international student mobility decision-making. *Social Inclusion*, 9(1), 145–157. <https://doi.org/10.17645/si.v9i1.3769>
- ApplyBoard. (2025). *Trends report 2025: Global trends in student education migration*. ApplyBoard. <https://www.applyboard.com/applyinsights/trends-report-2025>
- Business Standard. (2024, April 5). Indian women migrant workers to MENA region to reach 6 million: Report. https://www.business-standard.com/industry/news/indian-women-migrant-workers-to-mena-region-to-reach-6-million-report-124040500674_1.html
- Choudhury, P. K., & Gill, A. S. (2022). Globalisation, human capital accumulation and dynamics of transnational migration of youth: The case of India. In A. L. Atterberry, D. G. McCallum, S. Tu, & A. Lutz (Eds.), *Children and youths' migration in a global landscape (Sociological studies of children and youth*, Vol. 29, pp. 167–183). Emerald Publishing Limited. <https://archive.iqac.puchd.ac.in/naac-docs/c3/publications/62ecc07db8cef8.28892679.pdf>
- Duernecker, G., & Vega-Redondo, F. (2012). *Social networks and the process of globalisation* (Economics Working Paper ECO2012/25). European University Institute. <https://cadmus.eui.eu/server/api/core/bitstreams/10543e83-ba86-5536-ae48-0f1a29e96993/content>
- Dustmann, C., & Glitz, A. (2011). Migration and education. In E. A. Hanushek, S. Machin, & L. Woessmann (Eds.), *Handbook of the economics of education* (Vol. 4, pp. 327–439). <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/~uctpb21/Cpapers/MigrationAndEducation.pdf>
- Fayda-Kinik, F. S., & Kirisci-Sarikaya, A. (2022). Migration in education research: A synthesis to support sustainable development. In I. Kushnir, K. Sood, M. S.-A. Park, H. Zhong, & N. Serret (Eds.), *Education and sustainable development in the context of crises: International case studies of transformational change* (Chap. 6). Emerald Publishing. <https://www.emerald.com/books/oa-edited-volume/16922/chapter/93906605/migration-in-education-research-a-synthesis-to>
- Findlay, A. M., King, R., Smith, F. M., Geddes, A., & Skeldon, R. (2012). World class? An investigation of globalisation,

- difference and international student mobility. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 37(1), 118–131.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-5661.2011.00454.x>
- Held, D., McGrew, A., Goldblatt, D., & Perratton, J. (1999). *Global transformations: Politics, economics and culture*. Polity Press.
- ICEF Monitor. (2012, October 31). The global flow of tertiary-level students. ICEF Monitor. <https://monitor.icef.com/2012/10/the-global-flow-of-tertiary-level-students/>
- Institute of International Education. (2024, November 18). Open Doors 2024 report on international educational exchange. <https://opendoorsdata.org>
- Lipura, S. J., & Collins, F. L. (2020). Towards an integrative understanding of contemporary educational mobilities: A critical agenda for international student mobilities research. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 18(3), 343–359. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2020.1711710>
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2022). *Education at a glance 2022: OECD indicators*. OECD Publishing. https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/2022/10/education-at-a-glance-2022_4aad242c.html
- Parreñas, R. S. (2000). Migrant Filipina domestic workers and the international division of reproductive labour. *Gender & Society*, 14(4), 560–580.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/089124300014004005>
- Stiglitz, J. E. (2002). *Globalization and its discontents*. W. W. Norton & Company.
- The Times of India*. (2025, August 4). Kuwait labour report: Indians largest among four nationalities that make up 90% of domestic workforce. *The Times of India*.
<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/123088907.cms>
- The Times of India*. (2025, March 5). Global dreams, local challenges: How rural Indian students can access international education. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/education/study-abroad/global-dreams-local-challenges-how-rural-indian-students-can-access-international-education/articleshow/123713053.cms>
- Varughese, G. M. (2025). Educational migration and its economic impacts: A study on brain drain, human capital formation, and regional inequality. *International Education and Research Journal (IERJ)*, 11(8).
<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17019045>