

# **Life Quality or Better Income: Understanding the Reasons for Migration and PR of Students from Kerala, Studying Abroad**

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## **Abstract**

The intercontinental universities have emanated as an eminent feature on the international higher education outlook. In Kerala, there's a tremendous increase in the migration of Keralite students to overseas over the past years. In this paper, an attempt is made to understand the reason for the migration and PR (Permanent Residence) of Students in Kerala to Study Abroad. Results depicts that there are some push-pull factors which motivates them to pursue their higher education in overseas institutions. This article also explores the propensity of Keralites in seeking Permanent Residence (PR) abroad after higher studies. It suggests that Universities in India should frame a policy for students to do part time work permit along with studies. This research gives a key knowledge to the home country Government and their educational universities to consider the relevance or importance of push-pull factor which motivate the students to study abroad.

## **Keywords**

International Education, Migration, Push-Pull factor, Permanent Residence and Kerala Students

## **1. Introduction**

In terms of international student migration, India is both a regional host country and a leading sender country. India has traditionally been a learning center. Universities such as Nalanda and Takshashila drew academics from all over the world in ancient times. When India became modernized, it had over 350 universities and 16,000 colleges, including IIT, IIM, Indian Business School, and AIIMS. Many students from various nations attended these educational institutions to further their studies. However now, students in India are increasingly interested in migrating to abroad in pursuit of their tertiary-level learning. Over the past decennium, there is an increase in the growth rate of 22% in the movement of student to overseas. As the COVID 19 pandemic open out and social distancing occurred which creates a huge disruption in education sector worldwide, impacted on the student's dream to study abroad on hold. Despite this pandemic, around 91% students show an increasingly keen on chasing their studies abroad. According to MEA (Ministry of External Affairs) of 2020, the total Indian students studying abroad reached 261,406 alone. From many states in India, vast number of students were hovering to abroad for achieving their ambition to learn higher education.

Kerala is renowned as one of India's most literate states, with a hardworking young. Twenty Kerala institutions are among the top 100 universities in India according to NIRF 2020. But students in Kerala have the desire to pursue higher education abroad. Student migration was an unfathomed aspects of global migration flows and trends in Kerala. However, in the last five years has been seen a fast peak in the swarm of Kerala students seeking higher education in various professions in foreign states, particularly in Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and China. The majority of students who choose to pursue higher education in another country with the aim of securing permanent residency. In this study, an attempt is made to elucidate the reason for the migration of students in Kerala and keen interest in obtaining permanent residence after graduation in abroad.

## **2. Literature Review**

Research is incomplete without reviews of related studies. The study explored global and national reviews in line with the topic. For this, we have gone through many articles which was conducted by several researchers. Edward and Douglas, (2001) investigated student migration and the main reasons that vary in various US geographic regions. This study identifies, tertiary education universities with geographically recognized standard programs have a better facility to attract non-resident students. It also revealed a link between non-resident admission and the economic context in which the university is located. Murphy-Lejeun and Elizabeth, (2002), In this book, the author describes about the motivation of travelling students, the procedure of building social networks, adapting to new cultures, then the consequences and challenges followed. Altberts and Hazen (2005) look into the factors that influence whether students settle in the United States or head back home after graduation. They identified three types of motivational reasons are: experts, communal and, individualize. Cubillo et al., (2006): The purpose of this study is to offer a theoretical model that combines the various groups of factors that impact foreign students' managing processes and, understanding the reasons that influence their preference, then the decisions are influenced by the institution's image, security, cultural events, standard of living, visa processing, and immigration possibilities are all variables to evaluate when living in the study location. Agarwal (2007): In his book, he recognizes the demands and gaps in education sectors and gives recommendations for improvement made from experiences form different countries. Investigates student study abroad decision within a theoretical framework. In advance to this study, a previous research has guided to describe the factors involved in study abroad (Presley et al. 2010).

There is a growing body of academic papers on higher learning international expansion, as well as student perceptions on their determination and personal stories (Brooks and Waters, 2011). It looks at how their migration has affected advanced university degree and our understanding of movement in general. They illustrate nationwide innovations and emerging instructions through overseas students' movement in countries such as Canada, the United Kingdom, the United States, Germany, Africa, China, India, Latin America, and Australia, and also the rationales and techniques of Middle Eastern provincial academic institutions (Bhandari et al. 2011). Hackney et al. (2012) discusses the willingness of American undergraduate student to study abroad. They concluded it by saying that individual, environmental and locational variables, which motivates them to study abroad. Authors analyze the challenges and adjustments of international students in US. It indicated, they often faced difficulties like academic challenges, social isolation and cultural adjustments (Wu et al. 2015). Hercog and van de Laar (2016) studied and looked into the student's preference and deciding factors of international mobility purpose of Indian students in Science and Engineering. Survey concluded that the preference variables is the main factor for mobility plans. As a result, foreign student mobility is a decision made by the entire family. In most cases, commitments to family take priority over potential individual ambitions.

The demographic profile of prospective Indian students and the preferred destination (Lekshmi et al. 2017). The most preferred destination choose by the student's is US, Canada, Australia, and Singapore. This study comprise the information about the Indian and Chinese case student mobility situations which reveals that, they are the to-notch student sending countries and, they initially experienced some similar issues (Pande et al. 2018). They also express the techniques and strategies each country used to create their educational systems and address the problem of student migration in their respective countries differ. Disya, and Ningrum (2019) studying abroad enhances not just their lives but it also their enjoyment. The difficult issues were having a greater impact on their satisfaction, and family is the driving force behind their decision to pursue school abroad. Aranya and Kumar (2019) analyse how CSR can help India achieve the SDGs set by the UN. The SDGs concept was not created in a brand-new environment. It is the outcome of numerous important conversations that have occurred over the past couple years. The Csr initiatives of fifteen Indian businesses served as the foundation for this project (Abhirami et al. 2019). They conducted a study of the main activities carried out by these fifteen companies to improve results for the companies, as well as an analysis of their CSR activities and a comparison of those activities with each other. In addition to official social media presence, Csr communication modalities, challenges and gaps in Csr disclosure pertaining to Indian Organizations, this study examines the visual communications intended for consumption by the target demographic of CSR communications (Arun and Babu, 2020). The purpose of this research is to investigate the factors that influence overseas students' intentions to remain in Finland three years after college.; and discovered that family relationships and job prospects are linked to a foreign student's possibility of settling in Finland after graduation (Mathies and Karhunen, 2021).

From all of the aforementioned reviews, it is clear that there are a variety of factors that influence students' choices to study abroad, as well as several types of researches conducted on Indian students. No such further studies related to Kerala students were not seen. So, it is necessary to look into the perspectives of Keralites' on this subject.

### 3. Objective of the Study

- To understand the push and pull factors motivating the student choice of overseas studies
- To identify and explore the benefits of doing higher education in abroad.
- To effectively understand the propensity to seek Permanent Residence (PR) in abroad after completing their studies.

### 4. Method and Data

This section covers the, research methodology, which includes the research design, as well as the sampling strategy and, data analysis deployed for conducting the study.

*Research Design:* A descriptive survey approach was taken up to understand the in-depth reason for Keralite students migrating to abroad for higher studies and settling down in foreign country after education there.

*Data:* This study is based upon primary data which has been employed through structured questionnaire. This study mainly focused on students especially from Kerala who were pursuing higher education abroad. Linkert Scale varying from 1 to 5 which ranges from “Not at All Important” to Extremely Important” were framed in the questionnaire to determine push and pull factors which motivates students to study overseas. A ranking question was used to determine the factors influencing the students to seek PR (Permanent Residence). In addition to responses to the declarations, demographic information was also collected from the respondents. This study mainly focuses on students especially from Kerala, who all are enrolled for higher education in abroad.

*Sampling:* Sample size – 150 questionnaires had been distributed and Sampling technique- Snowball sampling method was adopted to collect the information from the respondents.

*Research Instrument:* The collected data will be analyzed through statistical tools like reliability analysis, percentage analysis and, chi-square tests.

## 5. Data Analysis and Results:

### 5.1 Reliability Analysis Push-Pull Factors

Table 1. Reliability Analysis Push-Pull Factors

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based On Standardized Items	N of items
.864	.874	14

The reliability of the scale is performed, and coefficient of Cronbach's Alpha is found to be 0.864 for 14 items for the research study which shows that the items are strongly correlated for internal consistency (Nunnally,1978). Cronbach's Alpha of higher than 0.70 is regarded as a good indicator of scale reliability (Table 1).

### 5.2 Descriptive Statistics for Push-Pull Factors

As shown in Table 2, the overall mean score for both push and pull factors together which consist of 13 items is 3.39. Only three items have mean value below 3.0

Table 2. Mean score of Push-Pull Factors

<i>Items</i>	<i>Mean (5-point scale)</i>
Limited admission Quota in government universities	3.86
Course not available at home country	1.99
Overseas course better than home country	3.43
Difference in the method of study as compared to that in oversea course	3.41
Exorbitant fees in Non- Governmental universities	3.77
Quality of education	4.29
International exposure in the field of study	4.02
Ease of getting a scholarship	3.01
University facilities	3.53
Relatives or Friends are studying here	2.35
Increasing your social status in society associated with study abroad	2.49
Hospitality and helpfulness of local people	3.11
Intention to get a Permanent Residence (PR)	4.24
<b>Mean Score</b>	<b>3.39</b>

### 5.3 Chi-Square Test

#### *Hypotheses 1:*

**H<sub>0</sub>:** Age and factors motivates to stay or get Permanent Residence (PR) abroad has no significant impact each other.

**H<sub>1</sub>:** Age and factors motivates to stay or get Permanent Residence (PR) abroad has significantly impact each other (Table 3).

Table 3. Age and Factors motivating to stay or get Permanent Residence (PR) abroad

#### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	28.478 <sup>a</sup>	12	.005
Likelihood Ratio	25.508	12	.013
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.222	1	.022
N of Valid Cases	150		

#### *Interpretation*

The chi-square was found to be 0.005, indicating that the occurrence of H<sub>0</sub> is less than 5%. (level of significance), implying that Age has a significant relationship with Factors motivating to stay or get Permanent Residence (PR) abroad (though not significant). Here, in this since  $H_0 < 0.05$  ( $0.005 < 0.05$ ) we reject the H<sub>0</sub> and accept the H<sub>1</sub>. So, it is concluded that there is an association between Age and Factors motivating to stay or get Permanent Residence (PR) abroad. The most important factor which motivates to stay abroad is the “Limited job opportunities in home country”, while the not at all important was “Acquiring work experience”.

#### *Hypothesis 2:*

**H<sub>0</sub>:** Intention to stay or get Permanent Residence (PR) abroad has not significant impact by age.

**H<sub>1</sub>:** Intention to stay or get Permanent Residence (PR) abroad has significant impact by age (Table 4).

Table 4. Age and Intention to stay or get Permanent Residence (PR) abroad.

#### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	12.312 <sup>a</sup>	6	.055
Likelihood Ratio	15.990	6	.014
Linear-by-Linear Association	9.458	1	.002

*Interpretation*

The chi-square was observed to be 0.055 stating that the occurrence of H0 is greater than 5% (level of significance), implying that Age has no impact on Intention to stay or get Permanent Residence (PR) abroad (though not significant). Here, in this since  $H_0 > 0.05$  ( $0.055 > 0.05$ ) we reject the H1 and accept the H0. So, it is concluded that there is no association between Age and Intention to stay or get Permanent Residence (PR) abroad.

**5.4 Descriptive Statistics of Demographic Characteristics, (N = 150)**

Reliability analysis for push-pull factors are strongly correlated for internal consistency with 0.864 for 14 items and the overall mean score for both push and pull factors together is 3.39. It is found that, most of the respondents, that is, 54% comes under the age group of 21-24 years. When it comes to gender category, 51% of respondents are males and the remaining 49% are female. It is found that, most of the respondents, that is 51% completed their bachelor’s degree from Kerala. It is found that, 51% of respondents were doing post-graduation degree in foreign country. About 31% respondents choose United Kingdom and 30% respondents choose Canada as their preferred study location. From the study it is clear that the push factor which motivates the students in Kerala to study abroad is mainly due to the limited admission quota in Governmental institutions as 47% and Exorbitant fees in Non-governmental institutions as 42%; it is been ranked as the most among 150 respondents (Table 5).

Table 5. Demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the sample

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>Age</i>	<i>Below 20</i>	22	14%
	<i>21-24</i>	81	54%
	<i>25-30</i>	46	31%
	<i>Above 30</i>	1	1%
<i>Gender</i>	<i>Male</i>	77	51%
	<i>Female</i>	73	49%
	<i>Others</i>	0	0%
<i>Highest grade completed in Kerala</i>	<i>High School Certificate</i>	41	27%
	<i>Bachelor's</i>	76	51%
	<i>Master's</i>	33	22%
	<i>Others</i>	0	0
<i>Field of Education in foreign country</i>	<i>Diploma</i>	5	3%
	<i>Under Graduation</i>	17	11%
	<i>Post-Graduation</i>	77	51%
	<i>PhD</i>	24	16%
	<i>Others</i>	27	18%
<i>Preferred location</i>	<i>Canada</i>	45	30%
	<i>UK</i>	47	31%
	<i>US</i>	2	1%
	<i>Russia</i>	26	17%
	<i>Australia</i>	16	11%
	<i>Singapore</i>	8	5%
	<i>China</i>	2	1%
	<i>Ireland</i>	1	1%
	<i>Others</i>	3	2%

**6. Findings and Suggestions**

Pull factors which motivates the students to go abroad for higher studies is mostly due to the quality of education in foreign countries and they had the intention to get permanent residence (PR); both has been ranked as the most in 55% among 150 respondents. It is found that 58% respondents were highly satisfied in pursuing higher studies abroad. It is found that 99% of the total sample respondents agree that they are benefited from studying higher education abroad. 37% of the total respondents said that parents helped or influenced in making decision to go abroad. It has been found

that, most of the respondents, that is 56% got the source of information from internet. 83% respondents of the sample are willing to stay or to get PR (Permanent Residence) in abroad after completing studies. Limited job opportunity in home country and quality of life in foreign country are the major reasons for most of the respondents willing to stay or get permanent residence (PR) in abroad.

The Chi-Square test at 5% level of significance shows that:

Age has a significant relationship with Factors motivating to stay or get Permanent Residence (PR) abroad. Age of the respondents has no significant impact on Intention to stay or get Permanent Residence (PR) abroad.

From this study it is found out that there are several reasons for the migration of students in Kerala to study abroad. So, we would like to suggest that, Government should take initiatives to override current education system from outdated or irrelevant curriculum; and implement practical and research oriented educational policy. Also, Government must make way to collaborate local universities with foreign universities to offer joint programs, from bachelors to doctoral, in all disciplines. and, also develop a tie-in between National research laboratories and other research centers for high standard and a synergic research.

## **7. Conclusion**

Students in Kerala are becoming pickier and more meticulous while choosing their educational career. They want to imbibe a global perspective and practical knowledge-based education. This expounded study concludes by proving that limited seats in governmental institutions, exorbitant fees in non-governmental institutions in home-country and quality of education in foreign country were the major reasons which motivates the students in Kerala to pursue their higher education in abroad. Here in this outlook it points out the propensity of the students to stay or get permanent residence after education is influenced by limited job opportunity in Kerala and the quality of life they will get in foreign country. Looking at the number of Keralites flee to abroad for higher studies, Government should investigate the possibility to lessen the migration and solution to increase the returning of students.

Governments must take initiatives to promote collaboration between higher education institution in Kerala and international universities. Indian universities should frame a policy for students to do part time work permit along with studies. It also suggests the home country Government and their educational universities to consider the relevance or importance of push-pull factor which motivate them to study abroad. Overall, this study depicts the better understanding of Keralites reason for pursuing higher education abroad.

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