



# The Brain Drain Migration of Indians to Abroad: Causes, Consequences, and Way Ahead

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## Abstract

Names like Satya Nadella, Sundar Pichai, Gita Gopinath, and many more come to mind when one thinks about Indians living overseas. These are all individuals of Indian descent who rose to the top of global institutions. Twitter's previous CEO was Parag Agarwal until Elon Musk took charge. But why are talented Indians getting these chances abroad? Is this a symptom of the brain drain from India? Along with working professionals, India is also experiencing a talent-driven student exodus. According to the British High Commission, 1,17,965 Indians have received student visas to the UK year through June 2022. According to another projection, by the year 2024, 1.8 million Indians will have spent close to \$85 billion on studying overseas. This is a staggering sum that demonstrates how India's skill and wealth are draining one another. The data on brain drain in India demonstrate that the consequences for the economy cannot be ignored.

**Key words:** Brain Drain, Brain Circulation, Demographic Dividend, Scheme for Promotion of Academic and Research Collaboration (SPARC), Innovation in Science Pursuit for Inspired Research (INSPIRE) Program.

## Significance of Research

Following the Chinese, Indians are the nationality with the greatest number of foreign migrants. India has the highest yearly inflow of remittances from abroad in the world. Despite its importance, there are a lot of gaps in the study on migration in India, which emphasizes the need for more investigation.

This paper seeks to draw attention to some of the shortcomings in the study of international migration in the Indian context. It is essential to share this knowledge in order to promote more study in the area.

The new destination tendencies seen among Indians have not yet been investigated in Indian migration studies study. For instance, research on Indians in Southeast Asian nations is lacking.

The majority of the study done so far on Indians living abroad has been in Anglophone nations. The necessity for Indian migration studies academics to observe new patterns of global migration is urgent. The purpose of the paper is to provide a springboard for further investigation into the as-yet-unstudied aspects of international migration from India.

## Methodology

The research paper is based on the study and evaluation of the information material available through secondary sources i.e., books, research articles in national and international journals and magazines, editorials, and news from leading newspapers and periodicals. The study consists of different methods used. They are historical, descriptive, analytical, rational, and comparative.

## Introduction

When skilled workers and professionals leave their home countries to pursue greater prospects abroad, this phenomenon is known as "brain drain". It also happens when people move from one sector of the workforce to another for many of the same reasons. Thus, the phrase "brain drain" refers to a significant exodus or migration of people. Internal strife in a country, the existence of attractive professional opportunities overseas, or a desire to relocate to a nation with a greater standard of living are all elements that might contribute to a brain drain. Brain drains results in the loss of a significant number of valuable people for nations, businesses, and organizations. The phrase is frequently used to refer to the departure of certain professions, such as teams of physicians, nurses, scientists, engineers, or financial experts.

Many individuals have questioned why most Indians opt to emigrate. Over 244 million individuals now reside in nations other than their countries of birth, according to data from the United Nations (2015). Additionally, it is significant to remember that over 16 million NRIs live outside of India, making up the biggest diaspora community in the world. In addition, there are qualified graduates, post-graduates, and even Ph.D. holders without positions that match their abilities. 55 million individuals in India's labor market have graduate degrees, and 9 million of them are unemployed.

On the one hand, India's youthful population is viewed as an important asset to our development and economy. India calls it its "Demographic Dividend" with pride. The Ministry of External Affairs reports that 'the total literacy rate among India's young has grown, with around 90% being able to read or write. But sadly, there is no evidence of teenage involvement in this endeavor. India still experiences widespread youth unemployment, which prevents these young people from being able to contribute to the country's progress. The issue that India is dealing with is the widespread departure of young, intelligent people to other nations.

India has to take migration-which has been occurring at a rising rate over the past few decades seriously and consider its causes and effects. Data demonstrate that persons with financial and educational advantages are more likely to try to leave India and reside abroad.

### Causes of Indians Migrating

There are several causes, according to Prof. Amarjiva Lochan, Deputy Dean of the University of Delhi's Department of International Relations. Indians now have access to nations like Singapore. You may move there and live there for free after paying \$1 million. Additionally, there are Scandinavian nations with lax immigration laws that welcome Indians with open arms. Indian IT "coolies" are in very high demand in the US. Some of the Push Factors are:

1. **Low Salary Packages in India:** One clearly has an idea of how much a new graduate will make in India, but owing to the currency rate, the same graduate with the same qualifications and age might make many times more money overseas. In addition to seeking a greater wage overseas, our young also seek a better standard of living.

Over 50% of top scorers in the standard 10th and 12th board examinations between 1996 and 2015, according to news station WION, left the country. These statistics highlight our nation's loss of human capital and the enormous amount of money spent on education. Indians who go overseas have the opportunity to create wealth, increase their income, and preserve more money than they would otherwise be able to in India.

2. **Unemployment:** Unfortunately, India's economic structure has elevated finding employment to the pinnacle of success. Jobs are in high demand inside the government because they provide employment stability, regular wage increases, and pensions with less responsibility. There are many instances of people working on a project even if they could easily find a well-paying job out there just because they want to make a difference. These individuals have the traits of having a talent, being risk-takers, and being motivated by an interest. Despite the fact that moving from thousands to millions of entrepreneurs is difficult, these qualities must be taught to the next generation by every educational institution. We can improve that in our nation.
3. **Lack of opportunities:** This is due to overpopulation. The opportunities are very less as compared to the population. On top of that the reservation system cuts off half of the candidates. Additionally, the students have the choice to work part-time employment while pursuing their education overseas. As a result, plenty of students go abroad. Numerous migrations have been prompted by the state's inadequate employment possibilities.
4. **Overpopulation:** India has surpassed China to be the most populated country in the world. The population of India can sometimes be a boon however when it comes to work and jobs it is a liability. The jobs are very less and applicants are more. This has resulted in many Indians leaving the country so that they can get opportunities in other parts of the world.
5. **No work-life balance:** In India, working professionals still have to work on weekends and attend calls related to work even after job hours. This is not the case in abroad as the work there is not week-days related but hours-related. Thus, there is flexibility and enough time for family and personal life. But this is not the situation in India.

6. **Lack of talent recognition:** In a population this size and with customs favoring the glamorous world above academic aptitude, it is difficult to be recognized in one's specialty, bright minds often choose foreign nations where their work is more highly valued.
7. **Social Security & Healthcare:** It is a known truth that India's public healthcare system is poor. Therefore, public healthcare in nations like Germany is not just cutting edge with top-notch management, but also reasonably priced. Additionally, mandatory payments are used to support Germany's healthcare system, assuring everyone access to free medical treatment. There are therefore trained physicians. People must pay for healthcare insurance out of their taxes, but this ensures that they won't go bankrupt if they become sick, suffer an accident, or experience similar circumstances.

### Consequences of Migration

While the industrialized nations use these professionals' skills without paying for their training, the underdeveloped countries spend millions of rupees on their education. The loss of medical personnel has a severe impact on India, particularly in rural areas where there are fewer physicians than in metropolitan areas.

The majority of students who leave India for higher education do not come back. They become completely disinterested in their own country after witnessing the luxurious lifestyles of other nations. The fact that technical professionals and intellectuals are provided with particular facilities in other nations is another benefit of having a higher level of life there.

The fact that technical professionals and intellectuals are provided with particular facilities in other nations is another draw to live in societies with better standards of life. However, these professionals and students also spend quite a bit of money back to India through remittances, which brings in a lot of foreign currency and capital to the nation.

The worldwide migration of talented workers benefits the nations that get access to their abilities. The young people who travel overseas have relatively few skills. Through further education and work experience, they develop their talents overseas so that when they return, they have more brainpower. Others refer to it as brain circulation.

There is a sizable Indian diaspora dispersed over the globe. Indian skilled professionals who have received their education and established their careers abroad are coming back home in greater numbers to take advantage of the STEM-related job prospects and the nation's strong economic growth. With the help of their worldwide networks and connections to foreign venture capital firms, returnees with strong job backgrounds and entrepreneurial talents are launching profitable start-ups.

It is referred to as the "Reverse Brain Drain" when professionals move back to their native country after gaining some experience and starting a firm, enrolling in a research university, or work for an MNC there. When human capital goes from a more developed nation to one that is still growing slowly or quickly, it is called a reverse brain drain.

## Policies/ Initiatives by the Indian Government

The initiatives of the Indian government to stop the brain drain are more restrictive than they are long-term remedies.

- 1) The practice of granting No Objection to Return to India (NORI) certifications to physicians immigrating to the US was discontinued in 2014.
- 2) For doctors who come to the US on a J1 visa and want to stay longer than three years, the US government requires the NORI certificate.
- 3) Nurses now fall within the Emigration Check Required (ECR) category, according to the government. This action was done to increase nursing recruitment transparency and lessen nurse exploitation in the countries of destination.
- 4) Due to India's ban on dual citizenship, anybody seeking citizenship in another nation must renounce their Indian passport. The Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) card, which allows them to live and even run a company in India, can still be obtained by Indians who renounce their citizenship.
- 5) The Indian government makes it obvious that they are very concerned about the exodus of the skilled population by providing a straightforward online option for citizenship renunciation.
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The government has developed a number of plans to recruit Indian scientists, including:

- 1) The Ramanujan Fellowship, Innovation in Science Pursuit for Inspired Research (INSPIRE) Program: The goal of this scheme is to inspire scientists and engineers of Indian descent from all over the globe to accept jobs in scientific research in India, particularly those scientists who desire to return to India from abroad.
- 2) The Ramalingaswamy Fellowship: This fellowship gives scientists who want to return and work in India a platform.
- 3) The Vaishvik Bharativa Vaigvanik (VAIBHAV): This summit brought together Indians and scholars of Indian descent from outside to brainstorm creative solutions to a range of problems.
- 4) The Scheme for Promotion of Academic and Research Collaboration (SPARC), the Impactful Policy Research in Social Science (IMPRESS), and the Scheme for Transformational and Advanced Research in Sciences (STARS) all have similar goals of fostering India-specific research in the social and natural sciences.

## Way Ahead

To create a conducive atmosphere for the brilliant enough to encourage them to stay in India, systematic improvements are required. The government should concentrate on developing laws that encourage return and circular migration. Policies encouraging professionals to go home after completing their training or education are also appreciated.

India may also engage in negotiations to create bilateral agreements for a strategy of "brain-share" between sending and receiving nations. Neglecting the brain and wealth drain caused by the exodus of students, skilled workers, and educated minds would impede the advancement of the country, which is still growing and faces several political and economic instabilities.

The time has come to talk about the causes of Indian people's "escape mentality. Young people with higher education degrees are experiencing unemployment as well as a violent and hateful culture. If India does not stop this brain and money drain, she will pay a steep price.

One approach is to provide the infrastructure that is required for Indian professionals and students. Another strategy is to support startup companies and provide Indians with chances to launch new firms. By doing so, more employment may be produced in the private sector, relieving pressure on the public sector.

India may benefit from its youthful population by working to upskill them. The nation should concentrate on expanding its system of colleges and universities and giving students the finest choices available domestically. The brain drain from India may be stopped or slowed down with the help of good infrastructure, competitive compensation, and professional prospects. India has the capacity to do this as we move forward. India's brain drain may be halted with the right actions.

## Conclusion

The time has come to talk about the causes of Indian residents' "escape mindset". Young people with advanced degrees are experiencing unemployment. If India does not stop this brain and money drain, she will pay a steep price. Neglecting the brain and wealth drain caused by the exodus of students, skilled workers, and educated minds would impede the advancement of the country, which is still growing and faces several political and economic instabilities. The CEO of several multinational corporations is of Indian descent. This is a matter of great pride for India, but it is also concerning since some of its brightest young brains are employed by other nations rather than their own. A few decades ago, only wealthy individuals could choose to study abroad, but now middle-class Indians are doing the same, thanks to expanding chances and scholarships offered by international colleges. Even part-time employment is not a barrier for Indian students. This is due to how these other nations' work cultures, standards of life, employment prospects, decent incomes, etc. all function together.

India has to take migration-which has been occurring at a rising rate over the past few decades seriously and consider its causes and effects. Data demonstrate that persons with financial and educational advantages are more likely to try to leave India and reside abroad. Migration will not be halted if the yearly conclaves of the Indian diaspora, such as the Pravasi Bhartiya Divas, continue to ignore unemployment and the economic downturn.

It is undeniable that India has a serious problem with brain drain. The patriotism of those who do this is equal to that of those who remain in their country of origin. These folks are relocating in order to live better lives and have more chances. Even if it is not always the most popular location for Indians, Germany is nevertheless a choice since getting a German visa is less difficult than getting an American or British visa. It is by no means obvious that immigration from India has changed so favorably in recent years. Instead, Germany is up against the Anglo-Saxon nations, which have substantial Indian populations and the English language as two important advantages.

An important aspect may have been the focused outreach of Indians interested in immigration, particularly through the web platform "Make it in Germany," in addition to the country's growing goodwill in the globe. These

initiatives ought to be developed further. India, which is now remains demographically robust and has a percentage of the global population aged 15 to 24 of 20.5% compared to China's 14.0%, which comes in second position.

At the same time, efforts should be made to prevent migrant flows from becoming overly concentrated in a few specific Indian areas and social groupings and to promote the emergence of varied German-Indian social networks and Indian communities in Germany. By doing this, the impact of India's economic and social changes on migratory flows can be reduced.

Probably names like Satya Nadella, Sundar Pichai, Gita Gopinath, and many more come to mind when you think about Indians living overseas. These are all individuals of Indian descent who rose to the top of global institutions. The brain drain phenomenon leads to the exodus of smart individuals from India, including Sundar Pichai, Satya Nadella, Gita Gopinath, etc. These individuals left India at some point in their lives and are now working for other nations. Imagine if they had been employed in India. All these are highlighting the need for a more inclusive approach to addressing this issue.

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