



EDUCATIONAL TOURISM: ANALYSING THE GLOBAL TRENDS

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ABSTRACT

Tourism is an important source of revenue for any country. Education tourism, one of the forms of tourism, is a way to give best education to students across the globe. The growing popularity of attaining knowledge and technical competencies from world's best destinations has resulted in increase in education tourism. As per a report by UNESCO, the number of students studying abroad at institutions of higher education has doubled over the past 12 years to around 4 million. The paper discusses global movement of students as well as Indian scenario. Financing facilities, immigration rules, cost of living, hostel facilities are some of the important considerations for students who want to study abroad. India has a long way to become an attractive destination as international counterparts like US, Canada. The paper gives suggestions which can be implemented to increase their intake of foreign students and prevent their students going out.

Keywords: Educational Tourism, Immigration, India

JEL Classification: L83

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism includes domestic as well as international travel but international movement is important for any nation due to implications on country's balance of payments. Many countries receive huge foreign exchange from their tourists. And on the other hand it is draining income of the other country. So tourism has a two way impact, positive for country receiving tourists and negative for the country who's people are going out and spending.

Tourism has been categorized into many categories depending on the purpose for which it occurs. Tourism may be experiential tourism, mass tourism, medical tourism, education tourism, creative tourism, social tourism and many more.

The focus of this paper is on education tourism. The growing popularity of attaining knowledge and technical competencies from world's best destinations has resulted in increase in education tourism. It means more students are now going abroad to study, specially for higher education.

Students going abroad to study have financial implications due to several reasons-

- i. The cost of study,
- ii. The cost of living and food in foreign country,
- iii. The cost of recreational activities,
- iv. The cost of family and friends visiting foreign country,
- v. The cost of staying in the country after studies are over.























These costs are to be incurred by the student who is going to study outside his home country. And these costs are source of revenue for the country where he/she is studying. Often it is seen that students are accompanied by family members or friends, stay in the country to search job after their studies are over. All this generate revenues for the country and are loss for the home country.

2. GLOBAL TRENDS

The movement of students from one part of the world to another is common. Students are attracted to foreign destinations in pursuit of quality education, better jobs and better recognized degrees. As per a report by UNESCO, the number of students studying abroad at institutions of higher education has doubled over the past 12 years to around 4 million. Here we see some of the top destinations of the world for higher studies.

Figure 1: International destinations for Higher Studies

Asian emerging economies promoting academic exchanges

	Country of origin	Number of students studying abroad; in thousands		Destination country	Number of foreign students accepted; in thousands
1	 China	694	1	 U.S.	740
2	 India	189	2	 U.K.	427
3	 South Korea	123	3	 France	271
4	 Germany	117	4	 Australia	249
5	 Saudi Arabia	62	5	 Germany	206
6	 France	62	6	 Russia	173
7	 U.S.	58	7	 Japan	150
8	 Malaysia	55	8	 Canada	120
9	 Vietnam	53	9	 China	88
10	 Iran	51	10	 Italy	77
22	 Japan	33	28	 India	31

Data, compiled by Unesco Institute for Statistics, covers students studying abroad at educational institutions higher than high school in 2012; students in short-term study programs of less than one year are not included

Source:

<http://asia.nikkei.com/Life-Arts/Education/Students-studying-abroad-around-the-world-top-4M>

In Asia, we see that China leads with around 6,94,000 Chinese students going to other countries while only 88,000 students came to China. That makes outflow of students from China almost 8 times more than the inflow. In case of India, 189000 students went to study abroad and only 31,000 came to India. So the outflow is 6 times more than the inflow. US, UK, France, Germany, Japan, Australia are the countries which have more students coming from abroad than their students going abroad for higher studies.

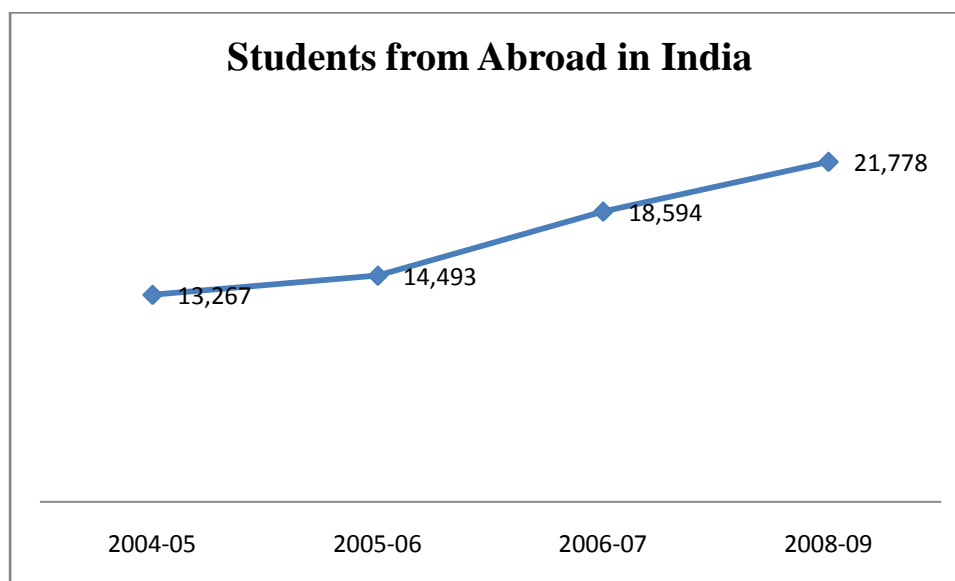
The top International destinations for education are- US, UK, Canada, Australia, Germany, France, Australia.

Emerging economies have been reinforcing their attraction as destination countries. While traditional destination countries - the U.S., Britain, Germany, France and Australia - hosted 47% of all students studying abroad in 2012, down from 55% in 2000, the ratio for Brazil, Russia, India and China, collectively known as the BRICs, stood at 9%, close to 11% for Britain, the second-ranked destination country.

China is the biggest country of origin for mobile students. More than 6,94,000 students went abroad from China in 2012, spelling a steep increase from 1,40,000 in 2000. One of every six students studying overseas is Chinese.

3. INDIAN SCENARIO

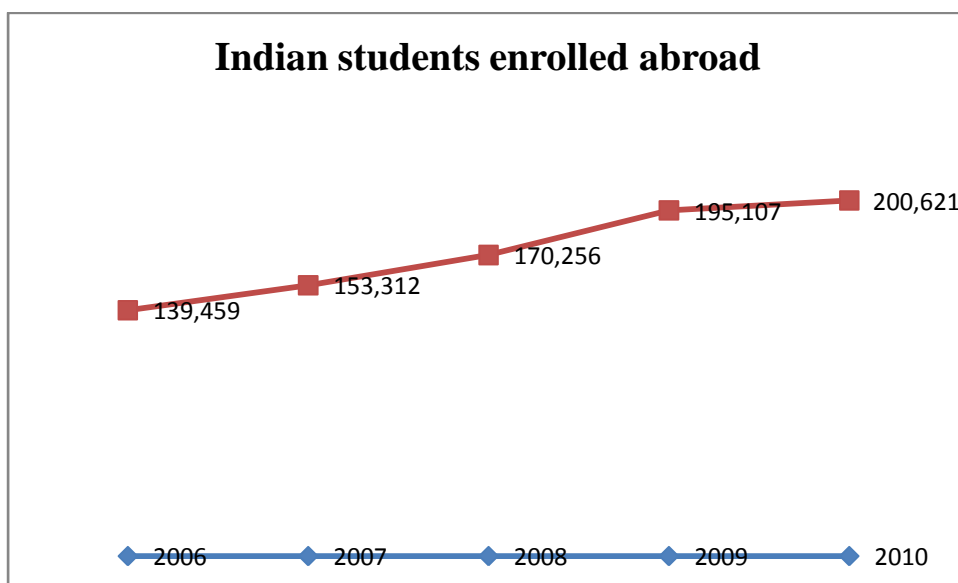
Figure 2: International students coming to India



Source: Inputs from <http://www.iie.org/Services/Project-Atlas/India/International-Students-In-India>

The figure above shows the growth in students coming to India for higher studies. The figure has been growing since 2004-05 to 2008-09. However the growth is not impressive when compared to global counterparts. Number of International students in some countries have doubled over the years whereas India has just a growth rate of around 1%. In 2012, the figure stands at around 31,000.

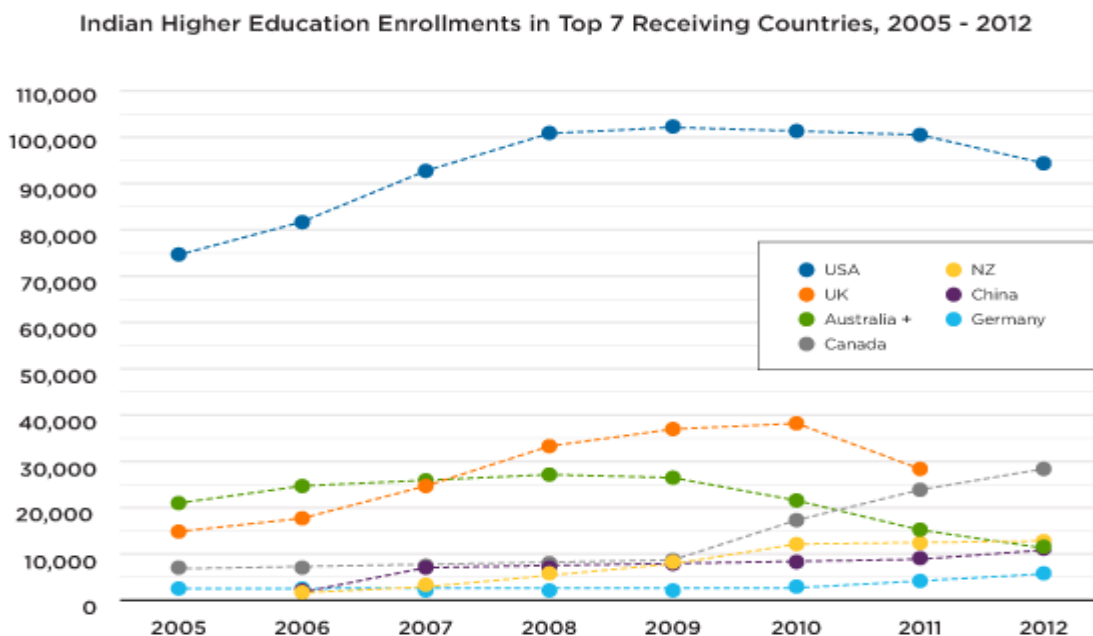
Figure 3: Indian students going abroad



Source: Inputs from <http://www.iie.org/Services/Project-Atlas/India/International-Students-In-India>

The figure above shows Indian students studying abroad. There has been a constant increase in Indian students going abroad.

Figure 4: Top destinations for Indian Students



Source: <http://wenr.wes.org/2013/12/indian-study-abroad-trends-past-present-and-future/>

Figure 4 shows the destinations preferred by Indian students to pursue their higher studies. Indian students have become an important source of international enrollment diversity, research strength and revenue for institutions of higher education across the world. In the last couple of years, however, the total number of overseas Indian students has been on decline. This is due to-

- i. Global financial crisis,
- ii. Devaluing rupee,
- iii. Changes to immigration laws in top host nations.

It is clear from figure 4 that the United States is the most favored destination with nearly 1,00,000 student-visa-holding Indians in the US in 2012-13. However after the 2008 crisis the enrolment has stagnated and is gradually declining. The enrollments have been also on decline for UK and Australia. In a span of one year, from 2010 to 2011, the enrolments in UK dropped by 10,000. Canada is the only country to see a steady growth. New Zealand, China and Germany have also seen increase in Indian students.

The decline in UK higher education is attributed to the weakening of the Indian rupee versus the British pound as well as the tightening of immigration rules. Weakening of Indian rupees has made cost of education and living expensive. In case the students are financing their loans, they are more price sensitive to currency fluctuations. They will want to first calculate return-on-investment before finalizing any foreign education plan.

Between the period 2005-10, there was extraordinary growth in Indian enrollments in vocational education and training programs in Australia. The degree enrollments have not shown any impressive growth. Indian students have declined to 53,951 in 2012 from 1,20,496 in 2009. In 2013 the enrollments have again picked up again.

The increased interest in Canada is due to the immigration reforms introduced in 2008. The “Canadian Experience Class” allows the skilled foreign workers and foreign graduates of Canadian institutions of higher education with work experience to apply for permanent residency without having to leave the country. The international students will be allowed to stay in Canada for up to three years following graduation instead of two years. And they would be required to have only 12 months of work experience within three years to be eligible for the residency. Under this program 20000 foreigners have attained permanent status in Canada as of September 2012. India is believed to be the second largest source of International students of Canada, after China , by 2020.

4. IMPROVING EDUCATION TOURISM

Following recommendations can help countries to increase education tourism.

- First step would be to analyze the needs of students and their aspirations. The needs of target students should be analyzed to determine what can be done to attract them.
- Countries should try to build a tourism educational inventory. In order to attract students from abroad, there should be world class University and education system with quality faculty and well developed infrastructure.
- Give competitive cost of education. Provide convenient financing options to attract students to your country. Price is very important consideration while deciding the destination for foreign education. A country can offer education programs at different price levels to attract more students.

- The country's environment should be conducive for the tourists. Political instability, communal rights are some of the issues which create a negative impression and restrain foreigners to come to such a country, no matter how good the education is being offered. The violence against Indian students in Australia impacted the decision of many potential students who dropped the idea of studying there due to safety reasons.
- Train the people involved in educational tourism. Efforts should be to provide foreign students hospitality in such a way that they prolong their stay.
- Conduct educational fairs and sessions in countries abroad to promote the educational programs being offered by your country. Creating awareness of the benefits of the programs, cost and other factors. Addressing to the queries of students at decision making stage will help them take better decision.
- Higher education institutes can collaborate with industrial bodies and offer unique programs which will increase the chance of employability and give the students hands on experience.
- As it has noticed that students come to India for one or two term and not for entire degree course, efforts should be made to attract them to pursue full length degree course. Concessions could be offered or flexible study options could be provided. Distance education is another way to increase the number of enrollments. But it will not ensure capital flow in terms of living and spending.
- Accommodation facilities should be easily available for the students. Safe and affordable accommodation will attract students to stay in the country for longer span.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Education tourism is a way to give best education to students across the globe. Movement of students across countries for achieving education, particularly higher education has been on an increase. Financing facilities, immigration rules, cost of living, hostel facilities are some of the important considerations for students who want to study abroad. Every country want to increase foreign enrollments as it source of revenue for them. India has a long way to become an attractive destination as international counterparts like US, Canada. The paper gives suggestions which can be implemented to increase their intake of foreign students and prevent their students going out.

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