

Educational Experiences of Students from North-Eastern States of India Studying in Higher Education Institutions in Delhi

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Abstract

Migration for higher education to Delhi has become popular phenomenon among students in the north-eastern states of India. Higher education institutions in Delhi have become obvious choice among students due to its quality. The current study investigates educational experiences of students from north-eastern states of India studying in higher education institutions in Delhi. Purposive and snowball sampling technique is used for selection of sample. Mixed methods are used in the study. Interpretivist approach is followed in analyzing the data. The findings reveal that differences in quality of higher education between Delhi and home state are important reasons for migration. The study finds that despite of all the challenges students are able to successfully participate in higher education in Delhi.

Keywords: *Delhi, Higher Education, Migration and North-Eastern States*

Introduction

Migration for higher education to metropolitan cities has become one of the important phenomena in India. In recent years, Indian metropolises are experiencing a tremendous increase in migration from small cities and rural areas from different regions in general and north-eastern region in particular. Delhi being the capital city with relatively better-quality higher education institutions and coaching centers for various competitive examinations attracts thousands of students from across the country every year. Students from north-eastern states of India migrate to Delhi in search of better educational opportunities. The national capital offers quality public institutions and has become the most favoured destination for the highest number of students from north-eastern region (Shimray & Ushadevi, 2009). The study attempts to understand the educational experiences of students migrated to Delhi for higher education.

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Internal Migration for Higher Education

Students that move from their hometowns or regions to other areas of their country to pursue higher education are referred to as internal migrants. This type of movement has grown in popularity in recent years as more students seek more educational options and access to a larger range of courses and materials. Internal migration for higher education has far-reaching implications for both people and society as a whole, including economic advantages, cultural exchange, and increased social mobility. It does, however, provide challenges such as financial constraints and social upheavals for students who move away from home. Internal migration has had a tremendous influence on the Indian higher education system. Universities and colleges are seeing an increase in demand for admissions as more students move to various states for better educational possibilities. The decision for migration is taken by students due to wage differences in employment with consideration of education in employability perspective (Rosenzweig, 2006; Bessey, 2012); to take up opportunities in different places away from home; and with an expectation of new experiences (Malamud & Wozniak, 2008). As a result, the number of colleges and universities has increased, particularly in metropolitan regions. This has, however, resulted in a scarcity of resources and facilities, with many institutions unable to handle the expanding student population.

Decision on higher education is viewed as an investment (Becker, 1964) towards monetary and non-monetary benefits. Non-monetary benefits such as recreation facilities and independent life style and monetary benefits like higher future income (Tuckman, 1971; McHugh & Morgan, 1984) are pull factors of migration for higher education. Students may experience difficulties ranging from financial restrictions to cultural adaptability during this period of change. Tuition, housing, and living expenditures are examples of financial restraints. Adapting to a new environment, developing new acquaintances, and negotiating foreign social conventions are all part of cultural adaptation. Students may also feel academic pressure as a result of the intensity of their academic programmes and the necessity to balance their academic and personal life.

Overall, internal migration for higher education necessitates students' perseverance, flexibility, and determination in order to overcome these hurdles and thrive academically. Internal migration for higher education may be a frightening experience for students as well. Financial constraints may cause challenges for students. Social and cultural issues such as family constraints and societal expectations contribute to internal migration for higher education. Students in India may find it difficult to relocate to a different place for higher education. Finding adequate lodging may be difficult and costly, particularly in major cities. It can be difficult to adjust to new surroundings, culture, and language. Managing funds and juggling academic obligations with part-time work or internships may sometimes be stressful. Homesickness is another prevalent issue for students who are leaving their family for the first time. The absence of a support structure or social network in a new place might result in feelings of isolation and loneliness. Over a period of time, these migrants develop affinity with the place of higher education and decide to continuously stay (Mixon & Hsing, 2006; Mak & Moncur, 2003). Migrating for quality higher education add strength to their profile

and makes them less dependent and interested to be employed in the home state (Kodrzyck, 2001; Groen, 2004). There are alternative ideas that say that due to migration for higher education, the migrants are able to develop required skills and would be ready to move for employment in different locations (Malamud & Wozniak, 2008). As a result, brain drain from rural to urban regions occurs by creating regional inequities in access to higher education. Within the country, Delhi NCR is observed to be the preferred choice for jobs after completing higher education with the possibility of receiving better campus placements and with the fulfillment of desire of life in a modern urban area (Kumar, 2020).

Migration from North-Eastern States of India

Migration from north-eastern states of India happens due to search for better life prospects. Ramesh (2012) suggests that migration of youth from north-eastern region of India to urban centers is quite unique and dynamic in its nature and characteristics due to differences in social and cultural norms at home and destination. Migration from north-eastern region has increased multiple times towards Delhi, Bengaluru, Kolkata and Mumbai (Marchang, 2017; Sarkar, 2014; Chyrmang, 2010; Shimray & Ushadevi, 2009). The 'push-pull' factors affecting the decision to migrate, particularly for higher education and employment, apply to a larger proportion of migrants from the north-eastern region. Migrants from north-eastern region belong to heterogeneous ethnic communities and are young, unmarried and aspire to gain access to better educational institutions (Singh, 2013). Smith and Gergan (2014) have pointed out that economic change has driven parents across India's remote mountain regions of Ladakh and states of north-east to send their children to cities like Delhi for higher education. These students' experiences in the cities are moderated by class, circumstances, and aspirations but are also profoundly shaped by the movement between their home context, ethnic and cultural background and the foreign experience of Indian city life. These migrants from north-eastern states of India often face lots of discriminatory behavior, stereotyping and prejudices in Delhi as reported in research and newspapers (Mcduie-RA, 2012).

Methodology

The study covers students who migrated for higher education from all the north-eastern states of India to Delhi. Purposive sampling technique is applied along with snow ball sampling as the sample was scattered across higher education institutions in Delhi. Mixed methods approach is used in the study and sequential explanatory strategy was adopted. Mixed methods involve the collection of quantitative as well as qualitative information either simultaneously or sequentially (Creswell & Clark, 2017). Students enrolled in various programmes at three central universities in Delhi i.e. Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi University and Jamia Millia Islamia participated in the study and the sample includes 146 higher education students (67 male and 79 female). Questionnaire consists of fifty one questions attempting to understand the educational experiences were used for the study. The cronbach alpha reliability is 0.80 and the validity is 0.89. As it is an ongoing research study, students perception on certain statements with 'yes' or 'no' responses was chosen for the current paper. Gender wise

percentage analysis is done for the responses under different categories. Besides, semi-structured interview schedule having twenty nine questions were used to understand educational experiences of students qualitatively. Triangulation of data is done at the analysis stage and the data is interpreted.

Findings of the Study

Table 1: Difference in Educational Environment in Delhi and Home State

Responses		Yes	No	Neutral
Gender	Male (%)	97.01	1.49	1.49
	Female (%)	93.67	1.27	5.06

It is observed from table 1 that a clear difference in educational environment in Delhi and home state is felt by the students. 97.01% male and 93.67% female have agreed that there exists a difference in educational environment in Delhi comparatively to their home state. 1.49% male and 5.06% female are neutral about it and the remaining has said there is no difference between the educational environment in Delhi and home state.

Students shared that the environment in Delhi is very competitive in comparison to their home town. In Delhi, everyone is handling curricular and co-curricular activities simultaneously. There is less interference by teachers in Delhi than their home town. Students have more freedom to do what they wish. Students get more exposure on different aspects and are liberal and at home town students are reserved. Students can express their ideas without any hesitation in higher education institutions of Delhi than in their home towns.

Table 2: Ability to Integrate with the Academic Culture of the Higher Education Institutions of Delhi

Responses		Yes	No	Not Sure
Gender	Male (%)	79.1	4.48	16.42
	Female (%)	75.95	3.8	20.25

Table 2 shows the responses on the ability to integrate with the academic culture of the higher education institutions in Delhi by students from north-eastern states. 79.10% male and 75.95% female students mentioned that they are able to integrate with the academic culture and 16.42% male and 20.25% female are not sure about it and the remaining are unable to integrate with the academic culture of the higher education institutions of Delhi.

Students shared that they get opportunities to meet people from across the country in higher education institutions of Delhi and these institutions become melting pot of different culture. Further it provides opportunity to integrate them academically as well.

Table 3: Teachers have Certain Expectations/Presumptions about Students from the North-Eastern States

Responses		Yes	No
Gender	Male (%)	79.1	20.9
	Female (%)	58.23	41.77

Responses of students from north-eastern states of India studying in higher education institutions of Delhi (table 3). 79.10% male and 58.23% female have said that their teachers have certain expectations/presumptions about students from the north-eastern states and 20.90% male and 41.77% female have said that their teachers have no particular expectations/presumptions about students from the north-eastern states.

Students reported that there are general perceptions about them like students from north-eastern states are not serious about their studies and come to Delhi for enjoyment. Sometimes these students are not identified as Indians even by the teachers. There is a general stereotype that these students are coming to higher education due to reservation and not due to merit.

Table 4: Inhibition between People from Different Social and Cultural Backgrounds in Interacting with Each Other

Responses		Yes	No	Sometimes
Gender	Male (%)	55.22	5.97	38.81
	Female (%)	45.57	2.53	51.9

Table 4 shows that 55.22% male and 45.57% female students from north-eastern states of India studying in higher education institutions of Delhi reported that there exists inhibitions between people from different social and cultural backgrounds in interacting with each other. 38.81% male and 51.90% female have responded that sometimes they felt inhibition towards people from different social and cultural backgrounds while interacting with them while the remaining have not felt any inhibitions in this regard.

There is certain level of inhibitions towards the students from north-eastern states of India due to their ways of dressing, speaking and eating etc. There are common mis-perceptions that the students from north-east are Chinese students.

Table 5: Language/Cultural Barriers Faced in Higher Education Institutions of Delhi

Responses		Yes	No	Not Sure
Gender	Male (%)	46.27	41.79	11.94
	Female (%)	45.57	36.71	17.72

It is observed from table 5 that 46.27% male and 45.57% female from north-eastern states of India have expressed that there are language/cultural barriers faced by them in higher education institutions of Delhi. 41.79% male and 36.71% female have responded that they

have not faced any language/cultural barriers in higher education institutions of Delhi and the remaining are not sure about it.

Many times students from north-eastern states of India studying in higher education institutions of Delhi face language barriers in the classroom and outside. It is reported that teachers teach in Hindi language that is not understood by the students from north-eastern states. Students face cultural barriers in-terms of their interaction and lifestyle.

The following figures show various issues and discriminations faced by students from north-eastern states of India studying in higher education institutions of Delhi.

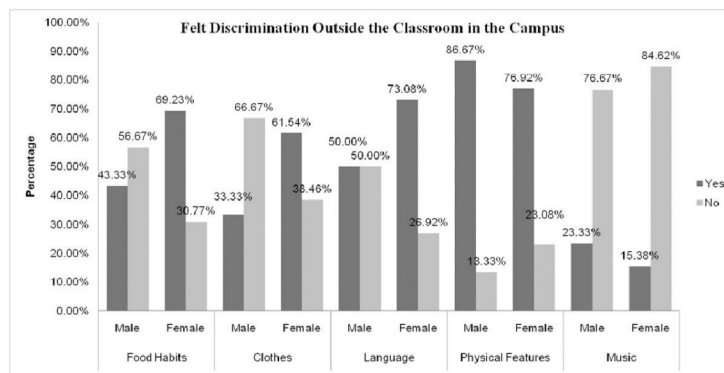


Figure 1 shows that mixed experiences of discrimination based on food habits in the campus. 43.33% male and 69.23% female felt discriminated due to their food habits. Females have felt more discrimination due to their clothing than males. The data reveals that 61.54% females and 33.33% males have experienced discriminations with regards to their clothing. Female (73.08%) have experienced more discrimination regarding language than males (50%). More males (86.67%) have experienced more discrimination based on physical features than females (76.92%). Among all the factors, the most discrimination is felt based on physical features by the students from north-eastern states of India studying in Delhi. Discrimination due to musical preference is the least experienced out of all the other factors.

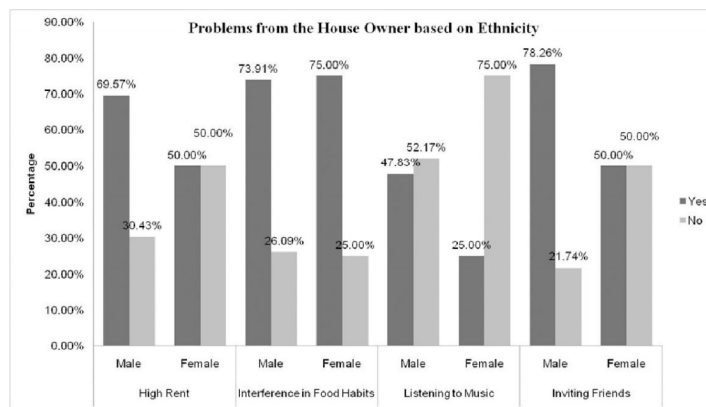


Figure 2 shows the problems from the house owner faced by the students studying in Delhi from north-eastern states of India. High rent is reported by 69.57% male and 50% female students. 73.91% male and 75% female have said that interference in food habits is a problem from the house owners. 47.83% male and 25% female have responded that house owners created problems for listening to music. More male students (78.26%) than female (50%) have reported that house owners created trouble to the students for inviting their friends to the house.

Table 6: Interested in Building Career in Delhi after Higher Education

Responses		Yes	No
Gender	Male (%)	71.64	28.36
	Female (%)	64.56	35.44

Table 6 shows that 71.64% male and 64.56% female students studying in higher education institutions of Delhi from north-eastern states of India are interested to build career in Delhi after their higher education. 28.36% male and 35.44% female are not interested to build career in Delhi after higher education. The percentage of males wishing to build a career in Delhi after higher education is higher than females.

Majority of the students have reported that the job opportunities in Delhi are more than the home state. The modern occupations due to liberalization policies in India are more in Delhi that satisfies the students' dream careers. Students also prefer to live in a city for comfortable life. Students have also expressed that they wish to bring their family to Delhi and would continue in Delhi for providing better life of future generations. However, there are some students who wish to return to home state and the reasons are not mentioned.

Discussion

Access to higher education in Delhi has been transformational for the students from north-eastern states of India. These students are able to get quality higher education in comparison to their home state. Students are able to successfully participate in higher education institutions and in shaping their career aspirations. However, these successes in participation are not without challenges being faced by the students. These challenges include integration into higher education institutions, language and cultural barriers, presumptions of teachers and students, inhibition between people etc. There is a limited knowledge about food habits, clothes, language, physical features and music of north-eastern states in Delhi. It is essential for higher education institutions to play wider role in understanding and spreading the diversity of the country among students. It will create positive and inclusive learning environment for all. Students from north-eastern states of India face challenges even outside the campus of higher education institutions. These include finding houses for rent, interference in food habits, listening to music and inviting friends. There is a dire need for sensitization about the diversity of India within the higher educational institutions and beyond the campus to create inclusive environment. Students from north-eastern states of India are interested in building

their careers in Delhi away from their home state after higher education for prospects of a better future. Higher education institutions in Delhi need to develop more policies for the integration of students and to help students for better educational experiences in higher education system. Delhi being the national capital, the union government and the government of Delhi should make policies to improve the support systems for people from north-eastern states of India.

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