

Changing Wave of Internationalization of Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

In the current decade, new wave of internationalization of higher education has emerged with the emergence of new trends which is changing the choice for international students and thus influencing the trends of international student mobility. In this context, the focus of the present paper is to revisit the trends of internationalization of higher education. The present paper will highlight the complexities which are arising as a result of the changing nature and new developments which are taking place in developed and developing countries in the area of international student mobility.

Keywords: *Student mobility; Internationalization; Competition; Choice; Decision*

Introduction

Internationalization of higher education has experienced substantial change since the 1980s. In earlier times going abroad for pursuing higher education is the privilege for the elite section of the society. But in recent years, patterns have changed significantly and volumes of mobile students have increased and projected to increase significantly in near future. Revenue generation and skilled migration approach are gaining central position in internationalization of higher education, in turn has led to changes in nature of student mobility and functioning of university/ institutions. So there was an urgent need to provide the recent trends of student mobility in a comparative perspective and the forces and factors that influence it.

In the recent decades under the transnational and internationalization of higher education student mobility has noted significant place. Currently 3.3 million students are studying across borders for the purpose of higher education. Such accelerated student mobility in recent years has resulted in emergence of global higher education market. Globally one estimate indicates that the world's international students represent a \$45 billion 'industry' (Barrow, 2008 cited in Altbach et al. 2010, 28). This article will focus on the three important aspects.

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- (I) New developments in International student mobility
- (II) New drivers of international student mobility
- (III) New forms of cross border education

(I) New Developments in International Student Mobility

In the traditional forms of student mobility, the movement has primarily been from developing countries to the developed countries. While Anglophone and Western European countries such as United States, United Kingdom, Australia, France and Germany have historically attracted the largest number of international students (Bhandari & Blumenthal 2011, 2). In the current scenario the emergence of new destination countries like China, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore and New Zealand have stepped up their efforts to internationalize and to attract more international students (Bhandari & Blumenthal 2011, 9). The entry of more countries into the field of international education has significantly changed the whole concept of international student mobility in terms of who is going where, and the host and sending countries. The foremost agenda of many countries including India is to enhance the inward mobility of students. Different host countries and institutions are adopting different marketing strategies in order to attract large number of international students. As a result of this, mobility of international students has become multidirectional and complex as compared to unidirectional of past.

A paradigm shift has been noted in the whole phenomenon of internationalization of higher education i.e. from pure learning or knowledge sharing approach to revenue generating approach in the phenomenon of student mobility. The leading destination countries have been pioneers in changing the nature of internationalization of higher education through adjusting their national policies. The two most prominent approaches which are driving competition in the international education market are revenue generation and skilled migration approach. Fees from non-EU students in higher education alone currently total some £2.5 billion a year. International education is Australia's third largest export contributing US\$12 billion to the Australian economy in 2008. Along with viewing international students as a source of revenue, countries also see international students as a potential source of skilled migration and are adjusting immigration policies in order to make it easier for international students to maintain residency and work in host countries after their study has been completed (Tremblay, 2005). For example, one out of four Indian students in New Zealand is able to get permanent residency makes New Zealand a popular choice amongst them (Agarwal 2011, 54). Policy strategies are being adopted to first, recruit international students and second, to retain talents. The driving forces of new vista of internationalization of higher education reflects important shift in the character of student mobility from co-operative model to competitive model.

(II) New Drivers of International Student Mobility

Capacity of domestic education to accommodate students in higher education has repetitively emphasised particularly in the case of developing countries i.e. India, China and Africa which is having an important implication for outward student mobility. Two dimensions of capacity of domestic education have been considered: one its supply and second its quality, absence of any of these drives students to consider overseas education as an alternative. A recent report by the industry body Associated Chambers of commerce and Industry in India (ASSOCHAM) found that about 450,000 Indian students migrate overseas and spend US\$13 billion each year on acquiring a higher education abroad, often because of the lack of capacity in domestic institutions (Bhandari & Blumenthal 2011,1). Admission standards in the home country have important implication for the outward mobility of the students as highlighted in the case of China and India (Agarwal 2011; Wadhwa 2010). An important implication relates not only to improve the quality of institutions but also increasing capacity accompanied by global quality standards.

However, in the changing dimensions of student mobility apart from the quality of higher education other factors are gaining places. In the current regime, student mobility is strongly affected by high demand of competitive skills and knowledge which is a way towards high employment opportunities. These are the strong pull factors attracting students abroad. Analysis of prospective students' decision to study abroad by Wadhwa (2010) in India reflected that students place greater emphasis on issues like immigration, part time work and future job prospects in choosing destination. Students now view overseas education as a springboard for permanent migration and changing migration policies by certain countries are getting positive responses from the students. These are important factors which influence outward student mobility.

(III) New Forms of Cross Border Education

Mobility of programs and institutions from one country to another in the form of branch campus, franchised degree programs, distance education are growing at a fast pace. Knight has analysed the different models of education hubs developed in the Middle East and Asian countries. Countries which have established themselves in the international education market are at competitive advantage as compared to new emerging countries as brand recognition and world rankings of foreign institutions are current factors motivating and influencing the development of new hubs (Knight 2008). On the one side these new forms of internationalization of higher education can offer increased access for local students by increasing the domestic capacity and on the other hand help in improving the quality by promoting competition in the domestic education sector.

Conclusion

A significant change observed in internationalization of higher education has been commercialized practices in exchange of education services. Revenue generation and skilled migration approach are gaining central position in internationalization of higher education, in turn has led to changes in nature of student mobility and functioning of university/ institutions. The changing statute of internationalization of higher education has led to change in the intention of international student mobility as Bhandari & Blumenthal very rightly pointed out 'what have changed, however, are the drivers of student mobility and the new modality through which this migration occurs' (1).

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