Voting with your feet and your brains: International student mobility from India

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Background

- Student mobility closely related to later migration: a stepping stone towards migration (Hein & Plesch, 2008; Rosenzweig, 2006).
- Increase in international student mobility by 53% from 1999 to 2007
- In 2007: 2.8 million students abroad
- Increased global competition for international students

- India an important player in student mobility: 153,312 Indian students studying abroad in 2007; 5.5% of the global total of internationally mobile students
- Outbound student mobility from India went up three times from 1999 to 2007
- USA the major receiver of Indian students: 104,897 Indian students in 2009/10

Research question

- What are the important personal and structural background factors and expectancy-based perceptions of place utility that determine

a) general intentions to move and

b) destination-specific migration intentions?

- Interested in individual level determinants of migration > The causal mechanisms of migration flows at micro level

Methodology

- Self-designed survey for identifying factors of migration decision-making
- Focus on students in the field of science and engineering
- A mixture of paper-based survey + web survey

468 students :   284 paper-based survey + 184 digital one

- 2 modules: a) for students who plan to migrate, b) for students who don't plan to move abroad (limited set of questions + additional question on reasons for stay)

Selection of universities to study

- Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU),
- Institute of Technology - Banaras Hindu University (IT-BHU),
- University of Jammu
- Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi
- Indian Institute of Science (IISc) Bangalore

Selection criteria for institutions:

- Quality criteria: all chosen institutions rank high according to quality rankings
- Diversity of education system: representatives for each type of institution: 2 central universities, 1 state university, 1 deemed university, 1 institution of national importance

- Geographical heterogeneity
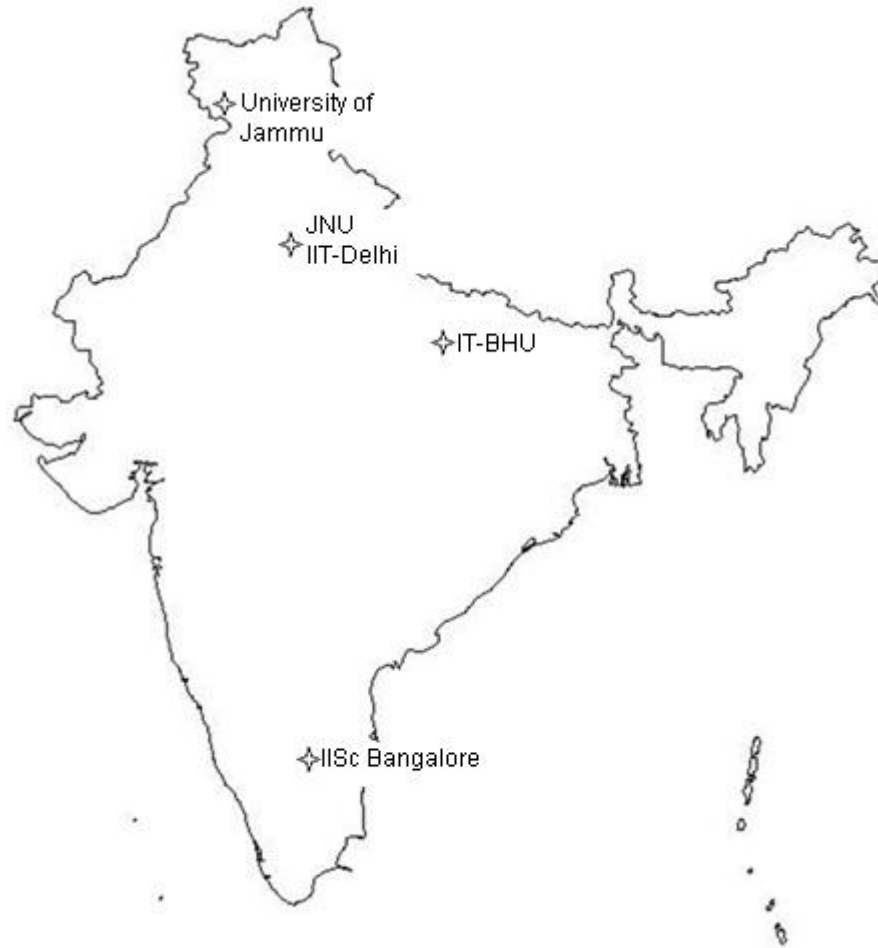
Theories of determinants of migration	Determinants
The neoclassical theory of migration **Todaro (1969), Harris and Todaro (1970)**	**Higher wage levels**
The human capital theory **Sjastaad (1962)**	**Future expectations of migrants based on their personal characteristics**
The theory of economics of family migration **Mincer (1978)**	**Utility gains for all family members**
The New Economics of Labour Migration **Stark and Bloom (1985), Stark (1991)**	**Risk sharing among family members** **Transaction costs**
Migration network theory **Massey et al. (1993)**	**Presence of social networks abroad**
Amenities literature **Graves (1979), Krupka (2007), Florida (2002, 2005)**	**Attractive local environment** **Tolerant atmosphere**
Migrant self-selection **Borjas (1987)**	**Progressive return to skills**
Structural theories **Fawcett (1989), Kritz and Zlotnik (1992) Frank (1966), Wallerstein (1974)**	**Historical, cultural, colonial and technological linkages between countries**

Variables in the survey

Personal characteristics	Hypothesis: the likelihood for migration higher for:	Theory	Determinants
Q14: Gender Q15: Age Q23: Which community do you belong to? Q24: Do you belong to a reserved group? Q28: What is your present relationship status?	b) men a) older people c) people with a non-Hindu background d) people from a reserved group e) single people	Human capital theory	Future expectations of migrants based on their personal characteristics

University-related factors	Hypothesis: the likelihood for migration higher for:	Theory	Determinants
Q16: field of studies Q17: In which level of educational programme are you currently enrolled? Q19: What is your average grade in the running year? Q20: What is your proficiency in English?	a)students in natural sciences b)students in higher level of studies c)students with high average grades d)students with good knowledge of English	Human capital theory The New Economics of Labour Migration	Future expectations Transaction costs

Family background	Hypothesis: the likelihood for migration higher for:	Theory	Determinants
Q 11 How does your family feel about your potential move abroad? Q21/22: What is the highest educational level achieved by your mother/father? Q27: What is the average monthly income of your household per month?	a) people who get support from their families b) people whose parents have high level of education c) for students from high-income families	The theory of economics of family migration	Risk sharing among family members Utility gains for all family members

Migration history Q7: Have you ever lived outside India staying in one location for one month or longer?	a) people who have past experiences with living abroad	Migration network theory	Presence of social networks abroad
Network abroad Q10: Have any of the below named persons lived abroad for half a year or more? (parents, brothers or sisters, extended family, close friends, people in your profession)	a) people who have a family network abroad b) people who have professional network abroad		

Sample characteristics:

- 154 students studying at JNU, 74 at IISc Bangalore, 63 at the University of Jammu, 46 at IT-BHU, 42 at IIT-Delhi

- predominantly male students population (69.5%)

- average age of respondents 24 years

- Respondents in the survey are predominantly Hindu, with almost 80% of the sample.

- 16% of students belong to any of the reserved categories

- the students with the highest representation in the dataset are those enrolled in engineering programmes (18.7%), life sciences (18.4%) and computer and systems sciences (12.5 %).

- distributed across all levels of study degrees: 28.8% in Bachelors, 34.4% in Masters and 36.8% in PhD or Post-doctoral programmes

Sample characterstics

- predominantly A-grade students, representing 73.9% of the sample. A large proportion of sampled students also has a good command of English.

- about 54% of students' mothers and 74% of students' fathers have completed university education.

- only 34.7% of students believe that their parents prefer for them to stay in India

- the biggest share of students hails from households with low level of income

- vast majority does not have any international migration experience (86.6%)

- small portion of respondents has anyone within a close family that had lived for half a year or longer out of India

- among friends and colleagues, our respondents are more likely to know someone with international exposure.

Moving or staying?

- 63% respondents consider moving abroad

 Among movers:

- fewer female students

- more older students

- student from minority communities

- students belonging to a reserved group

- students in natural sciences

- PhD students and post-doctoral researchers

- students with high grades and good command of English

- students with family support

- students with prior migration experience

- students with colleagues abroad

Location choice

- Students asked to name their top destination country if they were to move in the next five years

	All students N=305
	(in percentages)
USA (1)	49.51
Australia	7.54
Canada	4.26
Germany (2)	12.79
UK (3)	11.15
another European country	7.54
another country	3.28
I don't know	3.93
	100.00

Do students differ by chosen destination country?

Three regions of destination:

- USA: traditional migration country, strong migrant network
- Anglo-Saxon countries (UK, Canada, Australia): colonial history, traditional migrant countries
- European continental countries: missing networks, colonial links, language barriers

What types of students choose certain countries?

Among those that choose European countries

- bigger male dominance
- more students from reserved background
- students in natural sciences
- more PhD students
- more likely to come from urban areas
- more likely have been abroad in the past
- have colleagues living abroad

Students who choose Anglo-Saxon countries

- from family background with lower education
- students with children not inclined to pick Anglo-Saxon countries
- more Master students

Students who choose the US

- older as compared to those that choose other countries
- more Hindus
- single students
- more from richer households

Importance of policy-related factors
(1-not important, 5-very important)

Importance of factors	USA	Anglo-Saxon	Europe
Easily bringing in my family now or later	3.81	3.76	3.29
That I can easily return to later in my career	4.2	3.97	4
Living near a large Indian community	3.6	3.37	3.02
Clear application procedure for a residence and work permit	4.22	3.89	4.10
Accessibility of your spouse to the labour market	3.52	3.52	3.28
Being able to stay in a country longer that 5 years	3.72	3.8	3.39
Possibility of permanent settlement	3.27	3.27	2.83
Possibility of acquiring local citizenship	3.34	3.34	3.08

Conclusion

- There are differences with respect to who moves where

- Networks are an important player for decision to move, especially non-kinship networks

For students who would pick any of the European countries:

- colleagues abroad are especially important
- not much desire expressed for staying permanently and acquiring citizenship
- Europe also attracts people from minority communities