

# Burnout in Indian international students in America

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**“Cultural relativism affirms that one culture has no absolute criteria for judging the activities of another culture as low or noble.”**

— Claude Lèvi-Strauss

India has a population of 1.32 billion (second largest in the world, only behind China 1.35 billion) as per July 2016 estimates, accounting for 17.5 per cent of the world's population. It is certainly one of the youngest countries in the world with the median age being 27 years.

After independence India has worked hard to provide access to education almost all its young people. (British Council)

“Education is one of the most powerful instruments for reducing poverty and inequality. Education is equally key to enhance India's competitiveness in the global economy. Therefore, ensuring access to quality education for all, in particular for the poor and rural population, is central to the economic and social development of India.” (World bank)

According to the 2011 census, literacy rate in India was found to be 74.04 per cent. (World meter)

After independence, India has worked hard to provide access to almost all its young people. But **the growing population** of India and higher competition in getting quality education and jobs push out the students toward abroad.

The United States Of America is the first choice for students for many reasons and primary factor is quality education.

Open door report mentioned following points of causes due to which students from other countries migrate to American universities:

## **Institutional Factors:**

1. Dynamic recruitment efforts by institution.
2. Growing reputation and visibility of institution abroad.
3. Increased institutional funding increased staff and other resources for admission and recruitment of international students.

## **Economic and Other Factors:**

Increasing population in some countries are facing tough competition within nation to get good education.

1. Also, increasing number of middle class families in some countries like India and China facing high level of competition in getting admission in top educational institutions in their countries.
2. Easy available loans, different programs for education funding and scholarship opportunities are some other factors impacting positively on students growth in international universities.

Immigration is an industry. People from around the world is being attracted to America and it is most appealing country from last some years for immigrants and foreign students. The popular reason is “land of opportunities for everyone.”

## Economic Impact of International Students

The continued growth in international students coming to the U.S. for higher education had a significant positive economic impact on the United States. International students contributed \$39.4 billion to the U.S. economy in 2016, according to the U.S. Department of Commerce.

*Open Doors 2017* reports that about 67 percent of all international students receive the majority of their funds from sources outside of the United States, including personal and family sources as well as assistance from their home country governments or universities. Students from around the world who study in the United States also contribute to America's scientific and technical research and bring international perspectives into U.S. classrooms, helping prepare American undergraduates for global careers, and often lead to longer-term business relationships and economic benefits. Additional breakdowns of economic impact by state and Congressional District, calculated using *Open Doors* enrollment figures, are available on the [NAFSA International Student Economic Value Tool website](http://www.nafsa.org/International-Student-Economic-Value-Tool).

Forty to fifty percent of students in graduate STEM programs are from overseas or international students. Question arises: Why the overseas students are appealing to America for Education or why there is such a strong population of overseas students coming in America? Even though world class schools are around the world.

The applications in India in caliber schools might have 10-20 times more than seat availability. Indian schools are incredibly competitive institutions with the high level and high caliber instructions (discussed in Stanford education seminar on the basis of data.) Also **reservation** reduces the chances of getting admission for high achievers students. This has been observed in some belt of US where foreign bond population is growing much faster than native population. This year foreign bound population is significantly higher than native college graduates population.

There is something about profile of some international students and the main factor is self-confidence and often the family support to pick up and move the halfway around the world to do anything. Those who are not self-inclined, self-images or limitations public stay in home, they do tend by the nature of moving overseas attracted different kind of person.

It's a lot of work to come from overseas with high level of uncertainty. You have to be pretty sure and determine that you are going to make success of your life. Giving up all the securities back home. One they are arrived they are highly motivated and no surprise, they are going to achieve success in many ways in their life on a foreign land. They need a high return on investment through education because it is far more costly.(female participant)

From last couple of years number of students increasing dramatically in foreign universities.

Since past couple of years life is changing for a sojourner in USA.

In a paper “**International Students and U.S. Policy Choices**( **Stuart Anderson, Executive Director, National Foundation for American Policy**)”

Data indicated on genuine problems of international students which has impact on the decline enrollment of international students.

Following are the major reasons mentioned for decreasing enrollment in US Universities:

1. **Visa Policy:** Denial a student visa in case of insufficient documents or lack of the information provided to embassy of a foreign country is not a problem. But U.S. new immigration policy particularly obstructs the entry of brilliant outside nationals who wants to get higher education and having desire to work in the United States impacts global talent.

2. **Expensive education** :The main reason of less number of native students enroll in American higher education is expensive tuition fee and lack of the scholarship and financial aid. And the expenses become giant for international students who wants to study in US Universities. For a overseas student rent, food , car & medical insurance, college fee and transportation expenses cost a thousand dollars more. Without family & financial support it is almost impossible for a overseas student to study abroad.

3. **Less opportunity of getting job sponsorship in US in present scenario**:. Every student need a high return on investment through education because it is far more costly. But due to change in recent immigration work policies by USCIS, it is very hard to find job in U.S. on visas and companies are also bound with law so many companies are not sponsoring visa for jobs. And the ratio of jobs and available job opportunities for international students are very less in present immigration policy. Less job opportunity in a nation impacts on number of international students enrollment in the universities of particular country.

According to **open door report** (2016) following are the major factors declining in enrollment:

1. Non favorable social and political climate
2. Visa concerns
3. Work experience
4. Global competition
5. Costs and changes of government scholarships
6. Students concern about job situation after degree

In a 2005 report “Policy Implications of International Graduate Students and Postdoctoral *Scholars in The United States*” stated that the “**International students contribute to U.S. society not only academically and economically, but also by fostering the global and cultural knowledge and understanding necessary for effective U.S. leadership, competitiveness, and security.**”<sup>8</sup> (National Academy of Sciences report, p. 2)

**It warned: “If the United States is to maintain overall leadership in science and engineering, visa and immigration policies should provide clear procedures that do not unnecessarily hinder the flow of international graduate students and postdoctoral scholars.”** (Ibid., p.8.)

Most of the international students wants to stay longer or permanently on US land. As they seem a good investment in American education and wants back results with big profit. there has been many great achiever international students from Indian born like Sundar Pichai CEO of Google, Satya Nadella CEO of Microsoft, Seema Verma health advisor in present govt, Nikki Haley U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Kalpana Chawla astronaut, sunita Williams, Kiran Desai and many more.

**The factors of Raising obstacles for discouraging enrollment in U.S. Universities:**

**After 9/11 incident in U.S. number of international students getting decreased due to many reasons as** strict visa policies, high level security clearance, visa conversion issues and denials, problem of travel back to home country on visas.

Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates has called the policy “a disaster.” Meanwhile, Jeff Immelt, chairman and CEO of General Electric, said, “This is a case where our policy to close down on access boomerangs. It moves jobs out of the United States and creates less incentive for people to study the U.S.”<sup>18</sup>

**Impact on existing international students on new immigration policies:**

The researcher conducted a survey on forty international students enrolled in different universities of U.S. The aim of the survey was to explore their thoughts/views in current setting when immigration policies are getting stricken towards

international students. Survey shows students are not only anxious and stressed out, of them some are facing health issue due to psychological upset with the system. The policies has been changing after they enrolled in schools in United States which put a great uncertainty of future after getting degree in U.S.

Student who are impacted with changes in visa policies and new job rules which minimize their job opportunity in USA are stressed out and anxious.

International student in university in Memphis, Tennessee gave message to future students from India in U.S.

*“Don’t over expect from America.*

*It’s strict rules be prepared for anything, expect the worst.*

*it’s not that you will do party all day all night as people think in their country.”(Male participate)*

Also while conducting interview one male participant stated:

*“College meeting requirements are little bit stressed.*

*In India there is someone to help in academics but here we do online researches, we do start from scratch and learn then write.*

*But the biggest stress is insecurity of future. My parent took a big loan amount from Indian bank. Everyone in my family expect from me to get a good job after study and return back the loan. But here due to unfavorable visa policy now situations are getting worse. If I would know before coming here I would never come to U.S. for studies. Now I am helpless the only way is doing my best. And looking for job opportunities in other countries.” (A female participant)*

*“I feel very tough here. Visa policies should not be changed for old students. The rules should be same for us as the time of entry in U.S. I am completely exhausted with the system.*

*Also we cannot share every situation with our family back there in INDIA. Whenever something publish in newspaper regarding visa policies, tightening of policies and self-deportation news in India my family and friends ask about that. And I do not have a satisfy answer to save my position. I feel sad and helpless. I feel like I am doing something wrong even after investing a thousands of dollars in U.S. and spending life’s most precious time on a gamble of uncertainty.”(A female participant)*

*“I will never advice to my family member or friend to come here for studies. A doom and gloomy environment for visa people here. My family do not know how much stressed out I am. But cannot leave the field.”(Male participant)*

#### **Suggestions for future students:**

Every country has their own rules and immigration policies. **Nowadays, it is America’s interest to change the immigration policies to discourage the enrollment of international students .**

Social and political climate has changed in couple of years in the United States, there is a potential impact on future of current international students in U.S. and enrollment of new international students in U.S. universities.(open door reports,2017.)

Time to time for welfare of the country or due to political influences rules can be changed and could be highly challenging for immigrants. **Do not come directly to a foreign land** in the influence of movies or social pressure. Search in deep read about rules, regulations, education policies immigration rules and culture of a foreign country and then only take decision for your future establishment and awareness of the system so that no students could suffer and feel helpless after landed and investing thousands of dollars in foreign country and invaluable time of their life. Before taking the decision of moving abroad compare different countries also in the sense of immigrants welcoming policies, job opportunities and stability for overseas students and green card policies who wants to stay longer or permanently.

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