

EXPECTATIONS AND ASPIRATIONS OF MAKING IT IN CANADA: EXAMINING LABOUR MARKET EXPERIENCE OF INDIAN INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN CANADA

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Indian International Student Migration to Canada

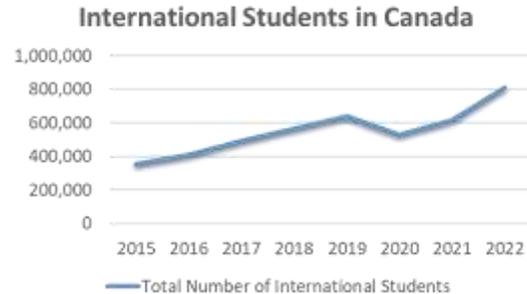
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Background

- ❖ "International Education: A Key Driver of Canada's Future Prosperity" (DFATD, 2014)
- ❖ Shift from immigration under the family class towards prioritising economic class immigrants in the 2000s and recently towards attracting international students
- ❖ Field work and data collection for the study was conducted in two countries: Canada and India, beginning in 2022 and ended in early 2023

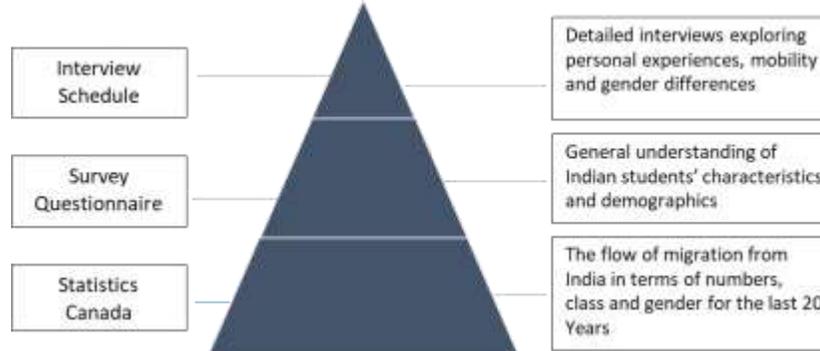


Objectives

- ❖ Explore the changing immigration pathways and intermediaries involved in international student migration to Canada from India
- ❖ Explore the geographical and gender dynamics
- ❖ Understand the experiences and characteristics of international students from India

Methodology

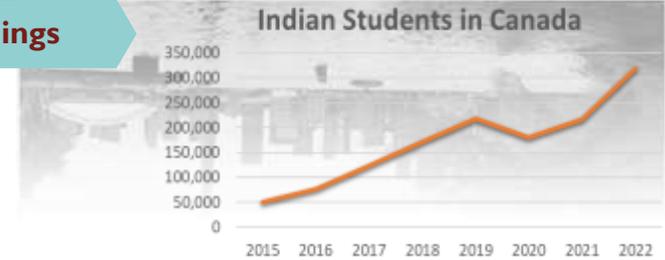
- ❖ Combining and integrating quantitative and qualitative data and research methods
- ❖ Triangulation of research methods and sources of data



Data Collection

Participants	Indian International Students In Canada	Prospective Students in India	Migration Intermediaries
Number of Interviews	Total 15 (14 online interviews and 1 in-person)	Total 29 (28 in-person and 1 online Interviews)	12 in-person interviews
Location	Canada (Indian students studying or have completed education in Ontario and 1 from India pursuing online education at the time of interview)	Amritsar (Khalsa College, Nursing College, Guru Nanak Dev University), Chandigarh (IELTS Center) and Jalandhar	Amritsar, Jalandhar, Chandigarh, Batala and New Delhi

Findings



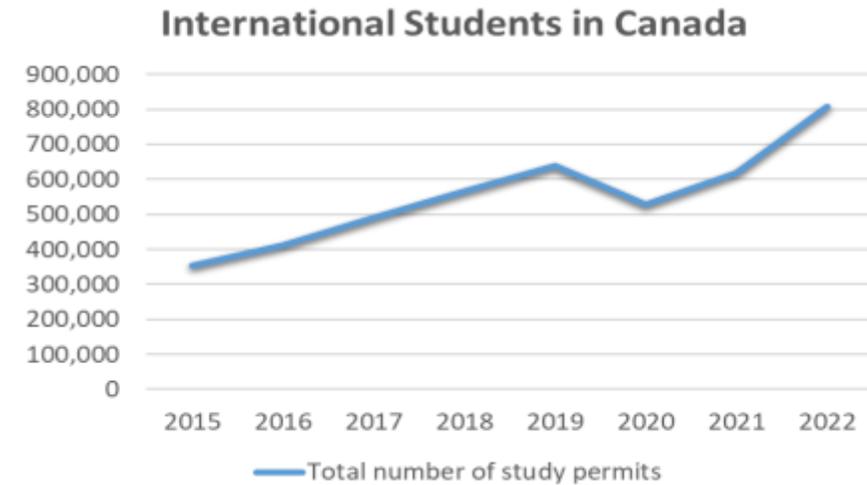
- ❖ Share of Indian students to Canada rose from 14 % in 2015 to 34% in 2019 and to 40% in 2022 (IRCC, 2022)
- ❖ In Ontario international student enrollment in colleges exceed enrollments in universities. IS contribute more than half of tuition fees revenue for Ontario colleges (about 68% in some major public colleges) and about half of the student body
- ❖ The majority of international students were males (55.4%) and in the 18-to-24 age group comprising 59% (IRCC, 2021)
- ❖ Permanent Residence and opportunity to work after study are some of the major factors in choosing Canada as a study destination
- ❖ Immigration intermediaries played a key role in international students migration from India
- ❖ International students contribute to labour market growth in Canada, especially in the low-wage sector
- ❖ More Indian women are migrating as principal applicants and their share as dependents (spouse, parents and grandparents etc.) has decreased from 62 % in 2000 to 30 % in 2021 (Statistics Canada, 2023)

Conclusion

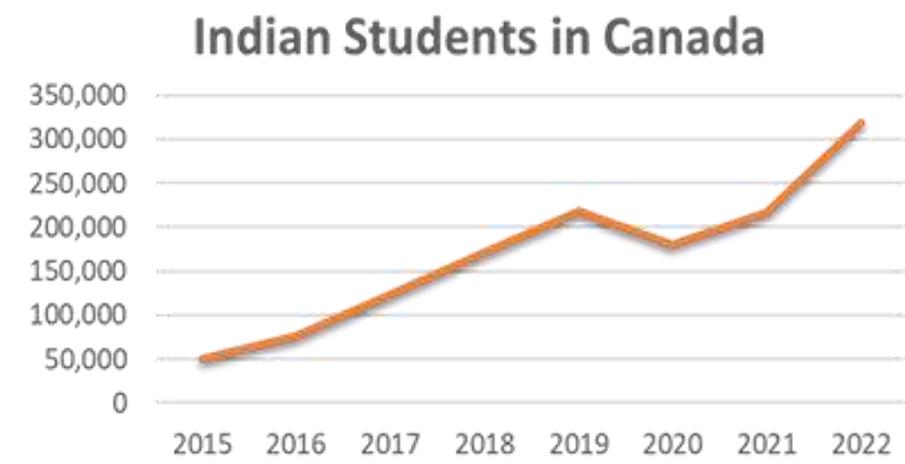
- ❖ Temporary migration pathways (International students and workers) and three step migration processes (from temporary to work visa and then permanent residence status) have significantly increased
- ❖ Canadian post-secondary institutions increasingly rely on international students paying significantly higher tuition fees
- ❖ The growth of short term diploma courses in private colleges have raised concerns about the quality of education and the increased vulnerability of Indian students to changes in policy and political relations with India
- ❖ Increasing numbers of female students from India are pursuing international education in Canada, leading to increasing negotiation with various gendered social expectations

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT MIGRATION TO CANADA

As a result of the pandemic and the following lockdown the number of international students decreased to **528,200 in 2020** representing a 17% decline, a first in 20 years, but the numbers recovered soon after to reach **621,600 in 2021**, suggesting a return to normal after a year of disruption (Crossman et al. 2022).



Share of Indian students to Canada rose from 14 % of total in 2015 to 34% in 2019 and to 40% in 2022 (IRCC, 2022)



INTERNATIONALISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

- **International Education: A Key Driver of Canada's Future Prosperity**, "International education has a vital role to play in creating jobs, economic growth and long-term prosperity in Canada." (DFATD, 2014, p. 6).
- International undergraduate students paid an average annual tuition that is almost **five times** more than the average for domestic students in Canada
- It is estimated that international students paid almost **40 %** of all tuition fees accounting for almost \$4 billion in annual revenue for Canadian universities in 2017/2018
- Universities and degree-granting colleges have seen funding **decreases** from government sources over the years. Provincial funding has declined over the past decade from 41.5% in 2010/11 to 32.5% in 2020/21, while the share of revenue from tuition fees has grown from 21.5% to 28.8% over this period.
- Provincial funding in Ontario has seen the greatest decline to **21.4%** in 2019/20, declining from **42.1%** in 2008/2009.

(Statistics Canada, 2020).

- In Ontario international student enrollment in colleges exceed enrollments in universities. IS contribute more than half of tuition fee revenue for Ontario colleges (about 68% in some major public colleges) and make up about 50% of students
- Temporary migration pathways (International students and workers) and three step migration processes (from temporary to work visa and then permanent residence status) have significantly increased

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AS SOURCE OF LABOUR

- In recent years increasing numbers of new economic immigrants were former Temporary Foreign Workers (TFWs) or international students. In 2020, their number was 67% among principal applicants in the economic class, an increase from 12% in 2000 and 33% in 2010 (Hou et al. 2020).
- International students are also noted to have become a significant source of labour, especially in low-wage labour market (Lundy and Subramaniam, 2022).
- In October 2022, the federal government allowed international students to work for more than 20 hours a week during the duration of their study (IRCC, 2022).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

New theories in migration identify the importance of recognizing migrant agency.

Understanding migration as part of independent individual or family decision making to pursue socio-economic goals

- Aspirations and capabilities (De Haas, 2023)
- Diversifying family income and reducing risks- (NELM) New Economics of Labour Migration (NELM) (Castles et al. 2020)
- Intimate Geopolitical analysis could be used to highlight the more intimate scale of family and the individual migratory decisions, and their relation to geopolitics and the global economy (Smith, 2020; Pain and Staeheli, 2014; Mountz & Hyndman, 2006; Pratt, 2004)

STUDENT BACKGROUND

- According to Indian immigration intermediaries majority of students heading abroad were young (between 19 to 21), just completed high school (12th grade) in India.
- Majority were going for either Under Graduate or Post Graduate Diploma courses in colleges across Canada.
- Diploma courses are for one or two years and some of the most popular programs for study, according to immigration intermediaries/ agents were hospitality, management and IT.
- For 23 % of students in the survey, migration intermediaries helped them with the choice of Program

LONG TERM EXPECTATIONS

- The 2018 survey of the CBIE (2018) showed that approximately 70% of international students planned to stay and work in Canada upon graduation and 60% intended to apply for permanent residency.
- For 85% of the respondents on the **online survey** for this research the opportunity to stay permanently was a significant factor in choosing to study in Canada.

“I was initially bit more keen to go to the UK, but like around 2017, at that time, the UK did not offer any visas/schemes for students to stay back after finishing their courses and even in the US like Trump had just come to power and I didn't know if I will get to stay and work. So, I think the guarantee that I will be able to stay here for some time after graduation and able to work was a very big motivator to move to Canada”. (Indian International Students in Canada, 18 May, 2022)

Long term plans and importance of securing permanent residence

“I plan to focus on my studies get settled in here get a degree and start working then maybe after that, after I am a permanent resident here then I could go for my masters because international student have to pay lot more fees” (Indian International male student in Canada, 4 June, 2022)

“Right now I wish to have a PR and then try to give the exams to practice law and basically have my own work or business. Parents want me to get settled but they do not want that I drive a truck like many of us from Punjab, so they want that I have a good job” (Indian International student in Canada, 4 July, 2022)

- Prospective students in India have high expectations regarding work
 - “They're not concerned about jobs because they are sure that once in Canada they will make it. They never really ever asked me how the economy is like in Canada, right now, or will they be able to get a job, once they have completed their courses, but these questions can come up when it comes to European countries (Immigration Intermediary from Delhi, 21 Aug, 2022).
- However, international students are concerned about finding relevant jobs in their field of study.
- **Importance of Social Networks** - Around 71% online survey respondents stated that they had friends or classmates of their age group already studying or working in Canada.

ROLE OF FAMILY

- Families play an important role in the decision making process - the survey revealed that for about 72 % of the respondents, their parents had a huge role to play in the decision making to study abroad in Canada.

- Expectations vs Reality

“They don't exactly have knowledge about things happening here everybody thinks that we are minting money here, I would say to an extent they want us to be happy, but they care about the level of success in life. For us like we are going to work and coming back, like trying to make both ends meet and especially I'm not married and then I don't exactly have any kind of social life at all” (Female Indian international student in Canada 24 May, 2022).

- **35 %** of Indian students in Canada said they send money to their parents in India
- Some students interviewed in India shared that it was their responsibility and then for some it was important to contribute to their family financial situation.
- **91 %** of all respondents said they work or plan to work part time to support their studies and stay in Canada
- About **60%** Indian international students in Canada responded that their parents/family did not contribute towards their monthly expenditure while studying in Canada

CONCLUSION

- International Students come with long term plans of work and settlement in Canada
- Families are central to decision making
- Students navigate various family expectations and economic realities in Canada
- International students increasingly involved in Low skilled jobs in Canada
- Concerns about finding relevant work