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NAVIGATING HIGHER EDUCATION: EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES OF MIGRANT STUDENTS IN TAMIL NADU

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Abstract:

This study examines the experiences and challenges faced by migrant students in higher education institutions in Tamil Nadu. Through survey data collected from a diverse sample of migrant students, including both domestic and international migrants, various factors affecting their educational journey have been analysed. These factors encompassed issues such as limited admission quotas, course availability, international exposure, scholarship accessibility, social integration, and perceptions of academic quality. The findings underscored the complex interplay of these factors, revealing disparities in access to educational opportunities and differing perceptions among migrant students. While some expressed concerns regarding limited admission quotas and difficulties in accessing scholarships, others highlighted the positive aspects of international exposure and the potential for social advancement through education. The study proposes recommendations to address these challenges, including the development of tailored support programs, initiatives to enhance cultural integration, and advocacy for inclusive admission policies. By implementing these recommendations, policymakers and educational institutions can work towards creating a more supportive and equitable environment for migrant students, fostering their academic success and overall well-being.

Keywords: *migrant students, admission quota, scholarships accessibility, educational opportunities.*

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Introduction

In recent years, student migration has emerged as a significant phenomenon shaping the landscape of collegiate education globally. Defined as the movement of students across national or regional boundaries in pursuit of higher education, this trend has garnered increasing attention due to its multifaceted impact on both sending and receiving countries. From economic implications to cultural exchanges, student migration influences various aspects of collegiate education, thereby warranting a comprehensive examination of its implications. This paper aims to delve into the scope, importance, and existing literature surrounding student migration in collegiate education, shedding light on its ramifications and potential avenues for further research.

The scope of this study encompasses a wide array of dimensions affected by student migration in the realm of collegiate education. It extends from analysing the economic consequences, such as tuition revenue for receiving institutions and remittances sent back to sending countries, to exploring the socio-cultural impacts, including intercultural understanding and global networking among students. Additionally, the scope extends to examine the educational outcomes for migrating students, such as academic performance and skill development, as well as the challenges they face in adapting to new academic environments and cultural contexts. The importance of understanding student migration lies in its role as a catalyst for educational, economic, and socio-cultural change. As globalization continues to reshape higher education, the mobility of students across borders has become integral to fostering diversity, innovation, and collaboration within academic institutions. Furthermore, student migration contributes significantly to the internationalization of higher education, facilitating knowledge exchange and cross-cultural dialogue essential for addressing global challenges in the 21st century. By examining the scope and implications of student migration, stakeholders in collegiate education can better navigate the opportunities and challenges presented by this phenomenon, thereby enhancing the quality and relevance of educational experiences for all involved parties.

Problem Statement

“Despite the increasing globalization of higher education and the growing number of migrant students pursuing collegiate studies worldwide, significant challenges persist in ensuring their equitable access, academic success, and socio-economic integration within host countries. Migrant students face a myriad of obstacles, including financial barriers, limited access to support services, cultural and linguistic challenges, and legal restrictions on

employment and residency. These hurdles not only hinder their educational attainment but also exacerbate socio-economic inequalities and perpetuate marginalization within higher education systems. Thus, there is an urgent need for targeted policies, institutional support mechanisms, and community initiatives to address the unique needs and enhance the academic and socio-economic outcomes of migrant students in collegiate education.”

Review of literature

Fenske et al (1972) has highlighted the importance of scholarship facilities available to migrants at their selected place of study. This indicates that financial assistance in the form of scholarships can serve as a significant pull factor for migrant students in choosing their educational destination. Ferris (1973) found that scholarship availability was a pull factor specifically for graduate students. This underscores the importance of financial support in attracting and retaining migrant students, particularly at the graduate level. Baharun et al. (2011) identified the learning environment as the most important determinant for migration, followed by the political environment, concern for students, cost of education, facilities, and location. This suggests that the quality of education and the overall academic atmosphere play a crucial role in attracting and retaining migrant students. Kusumwati et al. (2010) suggested that the reputation of the institution was the most significant parameter influencing migration decisions. This highlights the importance of institutional prestige and academic stand-up in attracting migrant students. Black et al. (2011) identified several major factors driving migration, including economic, political, demographic, social, and environmental factors. This indicates that migrant students' decisions regarding collegiate education are influenced by a complex interplay of various socio-economic and environmental considerations. Hariharan and Gurunathan (2016) has examined higher education challenges in India, emphasizing systemic issues regarding the migrants and the need for reforms. Muhidin (2018) studied empirically the evidence in which education has a very strong influence on internal migration. Using statistical data, he surveyed and pointed out the profile of migration development outlined within three decades in the periods of 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s.

Objectives of the Study:

- To identify the pull factors, influence on students' migration in Tamil Nadu.
- To examine pull factors on job opportunities and academic progression.

Methodology of the study

The study has utilized the analytical and descriptive research. In this study, the

researcher has accessed the migrant students from other states of Tamil Nadu for their collegiate or higher education in Tamil Nadu. The study covers only the Arts and Science colleges' migrants' students in Tamil Nadu. Purposive sampling was used because respondents selected as sample for this research are used as migrant students. 100 samples have been collected for this study from the selected hostels (Approved by Tamil Nadu Government) in Tamil Nadu. Primary data have been collected from the migrant's students from arts and science college students with the help of well-structured pre tested questionnaire. The researchers have adopted the direct interview method to gather information from the respondents and secondary data will be collected to write the review of literature and other relevant sources to be used for this research.

Table 1
Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.836	19

Source: Result of the SPSS

The above table indicates the reliability statistics of the items. It shows the value of Cronbach's Alpha is 0.836. it is more internal consistency of items that have been used for the primary data collection.

Results and Discussion:

Table 2
Basic Details of the respondents

		Gender		Total
		Boy	Girl	
Area of Residence	Rural	37	14	51
		72.5%	27.5%	100.0%
	Semi Urban	16	10	26
		61.5%	38.5%	100.0%
	Urban	11	12	23
		47.8%	52.2%	100.0%
Age	18-20	27	10	37
		73.0%	27.0%	100.0%
	20-22	11	15	26
		42.3%	57.7%	100.0%
	22-24	10	5	15
		66.7%	33.3%	100.0%
	24 and above	16	6	22
		72.7%	27.3%	100.0%
Degree	Arts	44	19	63
		69.8%	30.2%	100.0%
	Science	20	17	37
		54.1%	45.9%	100.0%

First Generation	Yes	43 71.7%	17 28.3%	60 100.0%
	No	21 52.5%	19 47.5%	40 100.0%
CGPA	Lessthan 50%	33 82.5%	7 17.5%	40 100.0%
		4 36.4%	7 63.6%	11 100.0%
	50% - 60%	3 30.0%	7 70.0%	10 100.0%
		9 52.9%	8 47.1%	17 100.0%
	71% - 80%	6 66.7%	3 33.3%	9 100.0%
		9 69.2%	4 30.8%	13 100.0%
	81% - 90%	41 82.0%	9 18.0%	50 100.0%
		10 35.7%	18 64.3%	28 100.0%
Morethan 90%	13 59.1%	9 40.9%	22 100.0%	
	Total	64 64.0%	36 36.0%	100 100.0%

Source: Compilation of primary survey

The above table shows the basic details of the study participants, boys constitute 64% while girls constitute 36% of the total sample. In rural areas, there are more boys (72.5%) than girls (27.5%), whereas in urban areas, girls (52.2%) slightly outnumber boys (47.8%). The gender distribution seems fairly balanced in semi-urban areas with 61.5% boys and 38.5% girls. The majority of the sample reside in rural areas (51%), followed by semi-urban (26%) and urban (23%) areas. Rural areas have a higher proportion of boys compared to urban areas where girls are slightly more numerous. Most participants fall within the age group of 18-20 (37%), followed by 24 and above (22%) and 20-22 (26%). The age group of 20-22 has more girls (57.7%), while the age group of 22-24 has more boys (66.7%). A larger proportion of students are pursuing degrees in arts (63%) compared to science (37%). The percentage of girls pursuing arts is higher compared to boys, while more boys pursue science degrees. 60% of the participants are first-generation college students. Among first-generation students, there's a higher proportion of boys (71.7%) compared to girls (28.3%). Most students have a CGPA of less than 50% (40% of the sample). Higher CGPA brackets tend to have more balanced gender distributions. The majority of students fall into the "Low" level of

academic achievement (50%). Higher academic achievement levels tend to have a more balanced gender distribution.

Table 3
Pull Factors of Academic Progression

Factors		Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
Limited admission Quota	Boy	26	81.3%	10	50.0%	9	56.3%	8	53.3%	11	64.7%
	Girl	6	18.8%	10	50.0%	7	43.8%	7	46.7%	6	35.3%
Total		32	100.0%	20	100.0%	16	100.0%	15	100.0%	17	100.0%
Course not available at native	Boy	24	92.3%	12	75.0%	12	48.0%	9	56.3%	7	41.2%
	Girl	2	7.7%	4	25.0%	13	52.0%	7	43.8%	10	58.8%
Total		26	100.0%	16	100.0%	25	100.0%	16	100.0%	17	100.0%
Course better than native	Boy	16	66.7%	8	44.4%	15	71.4%	10	62.5%	15	71.4%
	Girl	8	33.3%	10	55.6%	6	28.6%	6	37.5%	6	28.6%
Total		24	100.0%	18	100.0%	21	100.0%	16	100.0%	21	100.0%
Difference in the methods of study	Boy	18	78.3%	11	61.1%	11	57.9%	10	47.6%	14	73.7%
	Girl	5	21.7%	7	38.9%	8	42.1%	11	52.4%	5	26.3%
Total		23	100.0%	18	100.0%	19	100.0%	21	100.0%	19	100.0%
Exorbitant fees	Boy	24	72.7%	7	63.6%	9	69.2%	17	65.4%	7	41.2%
	Girl	9	27.3%	4	36.4%	4	30.8%	9	34.6%	10	58.8%
Total		33	100.0%	11	100.0%	13	100.0%	26	100.0%	17	100.0%
Quality of education	Boy	24	68.6%	8	50.0%	13	68.4%	8	53.3%	11	73.3%
	Girl	11	31.4%	8	50.0%	6	31.6%	7	46.7%	4	26.7%
Total		35	100.0%	16	100.0%	19	100.0%	15	100.0%	15	100.0%

Source: Compilation of primary survey

Limited Admission Quota: Boys show higher percentages across all agreement levels compared to girls. This suggests that boys are more likely to agree that limited admission quotas exist. Overall, a majority of both boys and girls either agree or strongly agree that limited admission quotas are present.

Course Not Available at Native Place: Boys overwhelmingly agree (92.3%) that courses are not available at their native place, while girls show a more mixed response. A significant portion of both boys and girls agrees that courses are not available at their native place.

Course Better Than Native: Boys tend to agree more strongly (66.7%) that the course they are pursuing is better than what is available in their native place, while girls' responses are

more evenly distributed. Overall, a considerable portion of both boys and girls agree that the course they are pursuing is better than what is available at their native place.

Difference in the Methods of Study: Boys express stronger disagreement (78.3%) regarding differences in the method of study compared to girls. Both boys and girls show varied responses, with no clear trend indicating agreement or disagreement.

Exorbitant Fees: Boys tend to agree more strongly that fees are exorbitant compared to girls, with higher percentages across all agreement levels. Overall, a significant portion of both boys and girls agree that fees are exorbitant.

Quality of Education: Boys generally express higher agreement percentages across all categories compared to girls regarding the quality of education. There's a consensus among both boys and girls that the quality of education is generally good, although boys tend to agree more strongly.

Table 4
Pull Factors of Job opportunities

Factors		Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
International exposure in the field of study	Boy	30	81.1%	14	73.7%	8	47.1%	5	35.7%	7	53.8%
	Girl	7	18.9%	5	26.3%	9	52.9%	9	64.3%	6	46.2%
Total		37	100.0%	19	100.0%	17	100.0%	14	100.0%	13	100.0%
Ease of getting a scholarship	Boy	22	78.6%	9	47.4%	16	64.0%	11	61.1%	6	60.0%
	Girl	6	21.4%	10	52.6%	9	36.0%	7	38.9%	4	40.0%
Total		28	100.0%	19	100.0%	25	100.0%	18	100.0%	10	100.0%
Relatives or Friends are studying here	Boy	27	75.0%	10	47.6%	10	66.7%	13	76.5%	4	36.4%
	Girl	9	25.0%	11	52.4%	5	33.3%	4	23.5%	7	63.6%
Total		36	100.0%	21	100.0%	15	100.0%	17	100.0%	11	100.0%
Increasing your social status in society	Boy	24	72.7%	10	62.5%	12	66.7%	8	88.9%	10	41.7%
	Girl	9	27.3%	6	37.5%	6	33.3%	1	11.1%	14	58.3%
Total		33	100.0%	16	100.0%	18	100.0%	9	100.0%	24	100.0%
Hospitality and helpfulness of local people	Boy	25	83.3%	10	58.8%	9	52.9%	12	66.7%	8	44.4%
	Girl	5	16.7%	7	41.2%	8	47.1%	6	33.3%	10	55.6%
Total		30	100.0%	17	100.0%	17	100.0%	18	100.0%	18	100.0%
Intention to get a Permanent Residence	Boy	19	82.6%	12	60.0%	11	55.0%	12	70.6%	10	50.0%
	Girl	4	17.4%	8	40.0%	9	45.0%	5	29.4%	10	50.0%
Total		23	100.0%	20	100.0%	20	100.0%	17	100.0%	20	100.0%

Source: Compilation of primary survey

International Exposure in the Field of Study: Boys tend to show higher disagreement percentages compared to girls, especially in strongly disagreeing categories. Girls show a more evenly distributed response, with a significant portion agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement. Overall, there are various opinions regarding international exposure, with boys leaning towards disagreement and girls more evenly split.

Ease of Getting a Scholarship: Both boys and girls express higher disagreement percentages, with boys showing a slightly higher level of disagreement across all categories. There's a notable portion of both genders who agree or strongly agree that getting a scholarship is easy, although the majority disagrees.

Relatives or Friends Are Studying Here: Boys tend to disagree more strongly compared to girls regarding the influence of relatives or friends studying in the same place. Girls express a more mixed response, with a considerable portion either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement. Overall, there's a mixed perception regarding the influence of relatives or friends studying in the same place, with boys leaning towards disagreement.

Increasing Your Social Status in Society: Boys express higher agreement percentages compared to girls across all categories, especially in strongly agreeing. Girls show a more mixed response, with a notable portion disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. Overall, there is mixed of views regarding whether studying abroad increases social status, with boys generally more optimistic about it.

Hospitality and Helpfulness of Local People: Boys tend to disagree more strongly compared to girls regarding the hospitality and helpfulness of local people. Girls express a more positive view, with a considerable portion agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement. Overall, there's a mixed perception regarding the hospitality and helpfulness of local people, with girls generally more positive about it.

Intention to Get a Permanent Residence: Boys express higher disagreement percentages compared to girls across all categories. Girls show a more evenly distributed response, with a significant portion either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement. Overall, there's a mixed perception regarding the intention to get permanent residence, with boys generally more skeptical about it.

Suggestions

- In order to prevent the migrant trend, the government can do the fixation of fees and improve the quality of education discussing with the higher education department, institution and universities.
- The institution should create good environment that does not impose high cost on students and allows them to continue their studies.
- If possible, the government can set up the new professional course institutions in rural areas.
- The government and the institutions can develop initiatives to improve awareness about available scholarships, streamline application processes, and provide support to students in applying for scholarships.

Scope for further research

Future researcher can do further investigation into gender disparities and they conduct deeper analysis to understand the reasons behind the gender disparities observed in various factors such as perception of international exposure, ease of getting scholarships, and intention to get permanent residence. Qualitative research methods like interviews or focus groups could provide insights into underlying factors contributing to these differences.

Conclusion

The process of migration is continuous. In the twenty-first century, education for migration is a common factor. Information can be accessed through education. Education is a tool for change. It is the community's biggest socioeconomic challenge. Change is brought about via education. For the betterment of society, education is crucial. Acknowledging the value of education as well as the goal of educating every segment of society is being pursued globally. Education promotes societal growth. Education is evolving into a worldwide industry and a kind of service that can be traded. The youthful, vibrant students relocate to big cities in search of better living conditions, elevated social standing, and personal fulfillment. They are prepared to take on obstacles and put themselves in risk to live somewhere other than their hometown, state, or nation. Students who relocate for postsecondary education have social, economic, educational, psychological, and cultural challenges. They struggle to fit in and become accustomed to the local cuisine, language, customs, and surroundings. Their migration goals aid in their habitat adaptation and acclimatization.

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