

**UNDERSTANDING THE SOCIAL CHALLENGES AND LIVED
REALITIES OF YOUTH MIGRATED ABROAD**

*A Dissertation submitted to the University of Kerala in Partial Fulfilment of
the Requirements for the Masters of Arts Degree Examination in Sociology*

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2022-2024**

DECLARATION

I, **POOJA J PRADEEP** hereby declare that the dissertation titled **UNDERSTANDING THE SOCIAL CHALLENGES AND LIVED REALITIES OF YOUTH MIGRATED ABROAD** is based on the original work carried out by me and submitted to the University of Kerala during the year 2022-2024 towards partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Master of Sociology Degree Examination. It has not been submitted for the award of any degree, diploma, fellowship or other similar title of recognition before.

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled “**UNDERSTANDING THE SOCIAL CHALLENGES AND LIVED REALITIES OF YOUTH MIGRATED ABROAD**” is a record of genuine work done by **POOJA J PRADEEP**, a fourth semester, Master of Sociology student of this college under my supervision and guidance and that is hereby approved for submission.

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ABSTRACT

Migration has evolved into a significant global phenomenon, and Kerala is no exception, with a growing number of young individuals pursuing higher education abroad. Malayali students have spread across the globe, driven by their quest for high-quality education and better employment prospects. Globalization, academic aspirations, and career objectives serve as the main driving forces in this movement, which has increasing impacts on individuals, institutions, and nations. Students in migration transfer knowledge, skills, and ideas and accordingly enrich the academic environment and trigger innovation. At the same time, the phenomenon raises concerns about brain drain, cultural homogenization, and inequity regarding access to education.

This study aims to examine the diverse effects on students studying abroad, exploring the profound transformations that occur in personal, social, and intellectual domains. It also tries to understand the lived experiences of students who have undertaken international education; this research reveals the complex interplay of factors that contribute to enhanced communication skills, adaptability, and independence. Additionally, this research explores the role of expanded global networks and connections in accessing international opportunities, resources, and innovative ideas, and how these, in turn, shape individuals' future careers and contributions to society.

The study employed a quantitative methodology with 63 respondents who had migrated abroad for higher education from Kerala. The findings indicate that the primary motivations for migration included the pursuit of superior educational opportunities and the search for diverse cultural experiences in foreign countries. Respondents expressed the belief that studying abroad would contribute to their holistic development, not only in academic growth but also enhancing their personal, social, and intercultural skills. This, in turn, was seen as a pathway to improving future earning potential and career prospects, giving them a competitive edge in the global job market.

However, despite the positive outcomes associated with international education, students also encountered significant challenges. Many reported facing discrimination and the experiences of bias and exclusion impacted their sense of belonging and overall well-being. Additionally, language barriers posed substantial difficulties, particularly in academic and social settings, where students struggled to communicate effectively, which at times affected their academic performance and social integration. Homesickness emerged as another prevalent issue, with students experiencing feelings of isolation and emotional distress due to their separation from family and familiar environments.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Migration has been a fundamental aspect of human history. Humans have relocated from place to place for socioeconomic or political reasons since their primordial origins. Migration is frequently addressed as a matter of time and space (Castles & Miller, 2009). In the second half of the twentieth century, the irrepressible commercialization drive encompassed all aspects of the public sphere, granting independence to countries and fostering interdependence among individuals. Rapid developments in global political and economic systems intensified global migratory flows and created a new international migration pattern (Sassen, 1998). The relevance of migration concerns is demonstrated by the intergenerational impact at both international and non-governmental levels (Portes, 2010).

The term "migration" refers to a shift in residency across an administrative boundary, such as a community, city, district, or nation. This can take the form of immigration, characterized by the total number of inhabitants entering a receiving geography, or emigration, which is the outflow of individuals leaving a nation during a period of time. Furthermore, there are two sorts of migration: internal migration, where migrants relocate within their own country, and international migration, where people move to reside outside of their country of origin (Massey et al., 1993).

The influx of young individuals migrating from India has been increasing consistently. According to the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) on migration for the fiscal year 2008-2009, the age group of 20-29 is anticipated to account for 11 million intra-state migrants (NSSO, 2010). This youth migration is prompted by unemployment, substandard job quality, gender disparities, and the lack of opportunities for job advancement from school to the workforce (Deshingkar & Akter, 2009). The escalation of economic and social inequalities in rural regions compels young individuals to migrate to more urban centers (Deshingkar & Akter, 2009). Recently, internal migration has been accelerated by the geographic disparity of industries and the availability of employment (Mitra, 2011). Additionally, migration is intricately connected to factors such as the expropriation of land, relative income disparity, and population pressure (de Haan, 1999). Youth migration is not motivated solely by economic advantages such as increased wages and improved living standards; it is also the result of societal pressure from family, friends, and relatives (Sander & Taylor, 2012).

Students are increasingly interested in pursuing at least a minimum part of their post-secondary education overseas. In 2012, 4.5 million graduates registered in higher learning universities in foreign countries. The global total of overseas learners is rapidly growing, having more than tripled between 1990 (1.3 million) and 2012 (4.5 million). At present, India ranks second globally in terms of population, boasts the highest number of its citizens residing overseas (approximately 18 million), and will be the primary recipient of remittances (USD 83 billion) in 2020. Equipped with more than three million Indian migrant labourers, the corridor connecting India and the United Arab Emirates ranks third on a global scale. In contrast, the corridor connecting India and Saudi Arabia ranks ninth. The most significant benefits of studying abroad among students include superior educational opportunities or specialised coursework that is not accessible within their homeland. International academic achievement has been regarded as an essential indicator of intercultural competency, with implications for potential employment opportunities in the future. Access to better education is a particularly important type of instrumental aspiration because not every nation can deliver a high-value certificate to all scholars due to inadequate institutions or a lack of capacity in native system of higher education (Sassen, 1998). For example, East Asian students often enroll to education overseas since a foreign degree confers more reputation or because they are unable to enrol in their home institutions. Studying abroad is often considered as a stepping stone to future migration. The rising inclination of Indian youngsters leaving the country to reside overseas has spurred disputes over whether it is fretting or advantageous to the nation. While the migration of Indian youth to different nations might promote cultural interchange and internationalization, it also has the potential to result in a shortage of promising individuals, resulting in a "brain drain" impact. It is essential to identify the root causes of this tendency, which involve a dearth of career potential, uncertainty in the economy, and societal constraints. Tackling the aforementioned issues will not only assist in retaining Indian youth but will also strengthen the nation's ability to compete worldwide (Sassen, 1998).

1.1 HISTORY OF MIGRATION

The process of migration has its roots from ancient history in search for various reasons such as food shelter, job opportunities and economic security. Migration patterns underwent major alterations during the 18th and 19th centuries Industrial Revolution. People from rural areas relocated to cities in search of industrial jobs. In the 20th and 21st centuries, migration has been influenced by a multitude of reasons. This covers economic inequality, political unrest, globalization, and improvements in communication and transportation.

Over the past 30 years, migration has played a significant role in Kerala's social, political, and economic upheaval. The political and cultural systems of Kerala have been profoundly influenced by the migration patterns and their socioeconomic ramifications. Intriguingly, substantial remittances decreased unemployment and poverty while also promoting a consumerist culture and the commercialization of public services like health and education. Depending on estimates, between 4 and 5 million individuals in Kerala obtained indirect jobs from the remittances of about 2 million migrant workers. The remarkable growth of the building industry and the pressure it put on land and paddy fields for new developments not only had an impact on the environment and ecology, but the remittance economy also changed patterns of land ownership and agriculture.

The distinct migratory waves from Kerala and the ways in which these trends impacted the social and political landscape of the state raises three points of contention: the political ramifications of migration; the socio-cultural changes brought about by migration; and the social and economic fallout from a remittance-based market.

Semi-skilled or quasi-professional labourers were the first group of migrants from Kerala in the early 20th century, and they went to Ceylon, Burma, Madras, Calcutta, Karachi, and Bombay, as well as some areas of Malaya to work on plantations. To some extent, Kerala's architecture and cuisine were inspired by the money and knowledge they returned with.

After World War II, there was another wave of migration that went to Singapore, Malaysia, and several cities in India, including Bombay, Delhi, Calcutta, Madras, and Bangalore. The majority of those who immigrated in the second wave, which took place between 1945 and 1960, were semi-skilled, high school graduates working in offices and as typists, secretaries, office workers, and army soldiers.

Between 1960 and 1975, the third wave of immigration was made up of individuals with professional training and technical abilities (technologists, nurses, clerks, and other professions).

Since many Malayalee's joined the pan-Indian middle class as a result of these three waves of migration and the remittances that followed, these events had an impact on land relations and cultivated a sense of "Indians."

The Gulf, the United States, Germany, and other European and non-European nations underwent large-scale migration during the fourth wave, which lasted from 1975 to 1992 (until the Kuwait War). The increase in earnings from the high oil prices of the 1970s and the lack of

qualified labour needed for building and developing infrastructure in an economy dependent on oil were the causes of this.

The fifth migration wave, which began in 1993, consisted of several distinct streams. These included: a relatively large migration of unskilled and semi-skilled laborers from northern Kerala, particularly from Kannur and Malappuram; the immigration of highly qualified professionals such as medical professionals, engineers, IT specialists, and academics to the US, Europe, and other countries; and an increase in the migration of family networks of nurses who initially moved to the US and Europe during the 1980s migration wave (Zachariah & Rajan, 2001).

A considerable number of Muslims, Ezhavas, and members of other communities migrated during the fourth wave. The second generation of immigrants from the first and second waves went on to become professionals like doctors and engineers, while the migrants from the fourth wave were primarily from the lower middle class. The fourth wave of migration was far more broad across caste, communities, and geographies than the preceding three waves, which were restricted to a few places of Kerala (Palghat, central Travancore, some sections of Malabar, and Kochi). This fourth wave had significant effects on the economy as well as the biggest influence on social and political ties as well as the cultural scene (Zachariah & Rajan, 2001).

Land relations, the growth of the consumer and service sectors, the decline of agriculture, the rise of education as an industry (capitation fees, self-financing, etc.), and the younger generation of political party leaders who were less knowledgeable and skilled were all impacted by these migration patterns and their aftermath. The leadership and organizational framework of political parties were also significantly impacted by this. Communities with a comparatively larger interest in Kerala's power system (Nair-Namboothiri) rose to positions of leadership in political organizations. These communities were prosperous due to their access to land and feudal links.

The future of Kerala will be significantly shaped by the effects of migration, both positive and negative, since the state is about to undergo a transformation. As the labour market in the region becomes saturated, remittance income will diminish along with the amount of migration to the Gulf. The competition for skilled and semi-skilled jobs in India and other countries is expected to increase. Therefore, a growth strategy that is primarily focused on the service sector and remittances may not be long-term viable for Kerala.

1.2 TYPES OF MIGRATION

The several types of migration are :

1. Migration: Moving to within a nation, frequently for educational, familial, or economic reasons, from one region to another. Moving to a nearby city or a far-off area might be part of this kind of migration Internal, which can be either voluntary or involuntary.
2. International Migration: Relocating internationally, frequently in search of better job prospects, educational opportunities, family reunions, or refuge from war. The procedure of this kind of migration, which entails crossing international boundaries, can be difficult.
3. Rural-Urban Migration: Moving from rural to urban regions in search of better job prospects, easier access to services, or higher standards of living. The dearth of opportunities and poverty in rural areas are major factors driving this kind of migration.
4. Urban-Rural Migration: Migrating to rural areas in search of a more peaceful lifestyle, to be nearer relatives, or to engage in farming or other resource-based employment. Many times, the desire for a slower pace of life is what motivates this kind of migration.
5. Circular Migration: Travelling
6. seasonally or temporarily between two or more places, usually in pursuit of employment or education, and then going back to one's home country. Regular migration occurs when people move from one location to another or to multiple locations.
7. Chain migration- Moving to join family or friends who have previously relocated is known as "Chain Migration" frequently in order to take advantage of their social networks and support systems. Social ties are a major motivator for this kind of movement.
8. Return Migration: Returning to one's home country after residing elsewhere, frequently as a result of cultural preferences, familial ties, or job prospects. Returning home is a component of this kind of migration
9. Refugee Migration: The act of escaping one's home country in search of safety abroad due to conflict, persecution, natural disasters, or breaches of human rights. An protection request is typically made during this kind of forced travel.
10. Asylum Seeker Migration: Travelling to another nation in search of safety from persecution, frequently while still awaiting word on their status as refugees. Migration of this kind entails the pursuit of security and safety.
11. Labour migration: The act of migrating in search of job or a better work environment, frequently to address a labour shortage in the new country. Economic needs are generally the driving force behind this kind of migration.

1.3 IMPACT OF MIGRATION GLOBALLY AND LOCALLY

In the twenty-first century, student migration—the movement of students across borders for educational purposes—has grown in importance. This migration trend has profound implications for the participating countries as well as the students, and it is a reflection of larger trends in globalization. It comprises a wide range of reasons on a worldwide scale, such as the desire for cultural interchange, the quest of greater educational quality, and searching for improved professional possibilities. A rising proportion of international students is a defining feature of the global student mobility landscape. High-ranking educational institutions and diverse cultural contexts make countries like the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and Canada appealing travel destinations, according to UNESCO and numerous educational statistics. Numerous reasons, including geopolitical dynamics, educational policies, and economic situations, have an impact on this migration. One possible explanation for the increase in student mobility is the pursuit of advanced degrees, specialized programs, and international networking possibilities provided by these host nations.

Local issues including immigration laws, economic conditions, and educational standards all have an impact on how student movement appears locally. Major international student destinations provide economic benefits to nearby universities and towns through the collection of living expenses and tuition fees, which also promote cultural variety. On the other hand, nations that welcome migrant students may suffer from a "brain drain," in which brilliant people depart for greater prospects outside, possibly harming the local economies and advancement of those nations. Simultaneously with the increased interest of individuals in higher education, new competitors are entering the global competition for talents. Competition is played out among a growing number of educational institutions and is expanding to national governments, with national active promotion strategies and targeted immigration policies. Many industrialized countries are changing their policies to become more attractive for highly skilled migrants, with enhancement of student mobility as one of the mechanisms to achieve this goal. Easy and transparent access to visas, possibility to work while studying, and extended job-searching periods after graduation are among the policy measures introduced to attract international students. As interest in higher education grows, so do new players in the global talent competition. This competition is being played out between an increasing number of educational institutions and is spreading to national governments, who are implementing targeted immigration policies and active promotion strategies. Many developed nations are modifying their immigration laws to make themselves more appealing to highly skilled migrants, and one way to do this is through improving student mobility. Some of the measures

taken to accomplish this include transparent and easy access to visas, the ability to work while studying, and longer job search periods after graduation.

1.4 IMPACT OF COVID -19 PANDEMIC

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on student migration abroad, significantly altering trends and related aspects in several key ways. The COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath have been the largest hindrance to international student mobility since the end of 2019. Globally, the pandemic has had a significant impact on social life, economics, and health systems. The societal impact on education is the most striking. The rapid spread of the illness and the announcement of the pandemic had detrimental impacts on education that put parents, instructors, students, and schools in danger. School closures and the economic downturn are the two main ways that the pandemic affects education, according to a World Bank report .The economies of the nations must be taken into primary consideration while examining international student mobility within the context of the pandemic.

The impacts of the pandemic are many and include: The global health crisis led to an immediate decline in international student mobility. Travel restrictions, border closures, and lockdown measures resulted in a sharp drop in the number of students studying abroad. According to UNESCO, international student numbers fell by approximately 15-20% during the peak of the pandemic. This decline was particularly noticeable in countries heavily reliant on international tuition fees, such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia. Another major trend was the shift toward virtual learning. Many institutions adapted by offering online courses, which allowed students to continue their education without traveling. This shift led to a rise in hybrid or fully online programs, which some students and institutions have continued to favour even as travel restrictions eased. The pandemic also prompted changes in students' destination preferences. Traditionally popular destinations like the U.S. and the U.K. saw a decline in interest as students and parents expressed concerns about health risks and the adequacy of the response to the pandemic. Conversely, countries that managed the pandemic effectively or had more favourable policies for international students saw increased interest. For example, Canada and New Zealand became more attractive destinations due to their perceived safety and effective management of the crisis. Financial impacts were significant as well. Many students faced economic hardships due to the pandemic, affecting their ability to afford studying abroad. Institutions responded by offering more scholarships, financial aid, and flexible payment options to mitigate the financial burden on students. Moreover, the pandemic accelerated the trend towards “regional” student mobility. Students increasingly considered universities closer

to home as a safer and more cost-effective option. This trend saw a rise in intra-regional mobility, with students opting for education within their own or neighbouring countries. The ultimate impact of the pandemic on student migration will likely continue to evolve. As countries recover and adjust to new normalcy, trends may shift further. Institutions are expected to maintain a hybrid model of education, combining online and in-person options to cater to diverse student needs and preferences. Furthermore, the pandemic has underscored the importance of robust health and safety protocols, which will play a crucial role in future student migration patterns. In conclusion, the COVID-19 pandemic has reshaped student migration abroad in significant ways, influencing trends in mobility, destination preferences, financial aspects, and educational delivery methods. As the global situation stabilizes, these changes will likely continue to influence international education for years to come.

1.5 PUSH AND PULL FACTORS

Push Factors:

Push factors are the negative conditions or circumstances in the home country that compel individuals to leave in search of a better life. Economic push factors, such as poverty, unemployment, and low wages, can make it difficult for individuals to sustain themselves and their families. Political push factors, including conflict, persecution, and human rights violations, can create a hostile environment that drives people away. Environmental push factors, such as natural disasters and climate change, can render areas uninhabitable, forcing people to migrate. Social push factors, including social inequality, discrimination, and limited access to education and healthcare, can also contribute to a person's decision to leave. Finally, cultural push factors, such as cultural restrictions and lack of freedom, can stifle personal growth and creativity, pushing individuals to seek opportunities elsewhere.

Pull Factors:

Pull factors, on the other hand, are the attractive conditions or opportunities in the destination country that draw individuals in. Economic pull factors, such as better job opportunities, higher wages, and improved living standards, can entice people to migrate. Political pull factors, including political stability, democracy, and human rights protection, can create a sense of security and freedom. Environmental pull factors, such as a more favourable climate and natural resources, can also attract people. Social pull factors, including access to education, healthcare, and social services, as well as cultural diversity and tolerance, can make a destination country more appealing. Finally, cultural pull factors, such as personal freedom,

cultural exchange, and opportunities for personal growth, can draw individuals to a new country.

Interplay between Push and Pull Factors:

In reality, push and pull factors often interact and influence each other. For instance, a person may be pushed out of their home country due to political instability, but also pulled to a destination country with a strong democracy and human rights record. Similarly, an individual may be pushed by economic hardship, but also pulled by the promise of better job opportunities and higher wages in another country. Understanding this complex interplay is crucial for developing effective migration policies and addressing the root causes of migration.

1.6 EDUCATION SYSTEM IN KERALA

Kerala's higher education system is an extensive network that has been designed to introduce the principle of comprehensiveness among all types of educational courses. From its very ethos, the state combines public and private institutions, including universities, colleges, and specialized institutions. The prime universities of the higher education sector are those of University of Kerala, Mahatma Gandhi University, and Indian Institute of Management Kozhikode. All these institutions offer a long list of undergraduate, postgraduate, and doctoral study programs in variant fields. Regulatory bodies and funding agencies, in terms of quality and standards, are the University Grants Commission of India and the state government.

Supporting much of the financing needs of the public universities are the benevolent taskmasters that are the state governments, and the case in Kerala is no different: the state government there is spending liberally even on infrastructure, research needs, and salary requirements of the teaching faculty. Some of the government schemes to improve accessibility to the higher levels of its education include scholarships, financial aid to students from poor backgrounds, and many more. The Kerala State Higher Education Council takes initiatives to reform and enhance the quality and innovations of pedagogy.

These are well complemented by a range of private colleges and universities that further add to diversity. Many of these are oriented toward specialized fields like engineering, medicine, and management and are privately invested with fees from students. They are governed by regulations of national accrediting bodies that ensure educational standards.

One of the most literate states of the country is Kerala, which shows commitment towards education through its high literacy rate and enormous educational resources. The state has also made massive strides in the assimilation of technology with education. Several institutions have

adopted digital tools and online learning platforms. It is reflected by initiatives such as the 'Digital University Kerala' and e-learning resources incorporated within regular curricula.

Recently, Kerala has been reported trying to expand its facilities in higher education by opening new institutions and developing already existing ones. There is also the notion that efforts are put towards better research facilities and the development of innovation, industry linkages, and international collaborations. Programs aimed at increasing student enrolment in higher education and improving employability through skill development are also critical priorities for the state.

The overall picture of the higher education system of Kerala is that it is strong in public-private partnership, committed towards quality, and innovative in learning and research. It constantly evolves towards the goal of equal, accessible, and high-quality education to its very diverse populations.

1.7 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Over the years, an increasing number of Indian students have opted to pursue higher education overseas. Despite a significant decline in enrolments due to the COVID-19 pandemic and associated lockdowns in 2021, a considerable cohort of students from Kerala is once again gearing up for international studies. Several factors contribute to this upward trend among the youth.

One, the present generation is fully aware of the different courses and career options available in many countries like the UK and Canada. Access to abundant information and counseling by a host of education careers has made the process easier. Students are better informed about the benefits awaiting them if they can study abroad: high-quality education, cultural diversity, and greater career avenues. The second factor attracting students is the chance of part-time employment while pursuing their studies abroad. This goes a long way in helping them cover their living expenses, besides acquiring vital work experience and skills that make them more competitive in the world's job market. The availability of post-study work visas and immigration opportunities attracts students to specific countries. Students seek destinations offering a clear pathway to employment and potential citizenship and the role of social media and online platforms cannot be underestimated. Students are influenced by online testimonials, reviews, and experiences shared by peers and alumni, shaping their perceptions and decisions.

Despite such opportunities, students have challenges and prospects that make them move to foreign countries. Therefore, the current study seeks to find the reasons why the increasing

trend of studying abroad is favoured by many students. The study also endeavors to understand the different aspects that govern a student's decisions to migrate and issues that make a student face challenges in the foreign country. It will try to find the underlying motivational factors in the students' decisions for going abroad for studies, such as urge for academic excellence, career advancement, and development of personality. The study will also see how far education professionals, social media, and alumni networks have influenced decisions of the students. The findings of the study would provide the kinds of problems these students face: cultural adjustment, language barrier, and separation from home. It also intends to talk about the types of support for the students, such as university services, student organizations, and government initiatives. By understanding the drivers and challenges behind this trend with studies abroad, it will help give insight into education policy, institutions, and stakeholders. This will no doubt inform the strategies that will support the decisions of students, enhance their experiences, and thereby maximize benefits derived from international education.

1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significant flow of young individuals from Kerala seeking education abroad has become a prominent trend, with a substantial number of young adults relocating to foreign nations such as the UK, Canada, New Zealand, and others. This phenomenon not only diminishes the overall population of young adults in Kerala but also contributes to the economic growth of the destination countries, primarily through high tuition fees. Moreover, this migration poses a potential challenge for Kerala as it leads to a scarcity of skilled youth for various job positions, given that individuals attaining higher education abroad often choose to settle in those foreign countries. Furthermore, the brain drain resulting from this migration can lead to a loss of talented and skilled individuals who could have contributed to Kerala's economic growth and development.

Looking ahead, Kerala is anticipated to confront the issue of an aging population increase and a decline in the youth demographic over the next decade or two. This demographic shift could have profound implications on the state, affecting various dimensions such as social, political, and economic aspects. The aging population may lead to a strain on the state's resources, healthcare system, and social security infrastructure. Additionally, the decline in the youth demographic may result in a shortage of workforce, leading to potential labor market imbalances and impacting the state's economic growth.

The significance of this study lies in its potential to provide deep understanding into the factors driving student migration from Kerala, ultimately informing policymakers and educators on

how to develop strategies to retain the talent and address the brain drain. Studying student migration from Kerala has the potential to advance knowledge in various academic domains, offering insights into social, economic, educational, and cultural aspects that can benefit researchers, policymakers, and educators. Findings from the study can inform educational policymakers about the factors influencing student migration, helping them develop policies that cater to the needs and aspirations of students in Kerala. This can contribute to the enhancement of educational systems and opportunities in the region, potentially reducing the push factors that lead to student migration. Moreover, understanding the motivations and experiences of students who have migrated can help policymakers develop targeted initiatives to attract and retain students in Kerala.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The review of literature serves as a critical foundation for understanding the complex dynamics of student migration, particularly the factors influencing the movement of students from Kerala, India, to international educational institutions. This chapter explores existing research related to student migration, analyzing the socio-economic, cultural, and policy factors that shape this global phenomenon. The review highlights key themes such as the dissatisfaction with local education, the privatization of post-secondary education in Kerala, and the global competition for attracting international students. By examining multiple perspectives and case studies, this review aims to contextualize the ongoing migration trends within broader educational, economic, and policy frameworks.

Kevin and Bijulal (2024) investigate the growing trend of student migration from Kerala, India, to European countries, focusing on case studies of Latvia, the Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom over the past five years. The research reveals that dissatisfaction with the perceived low standards of undergraduate education in Kerala has driven students to seek education abroad. Through comprehensive data analysis and case studies of five students, the study examines their experiences, educational opportunities, socio-economic conditions, cultural adaptation, and academic pursuits in the host countries. Additionally, the paper highlights the differing approaches of the Kerala and Indian governments toward managing and regulating this migration flow, focusing on policy frameworks, support systems, and challenges encountered. Furthermore, the research analyzes the safety standards implemented by both governments concerning the welfare and security of migrating students, shedding light on safety incidents and the measures adopted to safeguard students' interests and well-being. By combining quantitative data and qualitative insights, the study provides a comprehensive understanding of the complex nature of student migration and emphasizes the need for policy coherence between sending and receiving nations to facilitate a secure environment for students migrating abroad.

George and Kumar (2009) draw attention to the disparity between the perception of inclusivity and the actual exclusivity present in Kerala's education system. While Kerala has achieved commendable literacy rates due to the widespread availability of basic and secondary education, post-secondary education is becoming increasingly commercialized and privatized. The study emphasizes that the commercialization of higher education has created barriers for

students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, limiting their access to quality education.

Sebastian (2010) responds to the observations of George and Kumar by highlighting the dual impact of the decline in public education quality and the growing demand for private education in Kerala. Sebastian suggests that providing publicly sponsored education to the underprivileged population is essential for ensuring the effective utilization of public finances. He argues that state-sponsored education can counteract the negative effects of privatization and commercialization, which otherwise reinforce educational inequalities.

Srivastava (2016) explores the rise of low-cost private education as a solution for economically disadvantaged populations in India. Her study provides insights into how the proliferation of private schools offers an alternative for students who lack access to high-quality public education. Srivastava's work underscores the tension between the need for accessible education and the commercialization that limits opportunities for the marginalized.

Bourke (2000) presents a model of the determinants of international trade in higher education, focusing on the under-researched area of education as a traded service. The article addresses the factors influencing the global movement of foreign students, particularly those seeking education outside their home countries. Using medical education as a case study, the research examines the competition among host nations to attract international students and highlights the importance of information as a critical factor influencing students' decisions to study abroad. Bourke's study fills a gap in theory development by outlining the variables that affect the demand and supply of international university placements.

Verma & Singh (2022) in their study In the market for study abroad opportunities, there has been an intense global competition in recent years. A country's and an institution's ability to comprehend and meet the needs of the market is crucial to its success in attracting and keeping international students due to the rising level of global competitiveness. Senior secondary school has started to give way to migration as the main path to higher education in a number of Indian states, most notably Punjab. The decision to continue one's education abroad is influenced by many different factors. One hundred and twenty students from the Majha area of Punjab (India) participated in the study. .. Based on the demographic characteristics of the students themselves, this research aims to examine some of the factors that influence their decisions to study abroad. The information indicated that male students were more interested than female students in studying abroad. Compared to their urban counterparts, kids from rural areas are much more interested in visiting foreign countries. Furthermore, students who choose to study

abroad are more likely to be married or to come from traditional households. The study has implications for policy formulation as well as for the practical assessment of student mobility.

Deshmukh et al. (2022) explored the factors driving Indian students to migrate abroad for education. The study identified several key motivations, including the limited availability of seats in Indian educational institutions and the intense competition for admission to top universities. Many students believe that a foreign degree holds more prestige and is highly valued by employers, compared to a degree from an Indian institution. Additionally, the study noted that only a few Indian higher education institutions meet international standards, leading students to seek better quality education abroad. Another draw is the prospect of post-graduation employment opportunities in countries like Canada, which offers welcoming immigration policies and a clear pathway to work and settle.

Murphy and Groms, 2003, emphasized that all information about studying abroad needs to be readily available on the internet so that a student makes an informed decision. Information concerning the host countries and the global universities is paramount in deciding which country a student wants to study in. Financial reasons attract international students since they generate immense wealth for a host nation and private institutions require revenue from such students to enable them to be sustainable. Huge tuition fees, living expenses, and other associated costs come with international students and are therefore a boost to the local economy. As such, they are very valuable for both the universities and host countries. It is therefore for the concerned institutions to ensure full and accurate online information in order to allure the best talents and attract money-making opportunities.

George and Kurian (2024) in their study *Student Migration from Kerala: Investigating the Role of Youth Unemployment* found that COVID-19 pandemic has reignited a surge in student migration from Kerala, presenting policy challenges amid high youth unemployment and shifting job aspirations. Female youth unemployment is twice that of males, contributing significantly to the increase in migration. To address this issue, Kerala must create productive employment opportunities, especially for those with higher secondary education. Introducing the Four Year Undergraduate Programme (FYUGP) in state universities and affiliated colleges could help reduce the outflow of students. A comprehensive master plan is essential to tackle unemployment and curb student migration effectively.

Weber and Christ of Van Mol (2023) *The Student Migration Transition: An empirical investigation into the nexus between development and international student migration*, In this paper, we explore the relationship between development and outgoing international student mobility (ISM) from 2003 to 2018, utilizing UNESCO data. Drawing on migration transition theory, they hypothesize that the relationship between development and outgoing migration follows an inverted U-shape, reflecting changes in populations' capabilities and aspirations. Our findings confirm that outgoing ISM follows this pattern. To delve further into this result, we examined whether students from countries at different development levels prefer distinct destination countries, considering factors such as the academic ranking, GDP per capita, and linguistic and colonial ties of these destinations. Our analysis reveals that these destination country characteristics have varying impacts on students from countries at different stages of development, suggesting that the effects cannot be simply categorized as developed versus developing countries. These findings underscore the complexity and nonlinearity of ISM processes, paving the way for further research into the diverse nature of international student populations.

Rajan (2020) in “*Handbook of International Migration in India*”, explains that there is a significant trend of increasing student out-migration, primarily driven by the desire to attain professional degrees .Conversely, job seeker migration is decreasing, indicating a shift in motivations for migration. The majority of migrants (20-24 years) are young adults, likely pursuing higher education or early career opportunities . An analysis of religious demographics reveals that Hindus constitute the largest proportion (60.6%) of migrants, followed by Christians (27.9%), and Muslims (11.5%). Furthermore, self-financing institutions in neighboring states attract students by offering capitation fees and reduced costs, prompting them to move out of their home state for education .This trend highlights the importance of understanding the evolving motivations and characteristics of migrants to inform policy decisions and support their needs. By examining these patterns, policymakers can develop targeted initiatives to address the push and pull factors driving migration, ultimately enhancing the educational and career prospects of India's youth.

Vishal and Pal(2022),in the study titled *Factors Influences for Migration of Indian Students*, The study should not discourage people from migrating, as migration is not inherently a problem but rather a natural process. In recent decades, the flow of students migrating has grown significantly, and in some areas, it has become twice as important as the flow of those seeking employment. The purpose of this study is to examine the factors that influence students'

decisions to migrate. The two primary factors affecting migration are wage levels and the quality of education. It is important to note that countries with the highest-quality education do not necessarily offer the highest wages. Therefore, it is essential to explore whether the quality of higher education or wage levels play a more significant role in determining the direction of student migration. In the past decade, youth mobility has increased rapidly, and this flow is not uniform. On one side, there is the migration of skilled individuals seeking employment, while on the other, there is a growing trend of young people migrating to pursue education. This latter trend has increased rapidly over the past decade. In 2006, the number of people obtaining education outside their country of citizenship was nearly five times higher than in 1975, and this flow has continued to grow. To address this, it is crucial to offer better living conditions and study opportunities at home. This paper focuses on various factors that influence migration among Indian students, based on secondary research, and highlights the different reasons why Indian students choose to migrate.

Anilaskariah (2024), in the study *Dynamics of International Students Migration: An Explorative Study in the context of Kerala, India*, explores the dynamics of international student migration from Kerala, a region with a notable history of skilled migration. The research aims to understand the motivations, experiences, and trends in student mobility, especially in the post-pandemic context. Using a mixed-methods approach, data was collected from 37 participants in Thiruvalla, Kerala, through structured questionnaires, telephonic interviews, and Google Forms. The demographic analysis focuses on students aged 20-30 years, representing diverse genders and socioeconomic backgrounds. Key findings reveal that the primary motivation for migration is the pursuit of higher-quality education and better career prospects. The study shows a preference for English-speaking countries, with the UK, New Zealand, and Germany emerging as the top destinations, reflecting language familiarity and perceived educational excellence. Most respondents chose to migrate after completing their undergraduate studies to pursue postgraduate education abroad. The study also highlights the heavy reliance on educational loans as the main source of funding, indicating a significant financial commitment from both students and their families. The research identifies several challenges faced by students, including financial difficulties, social and psychological adaptation issues, and cultural integration hurdles. Notably, a majority of students express a desire to find employment in their host countries after graduation, indicating a trend toward long-term migration goals. The study concludes that perceived shortcomings in Kerala's educational institutions such as low-quality education, outdated curricula, and a lack of job-oriented courses strongly influence students' decisions to migrate. This finding underscores the

need for educational reforms in Kerala to meet global standards and align with students' aspirations. The study offers valuable insights into the factors driving international student migration from Kerala and highlights the need for policy interventions and educational improvements.

Renjan and Anandu (2020), *International Migration Remittances and Economic Growth in Kerala*, This study investigates the trends and patterns of international migration and the associated inflow of remittances to Kerala from 1998 to 2018, and assesses how these remittances impact Kerala's economic growth. It employs a time series dataset on Kerala's Net State Domestic Product (NSDP) at constant prices as a measure of economic growth and NRI deposits as a measure of remittances. The methodology includes the Augmented Dickey-Fuller Test (ADF) for the stationarity Johansen Cointegration test, and the Vector Error Correction Model (VECM). The study finds a unidirectional long-run relationship between remittances and economic growth in Kerala, confirming that remittances positively influence Kerala's NSDP in the long run.

Azeez and Jawed (2014), *Educated Unemployment: The Case of Kerala*, The role of education in enhancing social status and its connection to employment has long drawn the interest of researchers and social scientists. However, rising unemployment among the educated population has hindered the state from fully realizing the social and economic benefits of its educational progress. Unemployment should not only be seen as a lack of opportunities for individuals but also as a denial of their participation in the state's economic activities, thereby limiting their contribution to economic development. Currently, over one-fourth of the educated population in rural areas and one-fifth in urban areas remain unemployed in the state, with unemployment rates being even higher among women. This indicates that a significant portion of educated individuals, especially women, are unable to contribute to the state's economic growth. The primary challenge is not merely the lack of economic growth or the consequent inability to invest in education, but rather the growing unemployment rate, which is now curtailing further public investment in education. Increasing unemployment among the educated has dampened the state's enthusiasm for funding education. This has led to questions about whether government spending on education is worthwhile if it only results in higher unemployment rates. Some argue that the state should prioritize investment in productive activities that could create employment rather than spending more on education. However, as evidenced by Kerala's experience in the 1990s, economic growth alone does not necessarily generate employment.

Shaniba (2024), *Brain or Brain Gain: Understanding Overseas Migration of Students from Kerala*, This study says that Kerala is widely recognized as one of India's most literate states, known for its diligent and capable young population. According to the NIRF 2020 evaluation, twenty institutions in Kerala are ranked among the top 100 universities in India. However, it is commonly perceived that many students in Kerala have a strong desire to pursue higher education abroad and seek job opportunities or career advancement aligned with their aspirations. Student migration is an unexplored aspect of global migration trends in Kerala. This trend has accelerated in the past five years, leading to a significant increase in the number of Kerala students pursuing higher education in various fields in countries like Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, and China. A common trend among these students is the aspiration to secure permanent residency in their chosen country and build a life that suits their preferences and values. This study aims to comprehensively examine the reasons behind the migration of students from Kerala and their aspirations for obtaining permanent residence after completing their education abroad. The research adopts both a narrative and analytical approach to explore this phenomenon in depth.

Joseph(2022), *Driving Migration of Kerala Youth's in Worldwide*, In this study explore that the Keralites, also known as Malayalis, are a Dravidian ethnolinguistic group originating from the present-day state of Kerala in India, which is located along the southwestern Malabar coast. The majority of Malayalis are native speakers of Malayalam, one of the six classical languages of India. The state of Kerala was formed in 1956 through the States Reorganization Act. Before this, the region comprised the Kingdom of Cochin, the Kingdom of Travancore, the Malabar District, and South Canara under British India since the 1800s. The British annexed the Malabar District from Tipu Sultan after the Third Mysore War (1790–92). Before British rule, this area was governed by various kingdoms, including the Zamorins of Calicut, the Kingdom of Tanur, the Arakkal kingdom, Kolathunadu, Valluvanad, and the Palakkad Rajas. As per the 2020 Indian census, there are about 45 million Malayalis in Kerala, accounting for 97% of the state's total population. Malayali minorities also live in neighboring states, such as Tamil Nadu (mainly in Kanyakumari and Nilgiri districts) and Karnataka (Dakshina Kannada and Kodagu districts), as well as in other metropolitan areas of India. From the latter half of the 20th century, substantial Malayali communities have emerged in the Persian Gulf countries, including the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar, and Kuwait. Smaller communities are also found in other countries with large immigrant populations, such as Malaysia, Singapore, the United States (US), the United Kingdom (UK), Australia, New Zealand, and Canada. As of 2013, it was estimated that there were around 1.6 million Malayali

expatriates worldwide. In Malaysia, the estimated population of Malayalis in 2020 was approximately 348,000, representing 12.5% of the total Indian population in Malaysia, making them the second-largest Indian ethnic group in the country, after the Tamils. Most Malayalis in Malaysia aged 18 to 30 are third, fourth, or fifth-generation Malaysian citizens. According to A. R. Raja Raja Varma, "Malayalam" was originally the name of a place before it became the name of the language spoken by its people. The total population of Malayalis in Kerala was recorded as 45 million in 2020.

Clarket (2004) Students global awareness and attitudes to internationalism in a world of cultural convergence, This study examines the extent to which students have the attitudes and beliefs necessary for living in an increasingly globalized world, where national cultures are converging. A survey of 701 college students was conducted to measure their global awareness and attitudes toward internationalism. The findings revealed that students exhibited moderate levels of global awareness and held mixed views regarding the United States' engagement with other countries. The study suggests that international education is likely to become the standard in the future.

Bedenlier and Richer (2018) Social networks analysis of international students mobility: Uncovering the rise of regional hub. The research on international student mobility has largely focused on a Western perspective, shaped by Western-oriented discourse and understanding. However, this study contends that international student mobility is not confined to economically developed, politically stable, and academically advanced Western nations. Instead, it also involves countries with diverse economic, political, and academic characteristics. By considering various theoretical approaches, the study argues that political, economic, cultural, and historical factors have contributed to the emergence of non-traditional destinations for international students, termed "emergent regional hubs." To test this empirically, a social network analysis was conducted using a global dataset of 229 countries. The findings confirm the strong position of traditional destinations but also indicate the rise of several regional hubs that are internationalizing in diverse ways and for different reasons. The mobility patterns in these emerging hubs differ significantly from those of traditional destinations, fundamentally altering the nature of internationalization in this context.

Naidoo (2007) Research on the flow of international students to UK universities: Determinants and Implications, This article analyzes time series data from 1985 to 2003 to explore the factors influencing international student mobility to UK universities. The research identifies key determinants, such as access to domestic education opportunities in the source country, tuition

fees in the host country, and the source country's level of involvement in the global economy. In an increasingly competitive environment for attracting international students, these findings offer valuable insights for recruiters into the dynamics of the international education sector.

Gill (2013) *International Students Migration: Outcomes and Implications*, This study investigated the potential correlation between six life circumstances of international students (N=124) admitted to the United States for academic purposes and their choice of geographic location after graduation. This paper enhances the existing literature by examining actual migration outcomes (rather than intentions), incorporating three previously unanalyzed factors, and including graduate students from a new field of study. The independent variables considered were: duration of study, receipt of a scholarship, pursuit of a doctoral degree, participation in optional practical training, application for a temporary work visa, and the economic status of the student's country of origin. The dependent variable was the student's geographic location as of May 15, 2011, classified as either within the United States or outside. Data from foreign student graduates (academic years 2000-2011) from 43 countries were analyzed using binary logistic regression. The results revealed that three variables—scholarship aid, participation in optional practical training, and application for a temporary work visa—were significantly associated with the graduates' choice of residence. These findings are pertinent to academic institutions and government agencies focused on international education, student migration behavior, comparative data, and strategic policy development.

Bennell and Pearce (2003) *The internationalization of higher education: exporting education to developing and transnational economic*, This article evaluates the degree of internationalization in higher education in the UK and Australia, focusing on two main areas: the increase in foreign students and the rise of students studying in their home countries for qualifications provided by higher education institutions in these two nations. It examines the swift development of overseas-validated courses as part of collaborative partnerships between HEIs in the Global North and South, using survey data from the UK and Australia.

Remesh (2012) *Strangers in their own land: Migrants from the North-East in Delhi*, In this study, Migration has been deeply intertwined with Kerala's development trajectory. The first significant wave of migration from Kerala to West Asia was triggered by the Gulf boom following the discovery of crude oil in the early 1970s. The second wave occurred in the early 1990s, driven by the pursuit of a better standard of living, prompting many to move permanently to North America, Europe, and other industrialized nations. Kerala is now

experiencing a third wave of migration, characterized by students moving abroad, particularly to developed countries, for education and to seek permanent residence. A study by the Centre for Development Studies estimated that around 1.5 million people from Kerala are either working or pursuing higher education overseas. The study also highlighted the United States (US) and the United Kingdom (UK) as the most preferred destinations for Kerala students. Approximately 12% of graduates from Kerala's universities continue their education abroad, with the US, UK, Canada, and Australia being the most favored locations. According to the Ministry of External Affairs, 30,948 students from Kerala went abroad in 2019, but unofficial estimates suggest that over 35,000 students do so annually, with this number continually rising. It is noted that two out of three young people in Kerala aspire to migrate abroad for employment and related opportunities. Students are now also moving to less conventional destinations such as Mexico, Iceland, Vietnam, Kyrgyzstan, Barbados, Slovenia, and Slovakia, in addition to traditional educational hubs like the UK, US, Canada, and New Zealand. The main reasons for leaving Kerala include outdated curricula, a lack of skill development, limited job opportunities, inadequate research conditions in higher educational institutions, and various institutional and infrastructural challenges. While tuition fees at foreign universities in the developed world can be relatively high—requiring at least ₹20 lakh annually—some countries, like those in the former Soviet Union and the Balkans, offer comparatively lower tuition costs.

George and Menon (2023) *The Withering of Kerala's Higher Education Sectors*, The transformation of labor markets has created several concerns for policymakers in Kerala's higher education sector, including skill mismatches, student migration, and vacant seats in higher educational institutions. These are some of the most pressing issues threatening the progress achieved in the sector so far. It is crucial for policymakers to address these challenges and consider all possible suggestions to enhance the higher education sector, which is closely linked to global labor markets.

2.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

To understand student migration from a sociological perspective, we can apply various theoretical frameworks.

1. World-Systems Theory

Immanuel Wallerstein's *World-Systems Theory* is useful for understanding the global inequalities that drive migration. It posits that the world is divided into core, semi-periphery, and periphery nations. Core countries (e.g., the US, UK, and European nations) benefit from a

global system that exploits the labor and resources of periphery and semi-periphery countries. In this context, student migration from Kerala can be seen as a movement from a semi-periphery (India) to core nations for better education and economic opportunities, reinforcing global inequalities while offering temporary upward mobility.

2. Push-Pull Theory

Push-Pull Theory, initially formulated by Lee (1966), provides a framework for analyzing the factors influencing migration decisions. The "push" factors in Kerala include dissatisfaction with local education, limited employment opportunities, and socio-economic constraints. The "pull" factors in European countries and other destinations involve the availability of quality education, better economic prospects, and the potential for social mobility. This theory highlights how structural conditions in both the sending and receiving countries influence migration.

3. Human Capital Theory

This theory suggests that individuals migrate to enhance their "human capital" — education, skills, and experience — which in turn increases their value in the labor market. Students from Kerala view migration as an investment in their future earning potential, believing that foreign education provides better returns than staying in Kerala. This theory focuses on the rational decision-making processes of individuals based on economic self-interest.

5. Cultural Capital Theory

Pierre Bourdieu's concept of *Cultural Capital* can be applied to student migration to understand how education abroad is not just an economic decision but also a means of acquiring cultural capital. A foreign degree might provide students with social status, global cultural exposure, and symbolic capital that can enhance their social mobility both within and outside of India.

6. Transnationalism

Transnationalism refers to the process by which migrants create and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement. Kerala students studying abroad often maintain ties with their home communities while forming connections in their host countries. This theory helps explain how students manage their identities, adapt culturally, and navigate between different socio-cultural settings while maintaining a transnational lifestyle.

Each of these frameworks provides a different lens for analyzing the complexities of student migration from Kerala to foreign countries.

2.1 RESEARCH GAP

There is a notable gap in the current research concerning the effects of studying abroad on students beyond their academic achievements and professional goals. Specifically, there is limited exploration of the significant personal, social, and intellectual changes that occur when students migrate for education. The existing literature does not adequately examine how exposure to diverse cultures, the formation of global networks, and the challenges of adapting to new environments contribute to overall personal development and shape future career paths. Furthermore, although some studies mention challenges such as discrimination and language barriers, they do not thoroughly investigate how these experiences impact students' long-term integration, sense of identity, and ability to navigate multicultural settings.

To address this gap, the current study focuses on the varied effects of studying abroad, with particular attention to the personal, social, and intellectual transformations that students undergo. It delves into the lived experiences of these individuals, exploring how international education influences their communication skills, adaptability, independence, and future societal contributions. By doing so, this study offers a more comprehensive understanding of both the benefits and challenges associated with student migration, ultimately contributing to a more holistic view of its impact on individuals and the socio-economic landscape of Kerala. Therefore, very few studies have been conducted to better understand the social and cultural components of migration, such as discrimination, language barriers, and adaptation to the destination country's culture. This study not only focusses on the basic characteristics, but also explores the social and cultural aspects of migration, as well as the challenges that students who have migrated face.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Research methodology refers to the logical and systematic process employed to address a research problem effectively, ensuring that the research objectives are met through valid and reliable results. It encompasses the various methods, strategies, and procedures used in the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data. This chapter provides a detailed explanation of the methodologies applied in the study, highlighting the steps taken to ensure the research design and data management process. The chapter outlines the specific approaches used to gather and analyse data relevant to the research objectives, ensuring that the findings are both credible and actionable.

3.2 TITLE OF THE STUDY

UNDERSTANDING THE SOCIAL CHALLENGES AND LIVED REALITIES OF YOUTH MIGRATED ABROAD

3.3 OBJECTIVES

GENERAL OBJECTIVE

To explore the challenges and lived realities of students migrated to foreign countries from Kerala for higher education.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

To investigate the factors influencing students' decisions to migrate abroad for higher education.

To examine the academic prospects available to youth migrating for higher studies abroad.

To examine the socio-cultural challenges faced by youth migrating for higher education, including issues related to cultural differences, language barriers and discrimination.

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

The study follows a **quantitative research approach**, utilizing a **cross-sectional research design** to systematically collect and analyze numerical data related to student migration for higher education. A **cross-sectional design** is ideal for observing and capturing a snapshot of a particular phenomenon within a population at a specific point in time. In this study, it allows

for the examination of factors influencing students' migration decisions, their academic prospects, and the socio-cultural challenges they face abroad.

The cross-sectional design involves the **collection of data from a defined population or a representative sample** using structured methods such as surveys and questionnaires. The primary objective is to provide a comprehensive overview of the phenomenon under study, which, in this case, is student migration from Kerala. The design allows for the identification and comparison of different variables—such as behaviors, attitudes, socio-economic backgrounds, and academic goals—across the sample.

Quantitative data is gathered to provide statistical insights into migration patterns, reasons for migration, and the socio-cultural challenges students face in foreign educational settings. SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) is employed for data analysis, enabling the study to handle large datasets, perform descriptive statistics, and explore potential relationships between variables.

The findings are then presented through tables, charts, graphs, and written descriptions, providing a visual and narrative explanation of the data. These representations help to illustrate key trends, associations, and prevalence rates within the data set, giving clarity to the patterns identified.

However, while **cross-sectional studies** are effective in identifying patterns and associations, they have limitations in establishing causality. Since data is collected at one point in time, it does not allow for tracking changes or developments over time. As a result, while the study can highlight correlations between variables (e.g., migration decisions and academic success), it cannot definitively determine the causes behind those correlations. Despite this, the cross-sectional design remains valuable in **social sciences, public health, and epidemiology** for gaining timely insights into specific issues or phenomena as they exist at a given moment.

By utilizing this approach, the study offers a clear and precise snapshot of the factors driving student migration from Kerala, the educational prospects available abroad, and the socio-cultural challenges faced by students. The **limitations** of this design are acknowledged and discussed, ensuring transparency in the study's scope and the interpretation of its findings.

3.5 SAMPLING

This study employed snowball sampling, a non-probability sampling technique that is particularly useful when studying populations that are difficult to access or locate. Snowball sampling begins with a small group of initial participants—known as "seeds"—who are selected based on specific criteria relevant to the research. These initial participants then assist the researcher in recruiting further participants from among their acquaintances or networks, thus creating a "snowball" effect as the sample size increases. In the context of this study, which focuses on the prospects and challenges of youth who have migrated for higher studies, snowball sampling was an appropriate choice. Migration, especially for educational purposes, can be a dispersed and somewhat hard-to-reach phenomenon, with participants spread across different countries and institutions. The networks of initial participants facilitated access to additional respondents who met the study's criteria. A total of 63 respondents were recruited using this method. These participants were students who had migrated abroad for higher education from Kerala. They represented various age groups, allowing the study to capture a diverse range of experiences related to student migration. The inclusion of students from different educational stages and demographic backgrounds enhanced the study's ability to analyze the factors influencing migration, as well as the academic and socio-cultural challenges faced by individuals at different points in their academic journeys.

3.6 SOURCES OF DATA

The study utilized both primary and secondary data to provide a comprehensive understanding of the prospects and challenges faced by students migrating abroad for higher education.

Primary Data

The primary data was collected through a self-prepared questionnaire designed by the researcher. The questionnaire was structured to gather detailed information on various aspects of student migration, including the motivations for migration, academic opportunities, and the socio-cultural challenges experienced in foreign countries. The questions were formulated to ensure clarity and relevance, aiming to capture both quantitative and qualitative responses from the participants. The questionnaire was distributed to the 63 respondents, all of whom had migrated from Kerala for higher studies. Their responses provided first-hand insights into their personal experiences, academic journeys, and the socio-cultural adjustments they faced while studying abroad.

Secondary data

The secondary data was sourced from a wide range of academic and non-academic materials, including: Journals, Internet Sources, Articles and Magazines and Scholarly books on migration studies, sociology of education, and related topics were used to support the theoretical framework and contextual understanding of the phenomenon.

3.7 TOOLS OF DATA COLLECTION

To collect primary data, the researcher designed a questionnaire and distributed it through Google Forms, leveraging its digital capabilities to streamline data collection and organization for later analysis. By utilizing Google Forms, the researcher created a user-friendly online platform that enabled respondents to conveniently and efficiently complete the questionnaire, simplifying the data collection. The questionnaire covers every aspect of the objectives.

3.8 TOOLS OF DATA ANALYSIS

For data analysis, the researcher relied on the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software, which offered advanced statistical tools to scrutinize the collected data. Descriptive statistics was used. Descriptive statistics helped summarize and describe the key characteristics of the data, while inferential statistics facilitated the drawing of conclusions, predictions, about the population, based on the sample data.

3.9 PILOT STUDY

A pilot study is a small-scale exploratory investigation that helps researchers assess the feasibility of a larger study. It is used to test research protocols, data collection instruments, sample recruitment strategies, and other research techniques in preparation for a larger study. Pilot study is a crucial phase of a research project, which is carried out to find any possible flaws or issue areas in the protocol and research tools before they are used in the main study. Pilot study was conducted among 4 respondents to check the feasibility of the research. Questionnaire was used to collect data it is conducted in order to examine the scope and feasibility of the study. It was carried out to get a clear picture on the understanding the social challenges and lived realities of the youth that have migrated abroad.

3.10 PRE-TEST

After designing the questionnaire, the researcher tested its validity to see if the scales it contained produced the desired results. The purpose of the test was to find any problems, including response latency, incomplete responses, and any misunderstandings about the

questionnaire's first questions. The validity test played a pivotal role in identifying and resolving these issues, guaranteeing the precision and dependability of the gathered information.

CHAPTER IV

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

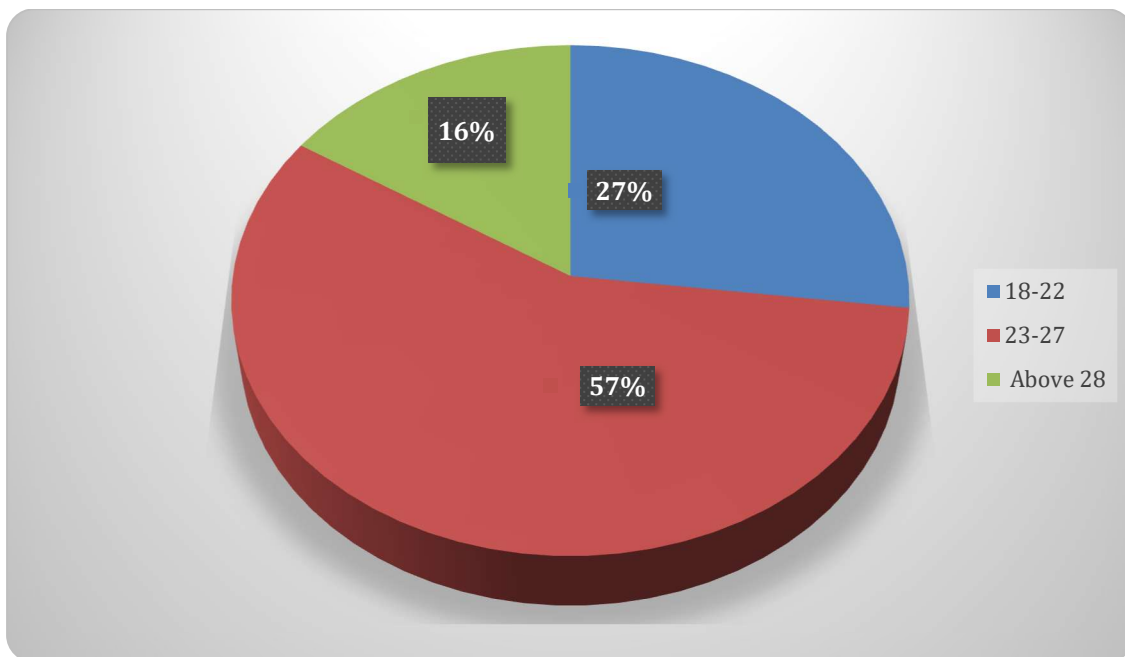
4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the analysis and interpretation of data using SPSS and Microsoft Excel. The data was collected from the students who had migrated to overseas for higher education and the data was collected using questionnaire through Google forms. The data analysis aimed to cover the experiences, challenges and outcomes of international student migration.

4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

The demographic variables considered for the study are age, gender and educational qualification.

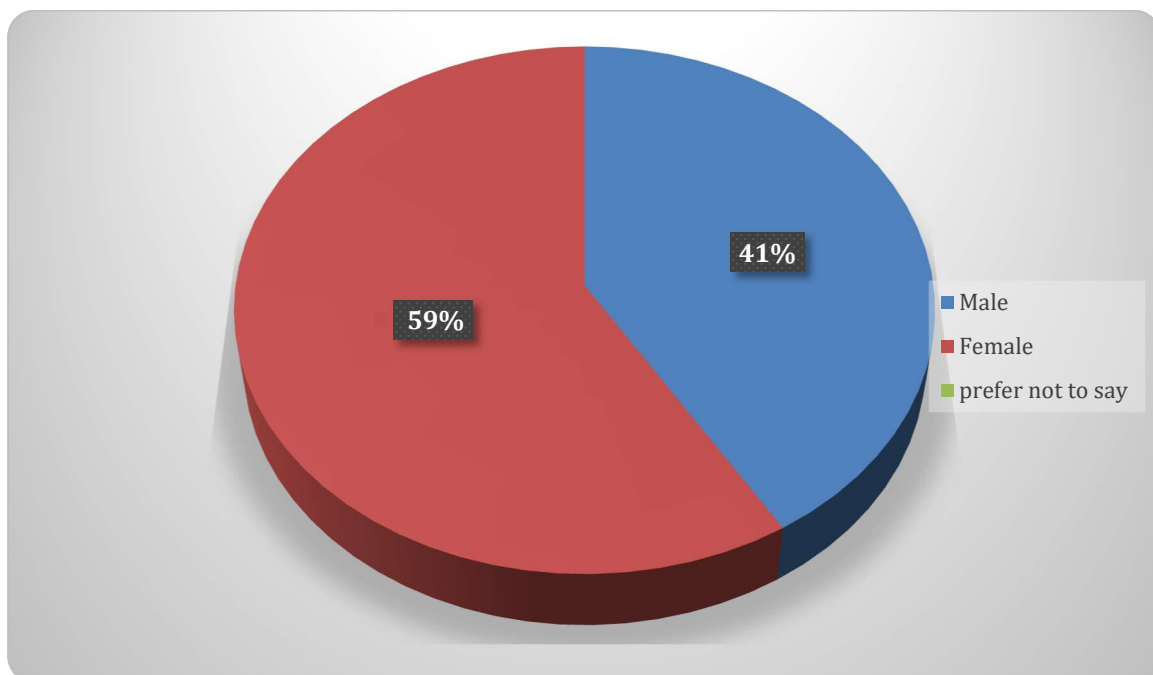
Figure 4.1. Age of the respondents



The age distribution of international students shows interesting spots in it. The major part, 57%, goes to the category 23–27 years old, which hence only represent the great group of young matured postgraduates or just newcomers in the working life. The members of this age group likely have increased motivation for personal and professional growth, which is pursued by the decision to get higher education abroad. At the same time, 27% of students fall within the age of 18-22, showing that a good proportion of undergraduate students or learners who have recently completed school are interested in international education. This age group is likely to

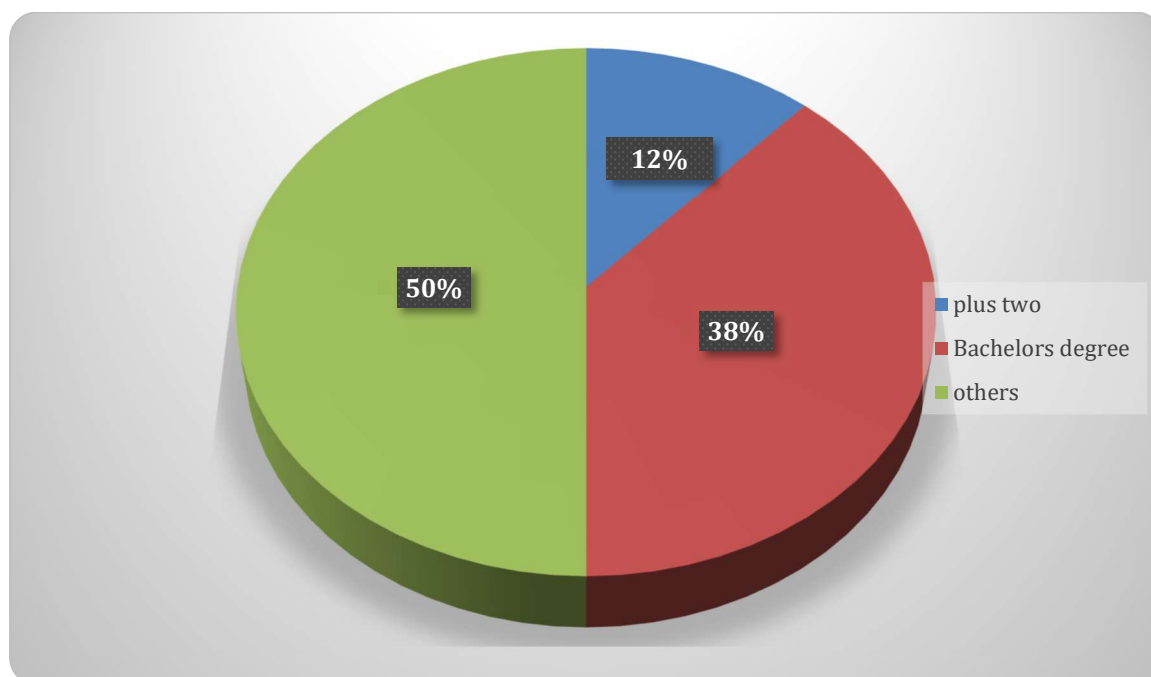
be highly influenced by family or societal expectations and, in a large sense, the migration experience would be driven by desires to be independent and experience self-discovery. More conspicuously, students who are over 28 years make up 16%, and this represents a smaller albeit significant group of mature students who more likely are into work experience and seeking to augment their careers or on the lookout for field shifts. Some particular difficulties may result in this trailing age group, such as a need to combine family or work commitments with rhetoric learning. The age distribution suggests that international students migrate not only as an effort belonging just to the group of young adults in life but as an effort belonging to a varied group of people in different stages of life. Knowledge of the workings in age-related dynamics will serve to develop support services and policies for both groups to meet specific needs for increased prolonged experience and benefits of migration. In understanding the complexities of age within international student migration, this recognition leads to the possibility of making education and policies more inclusive and supportive of students

Figure 4.2. Gender of the respondents



The gender distribution of international students reveals a notable majority of females (59%) compared to males (41%). This suggests that women are disproportionately represented in international student migration, potentially indicating greater autonomy, academic aspirations, or career ambitions among female students. Alternatively, this imbalance may reflect societal or cultural factors influencing males' access to education or migration opportunities

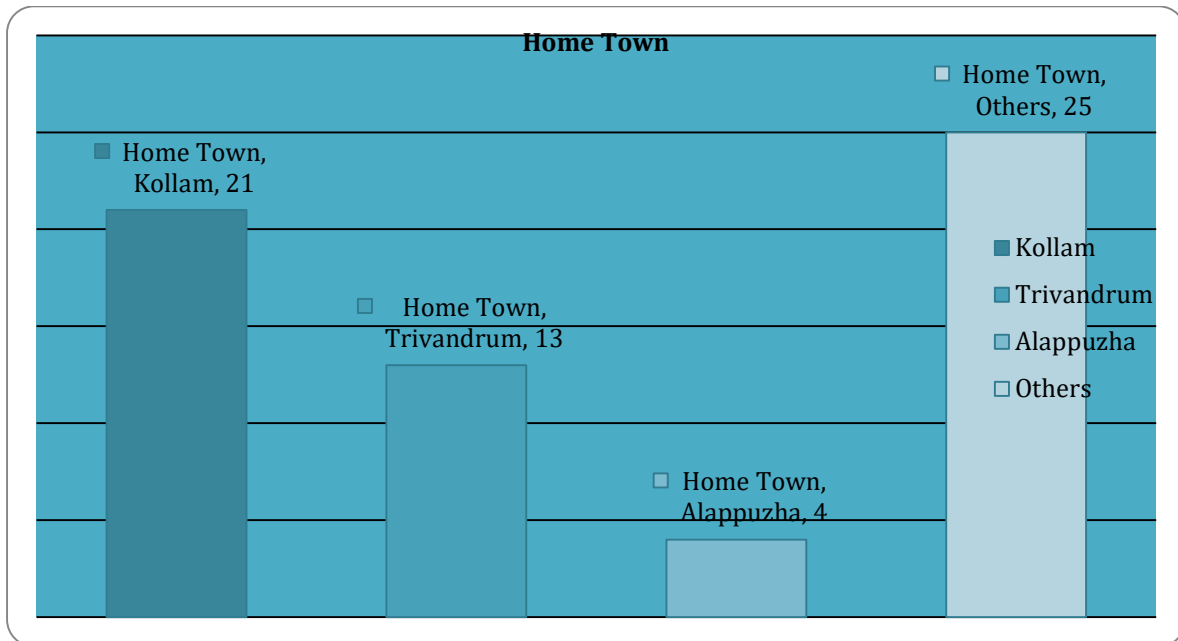
Figure 4. 3.Educational qualification



The analysis of international students' academic qualifications before and after migration reveals a diverse range of backgrounds. Notably, 12% of students migrated with a Plus Two qualification, indicating a group of individuals who pursued higher education abroad immediately after completing secondary school. In contrast, 38% of students held a Bachelor's degree before migrating, suggesting a significant proportion of individuals seeking postgraduate education or career opportunities. The remaining 50% fall under the "others" category, comprising students with vocational training, diploma holders, or those who pursued alternative educational paths. This subgroup's diversity may reflect varying motivations for migration, such as language training, cultural exchange, or personal development. The distribution suggests that international student migration is driven by a range of factors beyond academic pursuits, including personal and professional goals. Understanding these differences is crucial for developing targeted support services and policies that cater to the unique needs of each subgroup, ultimately promoting successful integration and outcomes. By recognizing the varied academic backgrounds and motivations of international students, educators and policymakers can create more inclusive and supportive environments that foster academic success, personal growth, and career advancement.

4.3 FACTORS INFLUENCING STUDENTS CHOICE TO MIGRATE

Figure 4.4: county of origin

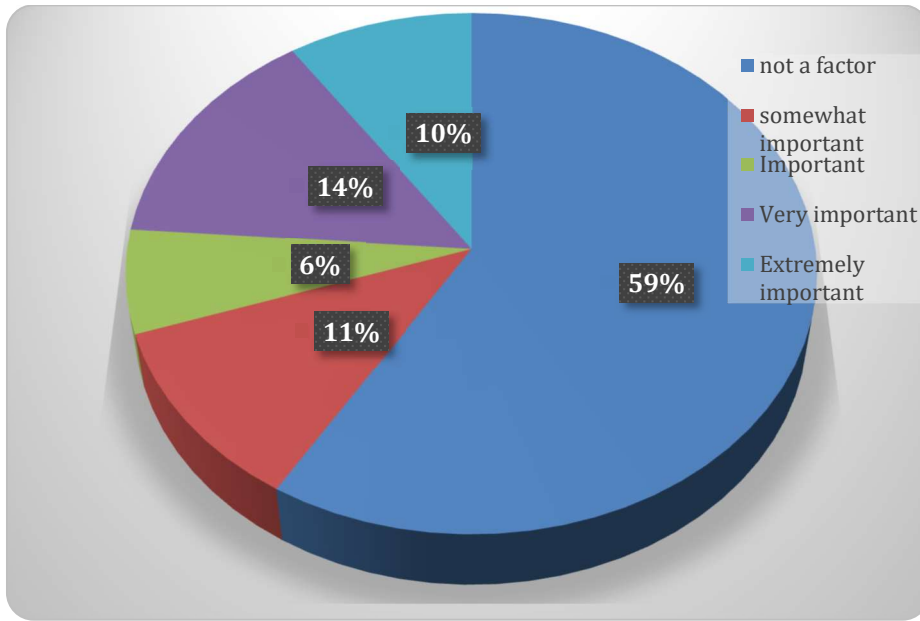


The distribution of students across districts reveals a notable variation, with Kollam district having the highest representation (21 out of 63, approximately 33%), followed by Trivandrum (13, approximately 21%), and Alappuzha (4, approximately 6%). Interestingly, a significant proportion of students (25, approximately 40%) hail from other districts, indicating a diverse geographic representation. This suggests that while Kollam and Trivandrum districts have a strong presence, the research also draws from a broader area of students across various districts, lending a degree of generalizability to the findings. The diversity of the sample ensures that the findings are more widely applicable

Educational cost in home country

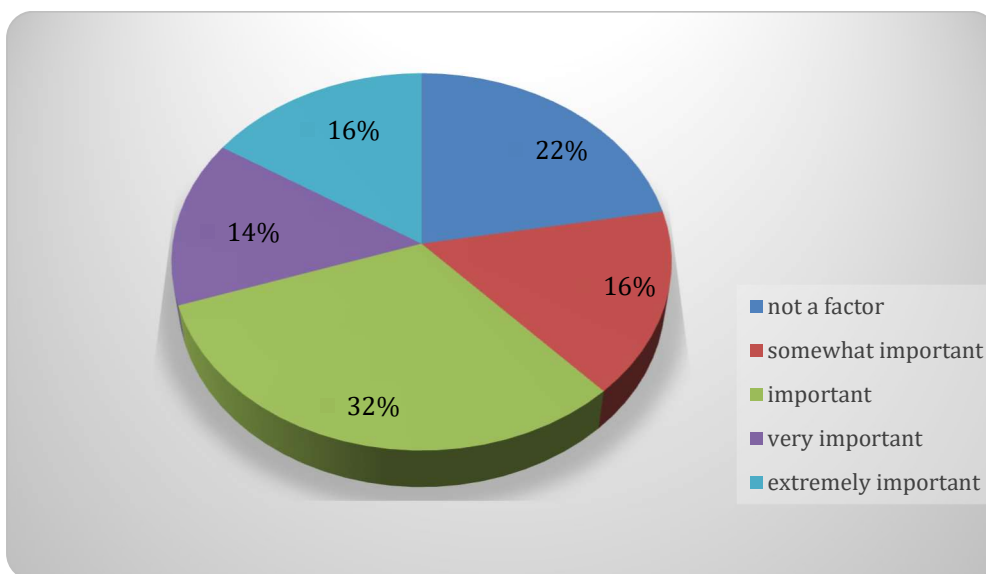
Youth migration for higher studies abroad has become a significant phenomenon globally, with various factors influencing individuals' decisions to migrate. While a majority (59 %) of respondents do not prioritize education costs when deciding to migrate, instead focusing on factors like academic quality, program offerings, location, career opportunities, and personal growth, a notable minority (30%) consider education costs important, with varying levels of influence on their decisions. This subgroup weighs costs against other benefits, with some prioritizing affordability above other considerations, highlighting the need for institutions and policymakers to consider pricing and financial aid when attracting international students.

Figure 4.5: Educational cost in home country



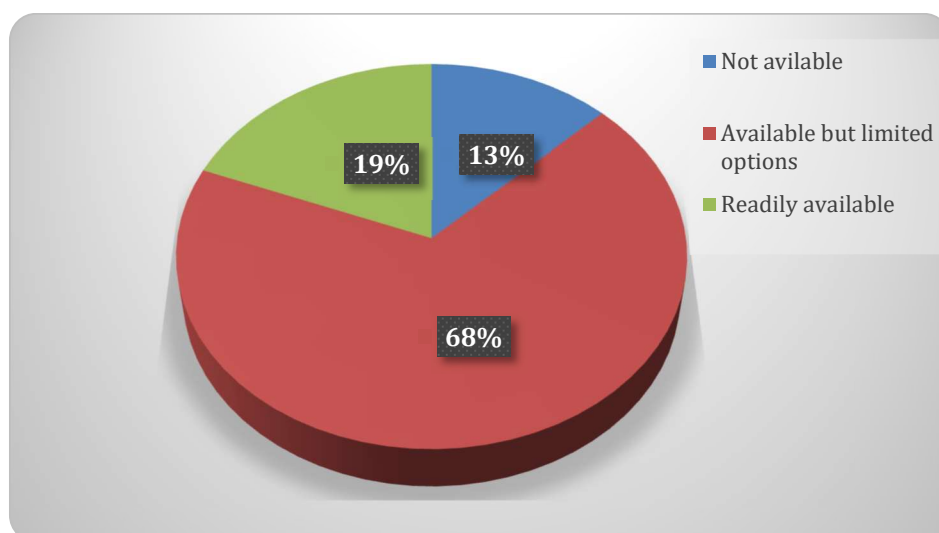
Understanding the varied influence of education costs can help stakeholders tailor their approaches to meet diverse needs and priorities, ultimately supporting informed decision-making among potential migrants. By recognizing the complex interplay of factors driving youth migration for higher studies abroad, stakeholders can develop effective strategies to attract and support international students, fostering global academic collaboration and talent mobility.

Figure 4. 6: Educational quality in home country



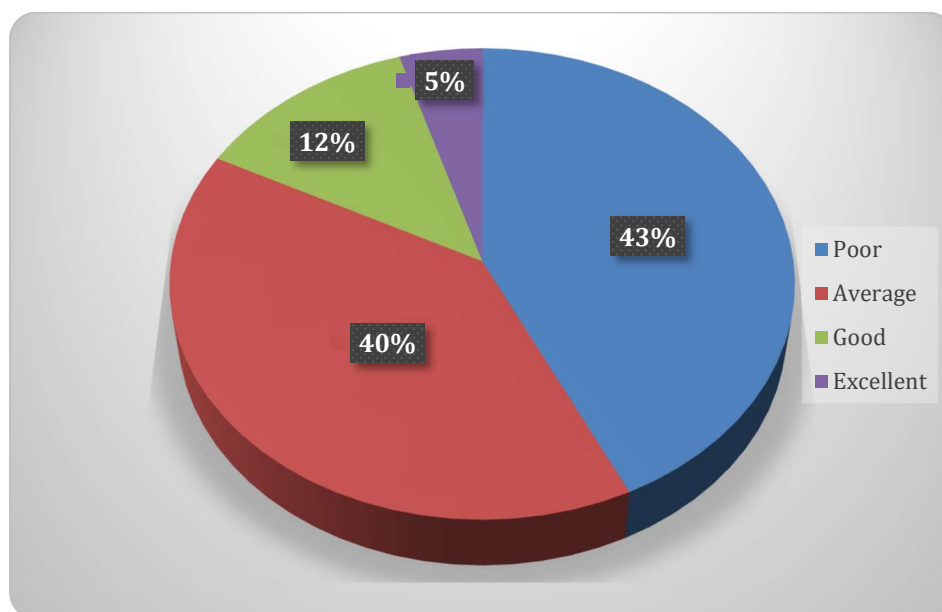
The quality of education in one's area that is offered in the home country is a very important factor to many people who intend to migrate for higher studies. Whereas 32% rated this as important, 14% rated it as very important. This indicates that quite a large percentage of people would prefer the standards of education as a basis of choice for studying. For most, the need and aspiration for good education are definitely coupled with the requirement for specialized knowledge and skills that may not be easily available within the homeland. This could be due to a lack of resources, the adoption of obsolete curricula, or even a lack of competence in those areas. Due to this, a candidate may look toward foreign institutions that have advanced programs, up-to-date research facilities, and a staff that commands respect in the relevant field. It is further underlined by the fact that 16% of the respondents view educational quality as extremely important. It indicates that among a significant minority, there may be an all-or-nothing attitude toward moving based on the quality of education available. These people may be prepared to travel any distance to obtain the best educational facilities available if need be. The stress on quality in education also brings out the aspirational nature of many migrants. They do not strive for any type of degree but to obtain quality education, which would equip them with proper skills, knowledge, and credentials in their chosen sphere of activity. That desire for excellence impels them to access the best possible education, even if it means reaching out beyond one's national borders. Therefore, the good quality of education in the chosen area is a main point for many who consider migration for higher studies. The fact that most respondents attach importance or extreme importance to this factor underlines the value that is given to high educational standards. Facilitated by knowledge of this driver of migration, stakeholders can design strategies to attract and support aspiring students who eventually will contribute to the development of knowledge and talents all over the world

Figure 4.7: Availability of desired field of study



One of the major constraints, according to most students, is the limited availability of desired fields of study in one's home country; 68% indicate that few options are available. From this statistic, it means that a big majority of people are constrained from pursuing their specific interests within the borders and have to seek options elsewhere. These can include limited resources, backward curricula, or even a lack of specialized programs in very niche areas. This will, therefore, potentially render such a student not able to apply their passion or career aspirations in their own country, therefore, making them frustrated and full of disappointment. This may also be the reason or the initial cause of brain drain as a result of the advanced choices that are available in countries with a highly specialized and intensive educational structure and curriculum. This could, in turn, aggravate the problems of disparity that already exists in the sector as students from more privileged backgrounds would have more access to means and information concerning foreign educational programs, and those from an underprivileged background will fall behind. This can result in such significant longitudinal effects as diminished academic enjoyment, fewer career options, and decreased prospects for economic growth. Recognizing the narrow options in education domestically, policymakers and educators may assist in narrowing these divides by encouraging programs that meet the diverse needs and interests of students while simultaneously facilitating those who desire to attend elsewhere to meet their academic goals.

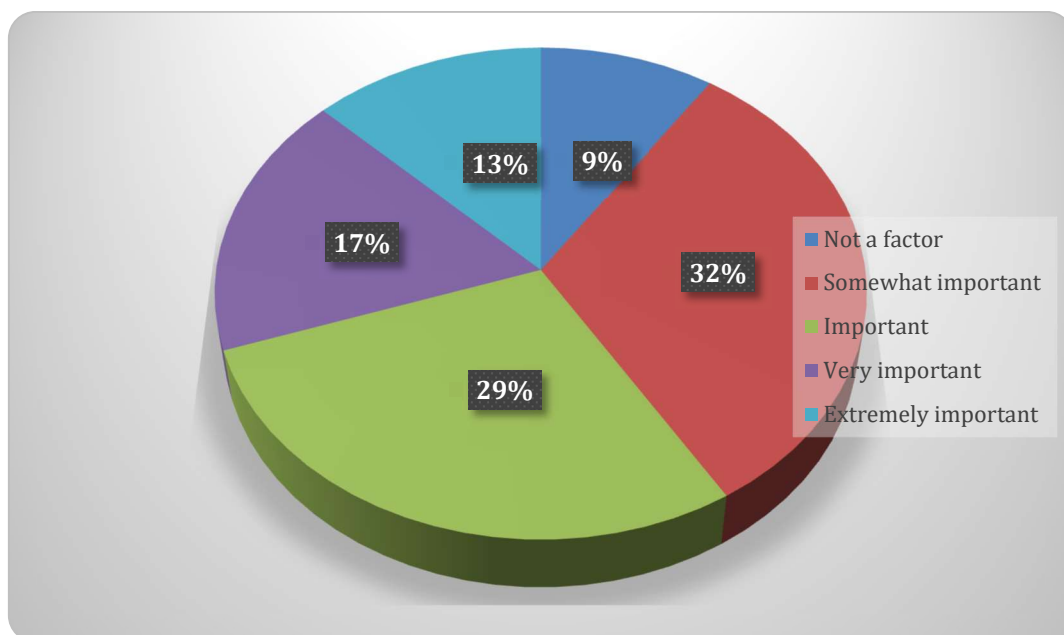
Figure 4.8: Employment opportunities in home country



Here very few has of the view that there are employment opportunities open to them in their home countries after graduation. Large majorities express pessimism about job prospects. A full 43% of the students rated the employment opportunities as poor, indicating widespread

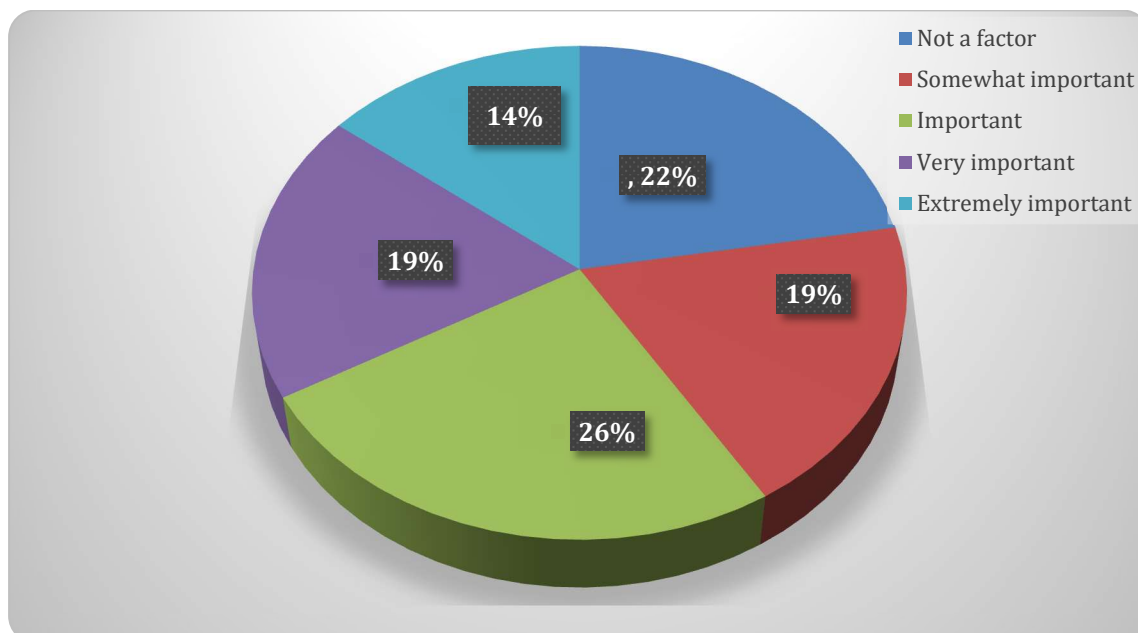
despondency and disillusionment among recent graduates. , An additional 40% of respondents feel that the job market is average suggesting that even those who do not view the situation as being dire recognize that there is quite a bit of room for improvement .On the other hand, 12% of respondents think that employment opportunities are good, thus pointing out the hard fact that this optimism is replaced by a small minority of reality among the graduates. The skewed distribution of responses underlines the tough job market that a few minority of recent graduates face in their home country. Poor perception about the job situation is likely caused by multifaceted factors: lack of jobs, high competition for any available jobs, or poor correspondence of graduate capabilities to employer requirements. Among other outcomes, such poor perception is likely to lead to increased stress, anxiety, and uncertainty among new graduates experiencing a compelling need to look for alternatives that enhance their employability, like migration or more education. Additionally, the overall economy and society stand to suffer since a large section of trained and educated people remains untapped or underemployed. Not only will there tend to be a brain drain of talented people leaving the country for better pastures, but the loss of investment in human capital, whereby the graduate fails to give back to the country in terms of economic growth and development, will occur. By realizing the difficulties that recent graduates are facing in the job market, policymakers and stakeholders can work in a manner that will thus address the mentioned challenges and make it a better place for the graduates to live and positively impact their home country’s economy.

Figure 4.9:Socio economic conditions in home country



Socio-economic factors such as poverty and political instability at home play an important role in shaping an individual's decision to migrate for higher studies; as majority of the respondents view these as important, wherein 32% consider them somewhat important, 17% very important, 29% important, and another 13% as very or extremely important. An overwhelming majority of the responses show how socioeconomic conditions can drastically affect the choices which people make. Harsh realities of poverty and political instability can suffocate academic growth, making people seek out better opportunities elsewhere. Lack of access to quality education, resources, and opportunities can retard the potential of people; political instability can also bring about uncertainty, insecurity, and disrupt the academic atmosphere. Hence, this might give talented people no alternative but to migrate to other more stable and supportive environments, thus leading to a brain drain. On the other hand, a small minority of 9.5% said that the socio-economic conditions were not important, probably because these respondents are in positions where they have the means or resources to make these less painful. In any case, for the overwhelming majority, socio-economic conditions are important reasons to migrate. In fact, it is in recognition of this importance that policymakers and relevant stakeholders will strive to create an enabling environment for academic pursuits, trying to address the fundamental factors driving migration and working toward talent retention

Figure 4. 10: Personal safety concerns

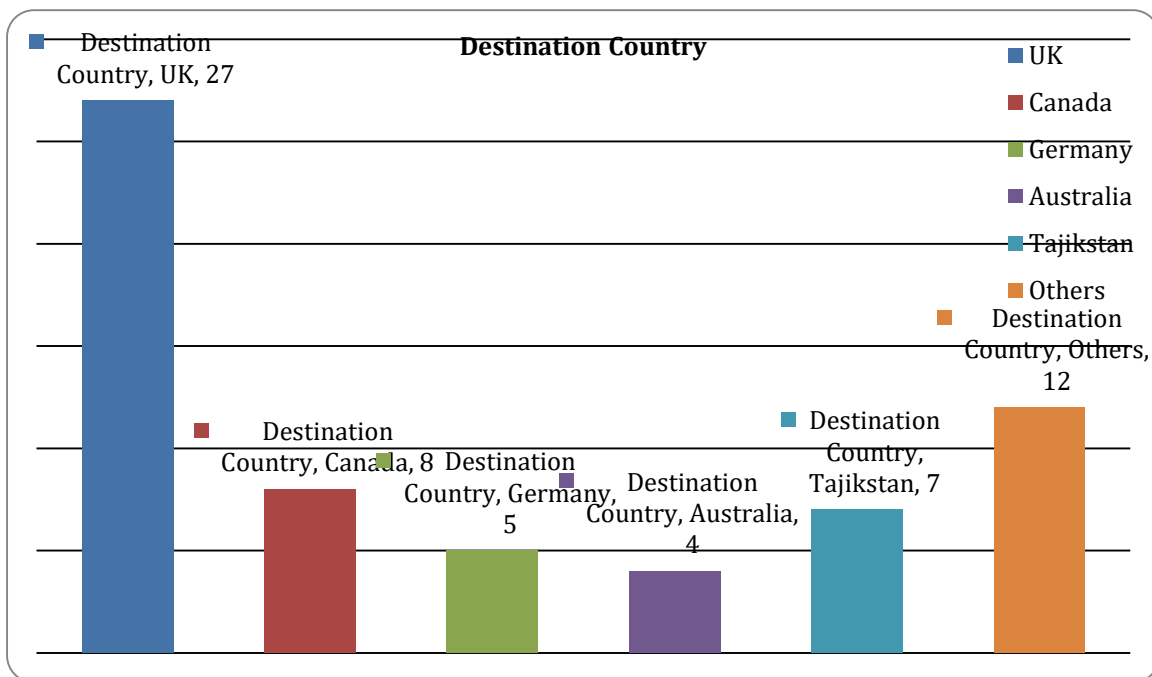


Personal safety in houses is a major matter for many individuals; of those surveyed, 25.4% believe it to be important, 33.3% believe it to be very or extremely important, and 22.2%

disagree. This suggests that a lot of individuals are concerned about their safety. People who live in unstable countries may feel more exposed and fearful, which makes them search for safer places to study. Issues with personal safety can be linked to issues pertaining to crime, violence, terrorism, political upheaval, or pretty much anything that poses a significant risk and makes it challenging to focus on academics or feel at ease in one's surroundings. Because people may relocate to another nation in quest of safer and more stable conditions, personal safety is always important when making decisions. This could have an impact on immigration and education policy. After this facility is recognized, policymakers and educational institutions can focus on improving safety concerns and implementing more welcoming and safe environments for students.

4.4 ACADEMIC PROSPECTS AVAILABLE TO YOUTH IN ABROAD

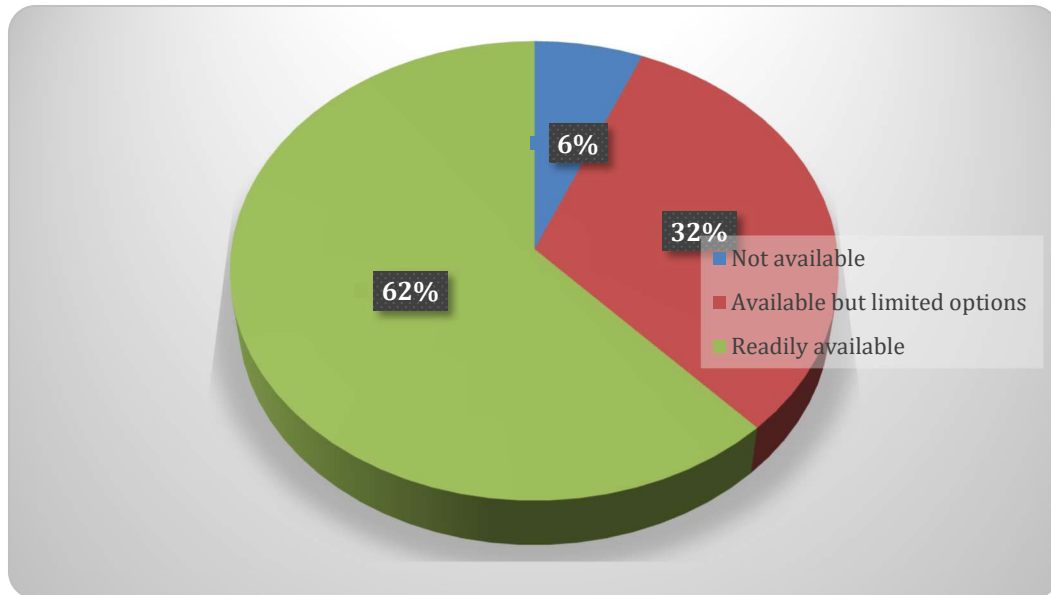
Figure 4.11: Destination country



The statistics showed that the majority of the respondents moved to the United Kingdom, with 27 students out of 63. 8 students were found to have gone to Canada in search of education, where it was discovered that it has a more liberal climate, with easier immigration processes and more post-study work prospects. Five students were found to have gone to Germany, which has a robust economy, innovative research, and a more encouraging environment for academic accomplishment. Australia is another country to which students have shifted because it provides greater academic quality and higher living conditions, attracting students to the country. Tajikistan was also a key country where students migrated in large numbers. Overall,

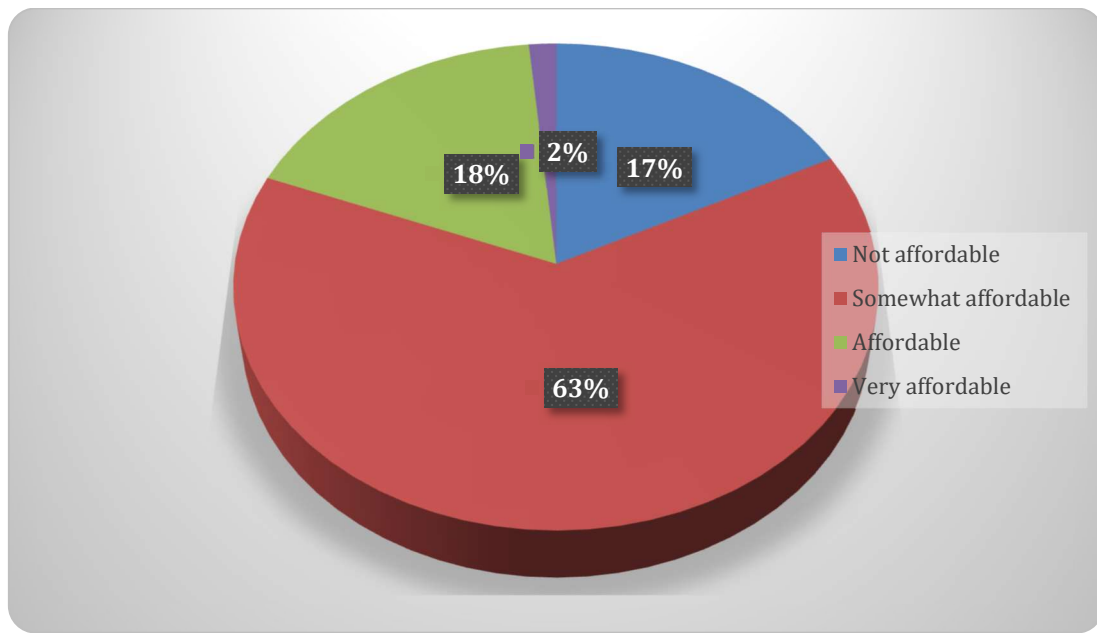
as students find a greater opportunity and academic quality in these nations, they migrate, and the data show a clear trend in which students choose specific countries.

Figure 4.12: Availability of desired field of study in destination country



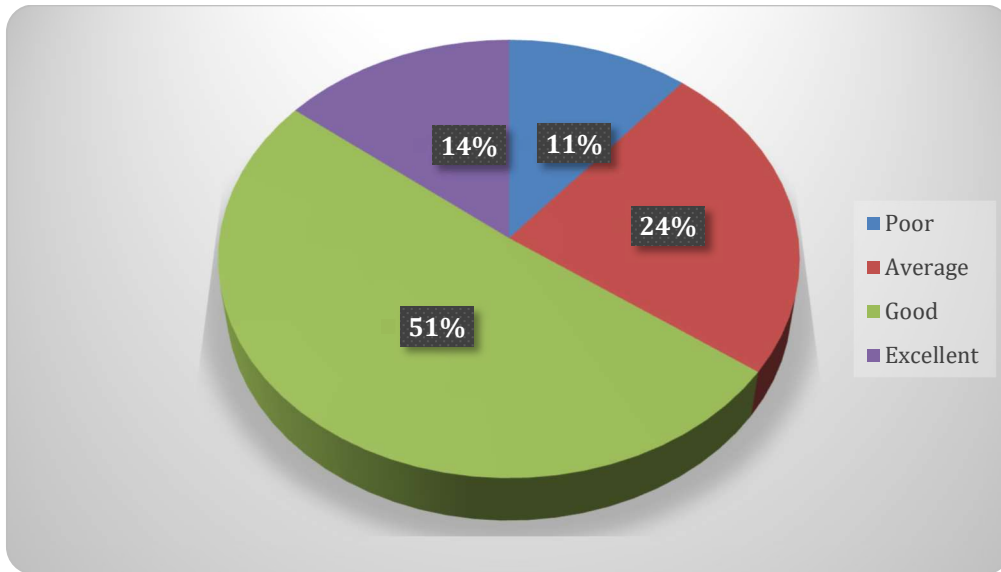
This shows the expectations of many students for whom the availability of the fields of interest in the destination country is a prime factor for migration for higher education. Fortunately, more than half of the respondents (62%) report that the desired fields of study are readily available in the destination country, which speaks to a supportive academic environment. It suggests that, for many students, this implies ample opportunities to pursue their academic interests abroad, which under certain conditions can become a very significant pull factor in migration. In that respect, the availability of desired programs in a foreign country can offer access to specialized knowledge, advanced research, and highly regarded faculty, thus considerably improving their academic and professional potential. Moreover, the wide spectrum of programs available suits a very wide sphere of interests and professional goals, thus making the destination country more attractive for students seeking to widen their academic horizons. Again, a much smaller proportion of those answering the question indicated that there were limited options available, and while this shows that most students find the right kind of program some may still experience a constraint while pursuing a field of study of their choice. That said, the overall positive response does show that, on average, destination countries will provide a supportive academic environment for students to follow their passion in academics realize goals.

Figure 4. 13: Educational cost in destination country



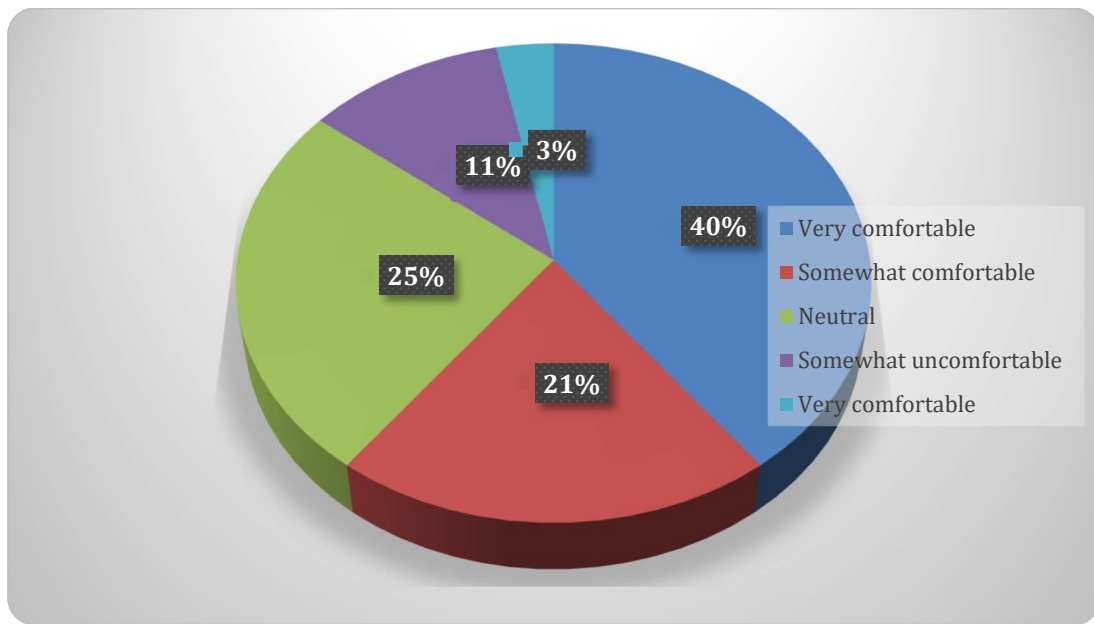
Most of the students, about 63%, found the cost of education in the destination country largely affordable, while 18% found it very unaffordable. This shows that the financial issue would, indeed, be a matter of concern to most of the students, while not a major challenge. This is even more telling as nearly two-thirds of the students surveyed find the fee reasonably affordable. This tells that a significant population of the students is willing to pay for the education, notwithstanding the cost as a burden on their finances. Similarly, the equal division of those that feel affordable and those who feel not affordable identifies a blend with diverse student financial background and priorities of students at the tertiary level. Likely some major role in making education abroad much more accessible will be played by scholarships, financial aid, and perhaps other forms of support as students find out ways to offset some expenses through them. This being a concern to many, support should be availed further by institutions and policymakers to confront the issue and be sure that fiscal challenges do not limit access to higher education because affordability is continuously a worry. It helps educators and policymakers target appropriate strategies to enhance accessibility and inclusiveness if they understand the financial considerations for international students. This is to foster a more diverse and vibrant academic community.

Figure 4. 14: Employment opportunities in destination country



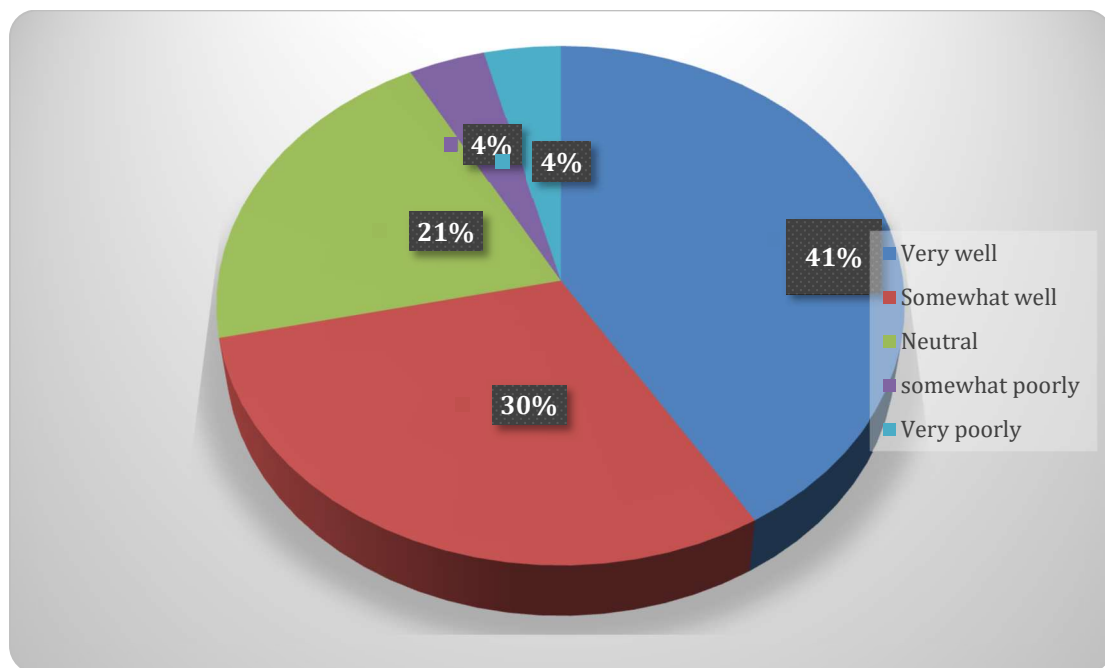
For the majority of the respondents, jobs in the destination country immediately after graduation are viewed positively, which indicates that there is a good job market waiting ahead for the graduates. In fact, in response to this question 51 percent judged the work opportunities as good, while 14 percent have found them to be excellent, hence showing that there is optimism and confidence of graduates about their career building. Moreover, 24% of the respondents consider the opportunities to be average, which points out that while people are not thoroughly satisfied, they believe the openings are there. There seems to be an overall positive sentiment that, yes, graduates do indeed feel quite well-equipped to enter the workforce and will land jobs related to their areas of study. These could be attributing factors: reputation of the educational establishments, the quality of education, and demand for skilled professionals in the destination country. A welcoming job market also underlines the fact that the destination country is a higher-education hub not only for students who want to attain knowledge but also for career prospects. By knowing these great perceptions about job opportunities, educators and policymakers can continue working on tailoring their programs to the requirements of the labor market. They will, in that way, be equipping graduates with the needed qualities necessary for success in their respective careers, hence contributing to the economy.

Figure 4.15: Comfort with teaching style



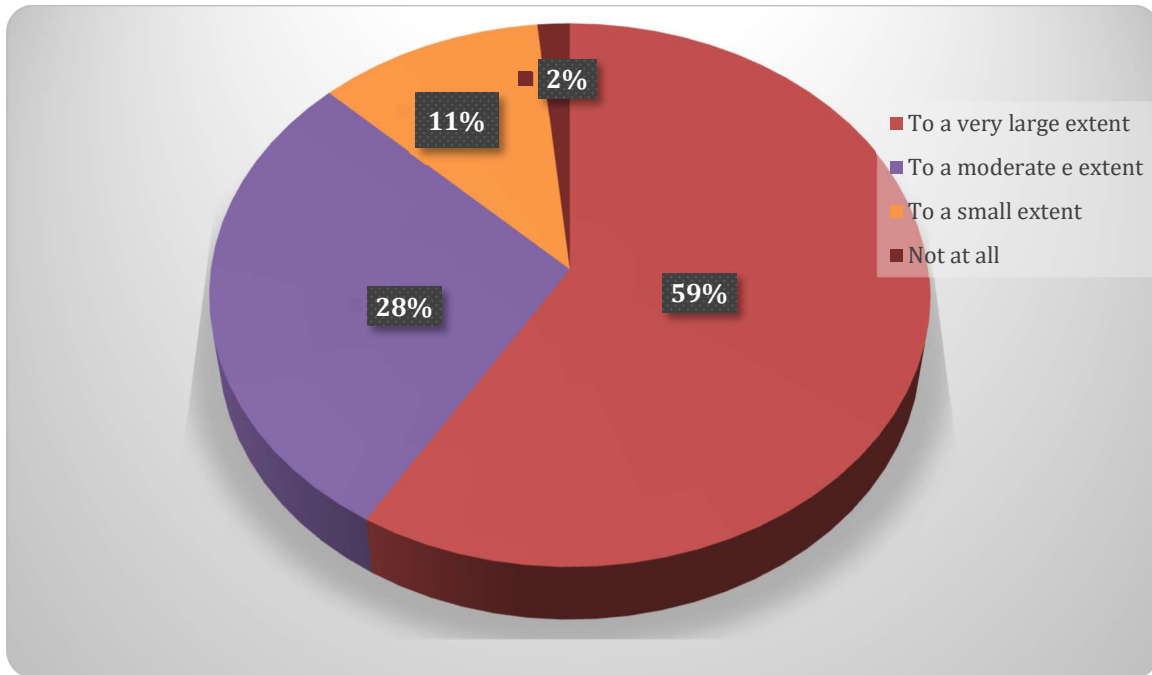
The comfort level with the teaching style and academic expectations in the destination country is remarkably high, indicating that most students feel positively about the academic environment abroad. A significant proportion of respondents (39.7%) feel very comfortable, while 20.6% are somewhat comfortable, highlighting the adaptability and openness of students to new academic settings. The fact that nearly two-thirds of respondents feel comfortable or very comfortable suggests that they are able to navigate the academic expectations and teaching styles with ease, which is crucial for academic success. Additionally, 25.4% of respondents report feeling neutral, indicating that while they may not be entirely comfortable, they are not significantly discomforted either. This neutrality may stem from a lack of familiarity or a need for adjustment, but it does not seem to hinder their overall academic experience. The high level of comfort can be attributed to various factors, including the quality of education, the supportiveness of faculty and peers, and the clarity of academic expectations. This positive perception of the academic environment suggests that students are able to thrive and reach their full potential in the destination country, making it an attractive option for those seeking higher education abroad. By understanding the comfort level of students, educators and policymakers can continue to refine their approaches to meet the needs of international students, fostering a supportive and inclusive academic community.

Figure 4. 16: Academic preparation abroad



The majority of students feel that their academic preparation from their home country has successfully translated to their studies abroad, demonstrating a high level of confidence in their foundational education. A significant proportion of respondents (41%) report that their academic preparation has served them very well, while 30% indicate it has done somewhat well, highlighting the effectiveness of their prior education in preparing them for international studies. This positive assessment suggests that students feel their home country’s education system has provided them with a solid foundation in critical thinking, problem-solving, and subject-specific knowledge, enabling them to adapt and excel in a foreign academic environment. The fact that over 70% of respondents feel their academic preparation has been successful indicates that they are able to build upon their existing knowledge and skills, rather than needing to bridge significant gaps. This confidence in their foundational education also underscores the value of international collaboration and standardization in education, suggesting that academic credentials and learning outcomes are increasingly recognized and respected across borders. By understanding the success of academic preparation, educators and policymakers can continue to refine their curricula and teaching methods, ensuring that students are well-equipped to thrive in an increasingly globalized higher education landscape.

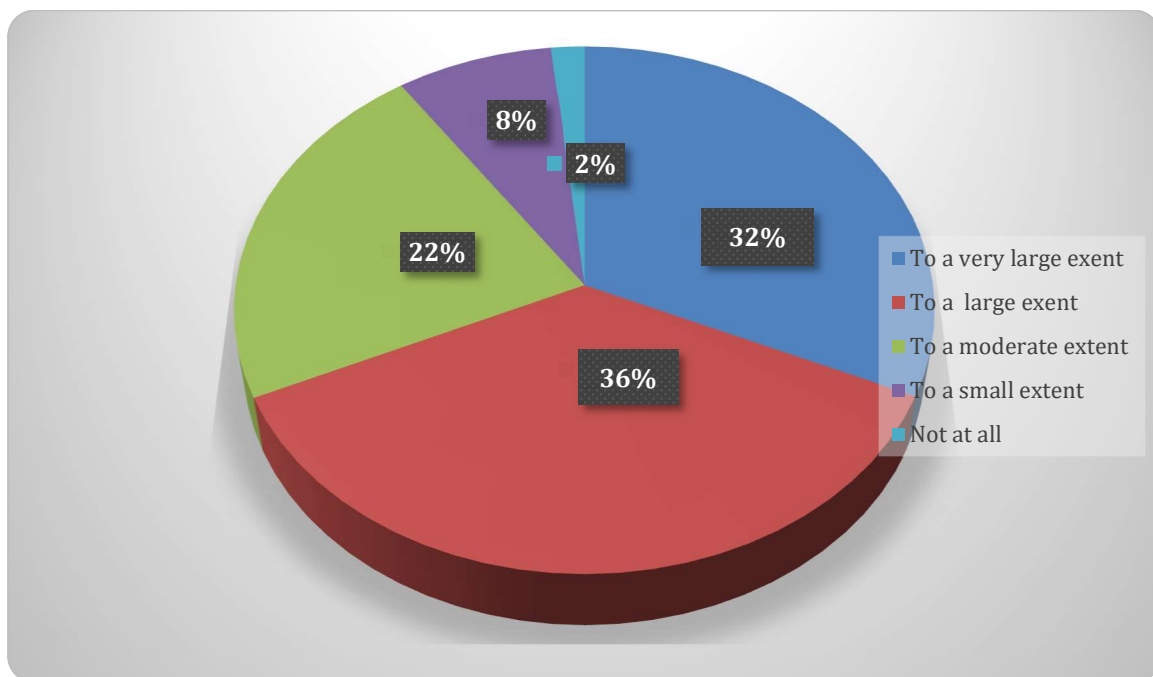
Figure 4.17: Enhancing Future earning potential



The data shows that there is a strong belief that studying abroad enhances future earning potential, as 59% agree it has increased "to a very large extent". Generally, bringing up with heterogeneity in cultures, languages, and educational systems equips students with more skills, making them more adaptable and competitive in the global job market. Employers often value international experience provided by studying abroad as a sign of independence, problem-solving ability, and competence in a variety of work environments and this will lead to better job prospects with higher salaries, as companies look for individuals capable of dealing with international markets and cross-cultural interactions. 28% judge that studying abroad improves earning prospects "to a moderate extent" and they believe that benefits exist but, again, depend upon things such as field of study, reputation of the foreign granting institution, or local economic conditions. For this group the effect is moderate, which may be due to other obstacles such as the recognition of foreign qualifications in their local labour markets or entry-level financial expenses related to studying abroad, which reduce immediate financial return. However, the realization of higher earning potential supports, in general, a far more positive view regarding international education as an investment worth making in one's career. 11% of the respondents believe that studying abroad increases earning potential "to a small extent," whereas for 2%, it creates no difference at all. This is probably due to belief in the financial burden resulting from this process, such as student loans and other high living expenses that eventually delay the process of benefiting financially. While domestic education also opens

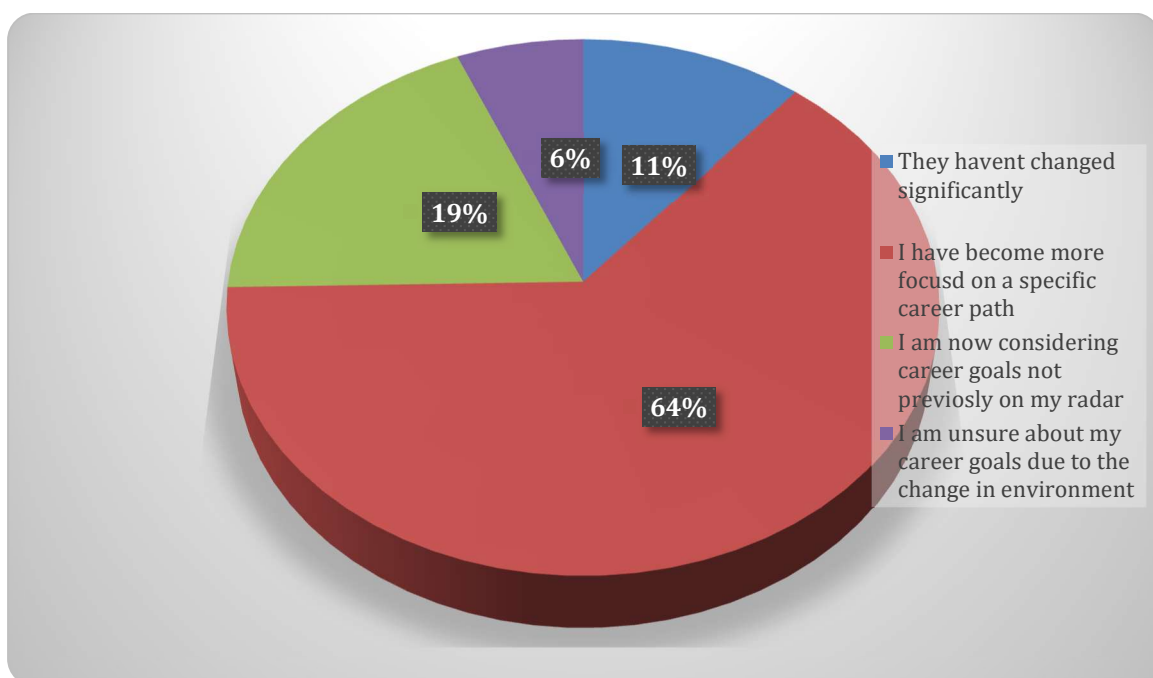
most of these doors, a number of them have also been noted to be highly dependent on local expertise and connections in areas where the kind of international exposure would serve as a victim. Not necessarily all benefits accruing from studying abroad would also turn into better-paying jobs where some competitive job markets constantly look for experience and may end up preferring 'locals' assuming to be better placed in local fora. For example, some industries may not reward it very much because, if the skill gained is not relevant to the job, they would not pay for it at its proper value. Evidence suggests that earning capacity is one of the major benefits widely attributed to studying abroad, but many do not privilege the same because of its impact on the general earning capacity of the individual. Those who think about huge benefits have considered some key areas like improved skills, international exposure boosting, and networking, all vital in increasing employability and salaries. The doubt of the smaller percent is reflected by the complexities and possible downsides, such as financial cost, job placement problems, and qualification transfer problems. While study abroad is ultimately an investment with potentially high rewards, the degree to which it enhances earning potential will depend on individual personal and professional circumstances, the field of study chosen, and also the degree to which the experience abroad is imposed effectively in the job-seeking process.

Figure 4.18: Becoming a competitive candidate



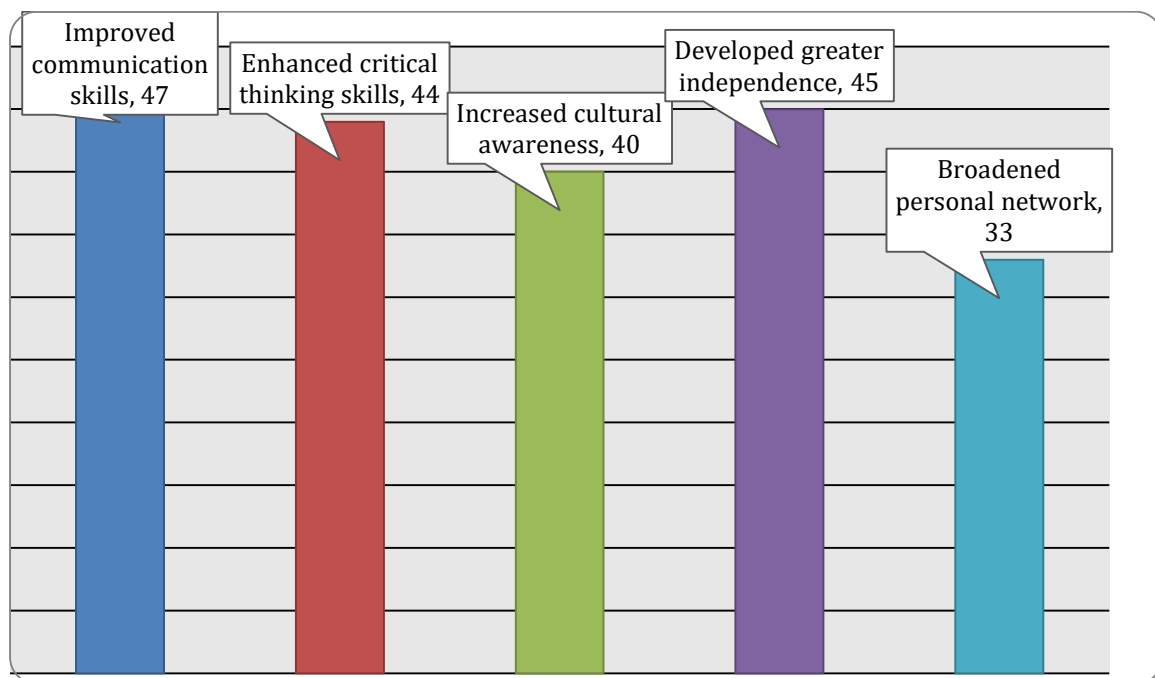
Large proportion of students believe that studying abroad will greatly contribute to job market competitiveness, entailing high trust in international experience. Among the respondents, a significant percentage, 32%, think that studying abroad would make them competitive to a very large extent, while 36% believe it will have large impacts, and 22% have the view that this will give them a moderate advantage. This collective optimism therefore suggests that students are aware of the real benefits of international education in preparing them for a workforce that is becoming increasingly global. Almost 70% of the respondents felt that studying abroad would greatly enhance their competitiveness, which says something about just how valuable they think it will be as an investment in their future careers. Much of the confidence could be attributed to the fact that one had developed valuable skills in language proficiency, cultural adaptability, global perspectives, and other prized values by employers. Further, it was seen as an experience which differentiated one in the job market, especially in regards to the challenge of studying in a foreign country and cultivating an international network of contact. It provides students with a skill set and experience needed to thrive in an ever-globalizing economy. The strong belief in the value of international experience also brings into sharper focus that students must be supported in their quest to study abroad and make sure that they are able to seize the career benefits arising from such an experience

Figure 4.19: Shaping career goals



Studying abroad has a profound impact on international students' career aspirations, with 63.5% becoming more focused on a specific career path, indicating a clarification of professional goals through exposure to specialized courses, industry connections, and mentorship opportunities. Meanwhile, 19% consider new career options, suggesting broadened perspectives and exploration of alternative fields or industries. A smaller proportion, 11.1%, report no significant change, likely having had strong career motivations prior to migrating. Notably, 6.4% remain unsure, potentially due to adaptation challenges or exploration of various fields. Overall, studying abroad serves as a catalyst for career growth, sharpening existing goals or introducing new possibilities, attributed to unique experiences and opportunities such as diverse perspectives, networking, and specialized resources. This transformation underscores the importance of targeted support services and resources to help international students navigate their career journeys and achieve professional goals.

Figure 4.20: Growth as an all round individual

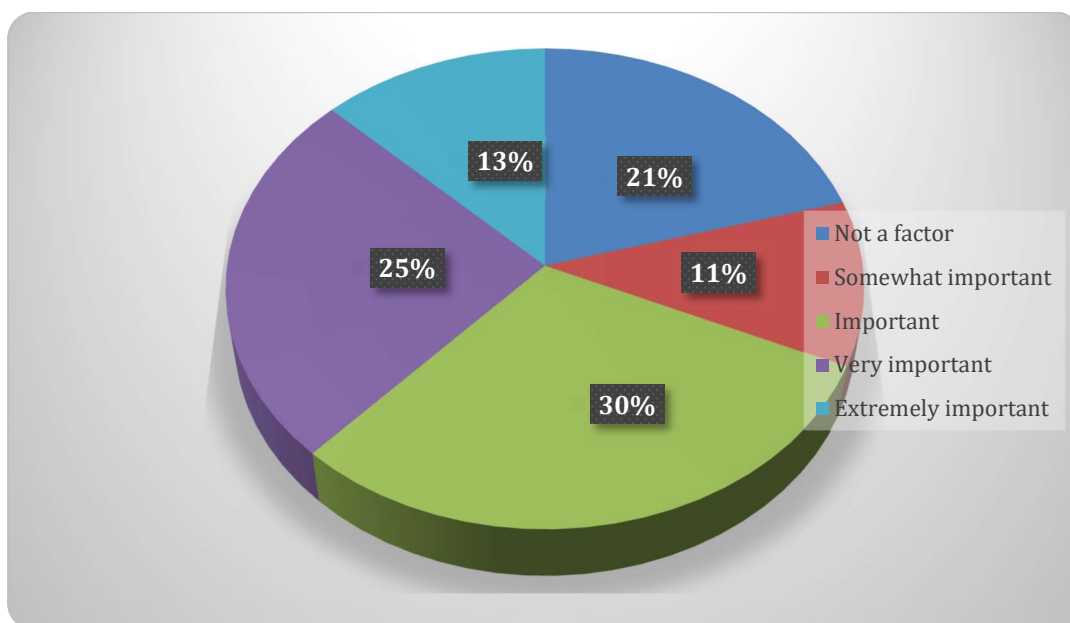


From the above data it is understood that studying abroad is a transformative experience that profoundly enhances personal, social, and intellectual skills, offering a wide range of benefits that encourage well-rounded development. By navigating language differences and various communication styles in a foreign country, individuals significantly improve their communication skills (74.6%), developing adaptability, clarity in expression, and a deeper grasp of non-verbal communication, essential for building strong relationships in both personal

and professional contexts. Living away from familiar support networks and managing everyday tasks also promote greater independence (71.4%), which also promotes self-reliance and resilience, crucial for personal development and career advancement. Moreover, exposure to diverse educational systems, teaching methods, and intellectual traditions enhances critical thinking skills, encouraging individuals to approach challenges from various perspectives, question assumptions, analyse diverse sources of information, and come up with innovative solutions to complex issues. Additionally, studying abroad increases cultural awareness (63.5%), promoting empathy, open-mindedness, and a deeper understanding of diverse perspectives and global issues, which is essential for operating effectively in a globalized world. Expanding personal networks (52.4%) through connections with peers, mentors, and professionals from around the world also provides pathways to international opportunities, collaborations, and resources, offering emotional and social support, exposure to various industries and innovations, and developing new ideas as well as approaches. Ultimately, studying abroad shapes individuals who are better equipped for their future careers, more empathetic, culturally aware, and ready to make meaningful contributions in a globalized world.

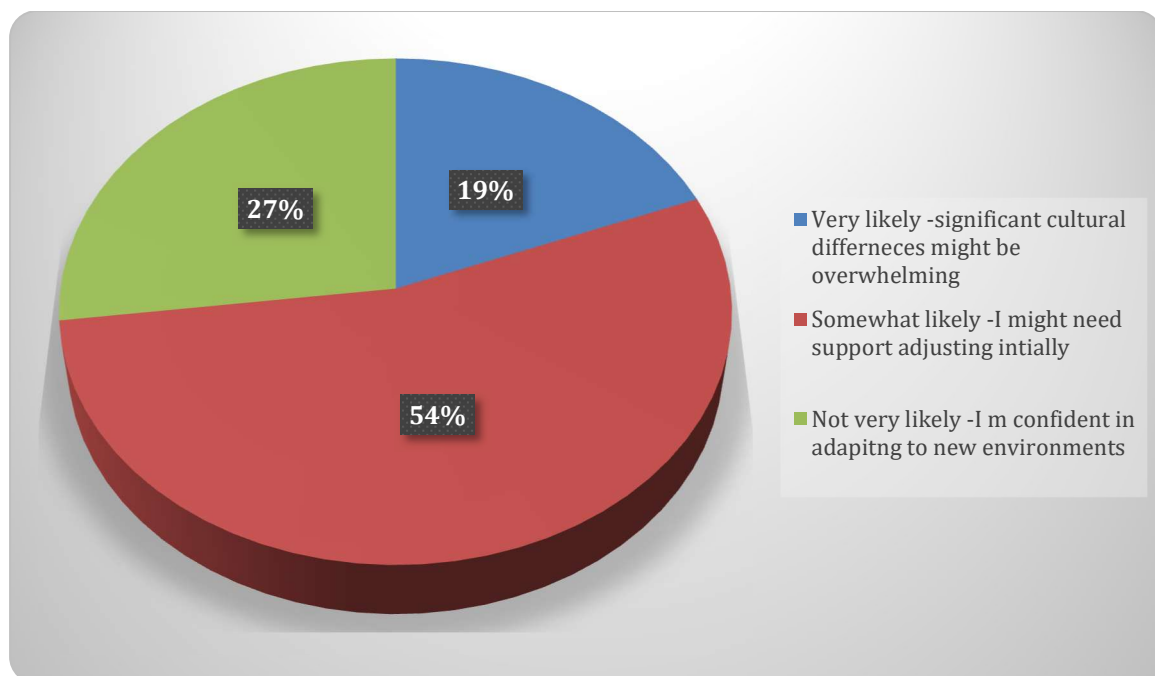
4.5 SOCIO CULTURAL CHALLENGES FACED BY YOUTH LIKE ISSUES RELATED TO CULTURAL DIFFERENCES LANGUAGE BARRIERS AND DISCRIMINATION

Figure 4.21: Cultural exploration as a factor



The cultural attractions and host country lifestyle are important for a huge proportion 30.2% rating it as important and 25.4% as very important. It means the only thing that the international students aim for is not education, but also to experience a new cultural environment and way of life, and broaden their horizons. Having an opportunity to visit cultural attractions—a country's historical places, museums, festivals—also being involved in some of the local customs and traditions takes centre place for the majority of them. Moreover, the kind of lifestyle that will be spent in the target country—food, music, social scene, and so on—is also an important factor in deciding their choice. This therefore means that a student is seeking a wide ranging experience that merges academic growth with personal enrichment and cultural exploration. By knowing that these are the main concerns in cultural attractions and lifestyle, educators and policymakers could package support services in such a manner that the marketing strategies would not be devoid of the chance to promote the unique cultural offerings of their respective institutions and destinations in an effort to attract students who desire a deep study abroad experience. At the last count, this will bring into being a far more diverse and internationally-minded type of student body, which will be endowed with the competencies and insights needed to succeed in an interdependent world.

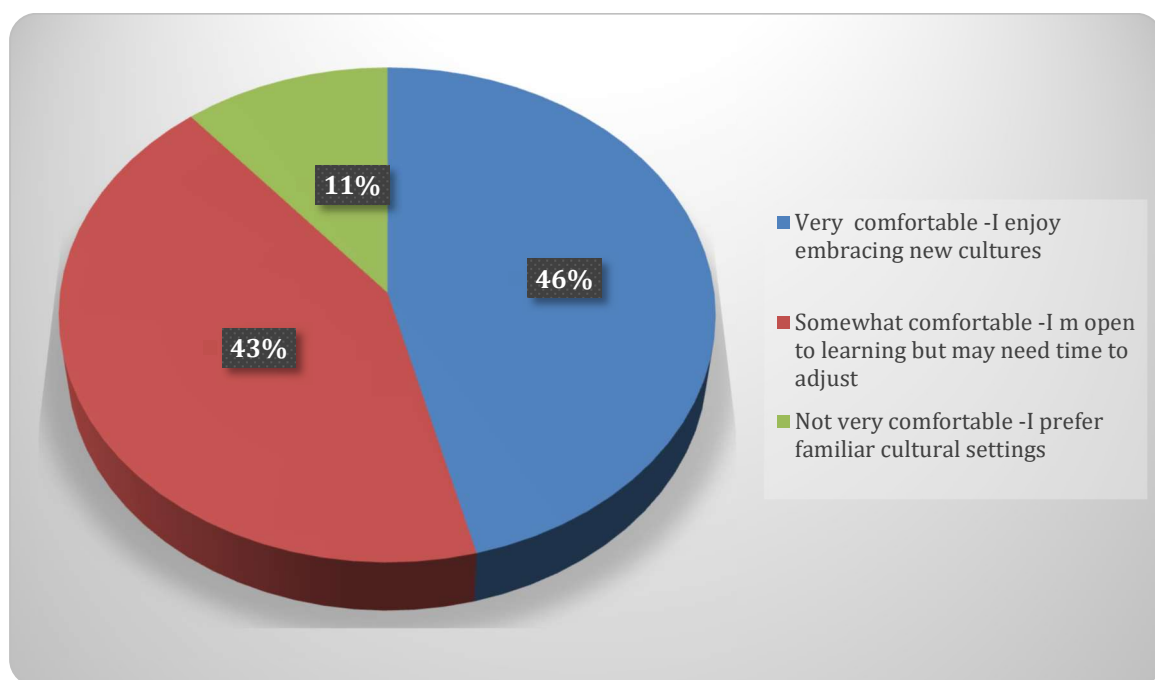
Figure 4.22: Cultural shock experience



The data results show a sensible orientation towards potential difficulties in adapting to a new cultural and environmental setup while being ready for help when needed. The data illustrates

differentiation among the students' expectations with regard to culture shock, as the majority of them responded by accepting the possibility (54%) of needing help and support in the first adjustment stage." However, 27% of students think they will have no trouble adjusting since they think they will fit in with the new culture. This most likely shows that they are highly emotional intelligent or have gone through a particular cultural shift. On the other hand, 19% anticipate significant challenges and more uncomfortable waiting times, most likely as a result of their limited exposure to other cultural contexts or fear of risk. These results highlight the need of providing international students with focused support networks throughout the key adjustment period. These networks should include cultural orientation programs, mentorship programs, and counselling services. These will facilitate the many demands of the student body, make the transfer much smoother, and let the students focus on their studies to the fullest, resulting in a good and rewarding experience for them while they are studying abroad

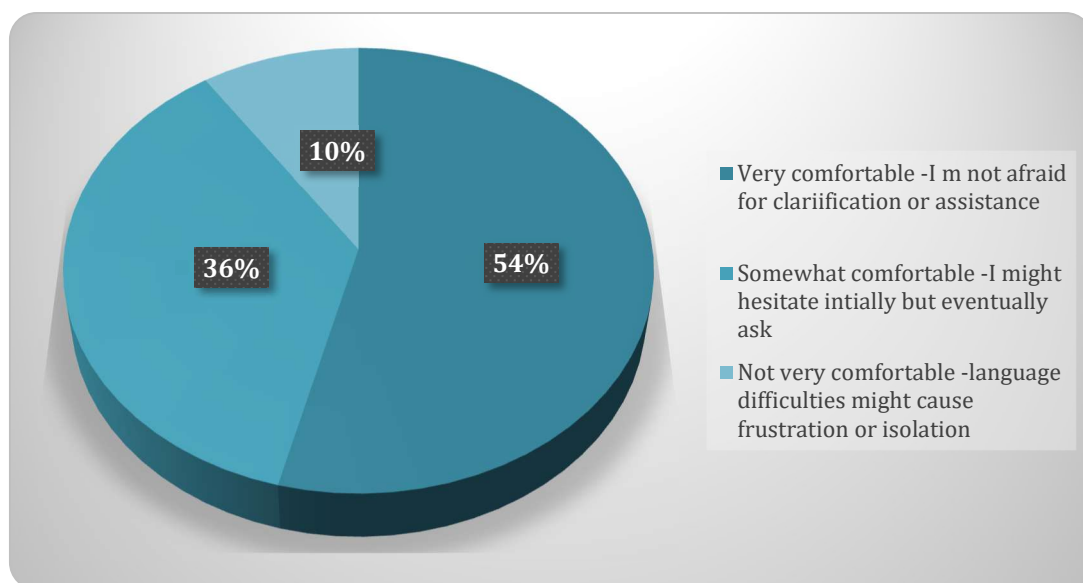
Figure 4. 23: Adapting to a new culture



The majority of students (46%) enjoy adapting to new social customs and cultures which demonstrate a high degree of cultural adaptability, curiosity, and enthusiasm. This group is likely to prosper in international educational settings, actively seeking out opportunities to engage with diverse cultural practices and norms. Their positive attitude towards cultural adaptation will enable them to form meaningful connections with peers from diverse

backgrounds, navigate unfamiliar social situations with ease, and develop a deeper understanding of different cultural perspectives. Another group of (43%) is open to adapting to new customs but expects a learning curve, indicating a more practical approach to cultural adaptation and recognizes the challenges involved in unfamiliar cultural norms and is willing to invest time and effort into learning and adapting. While they may not be as naturally inclined to adapt as the first group, they are still open minded to new experiences and willing to put in the effort required to adjust. On other side, the smaller minority (11%) who prefer familiar cultural settings may face more challenges in adapting to new social custom and they are more hesitant or risk-averse, potentially struggling to adjust to unfamiliar cultural norms and practices. However, this does not mean they are unable to adapt, but rather may require more support, time, and encouragement to adjust to new cultural environments. Overall, these findings suggest that most students are well-equipped to adapt to new social customs, with a significant proportion actively enjoying the process. This bodes well for their ability to thrive in international educational settings, develop into globally-minded individuals, and navigate an increasingly interconnected world.

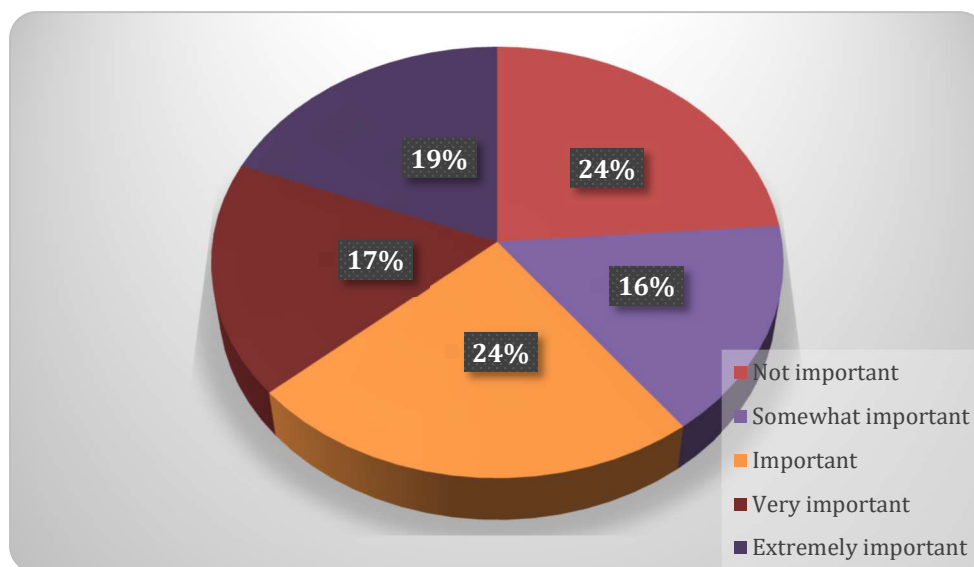
Figure 4. 24: Seeking language help



The majority of students 54%, feel extremely comfortable asking for help when they are facing language difficulties. This indicates that they are highly confident and willing to deal with linguistic challenges and the findings reveal a promising trend among students. Even though they were a little hesitant, another 36 % of respondents said they were fairly comfortable, indicating that they had a favourable attitude regarding receiving support. Overall, there is a willingness to ask for assistance because language barriers can negatively impact both general

wellbeing and academic achievement. The majority of them seem comfortable asking for assistance, which bodes well for their capacity to get above linguistic obstacles and obtain these resources they require. 10% of respondents, a lower but still a notable amount, may become frustrated or feel alone when faced with language barriers, which puts them at risk. To overcome language barriers, they might need extra help and encouragement. If they don't do so, they risk falling behind academically or feeling isolated from their classmates. Establishing a culture of inclusivity, celebrating a growth attitude, and offering accessible language support services can all be very beneficial in enabling any student, especially those in this subgroup, to feel more confident in asking for assistance and overcoming language obstacles. By doing this, educators will have made sure that language barriers do not stand in the way of students' academic achievement or personal development.

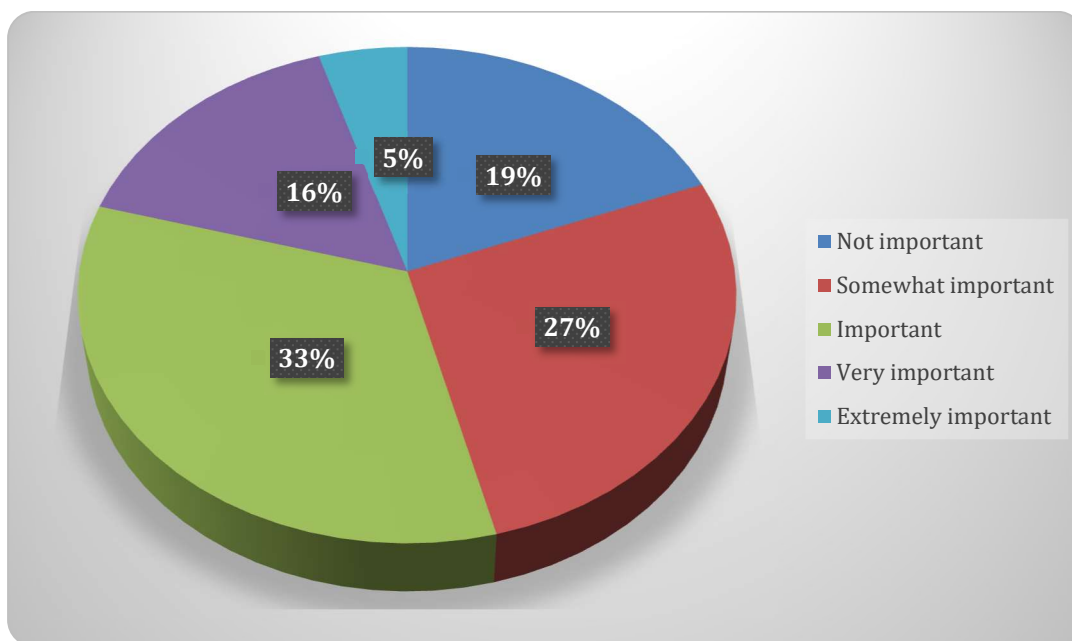
Figure 4.25: Language barriers as an obstacle



The survey's findings provide a comprehensive view of the influence of language barriers on academic achievement, highlighting the complexity of the problem from a variety of angles. Language proficiency is crucial for academic achievement, as seen by the fact that 19% of respondents emphasize how important language challenges are, while 24% minimize their importance, maybe because of supportive settings or good language skills. This second group most certainly encounters significant challenges, such as poor comprehension demonstration, limited engagement with the course topics, and restricted involvement. However, 24% of respondents agree that language barriers are a significant factor, but not the only one, in determining academic success, pointing to mild difficulties that can be overcome with assistance. Language obstacles may cause only small problems for the 16% who think they are

somewhat important, but for the 17% who think they are extremely important, they pose major problems that require specialized attention. These differing viewpoints highlight the ways in which language difficulties can affect people differently based on their unique situation, the resources that are accessible, and the academic setting. In order to address the variety of issues raised by language barriers and assure that students from different linguistic backgrounds have equal possibilities for academic success, the findings highlight the necessity of customized support systems, inclusive teaching techniques, and language resources. Through identification and resolution of these obstacles, educators may establish a more welcoming and encouraging classroom atmosphere that promotes academic success for every student.

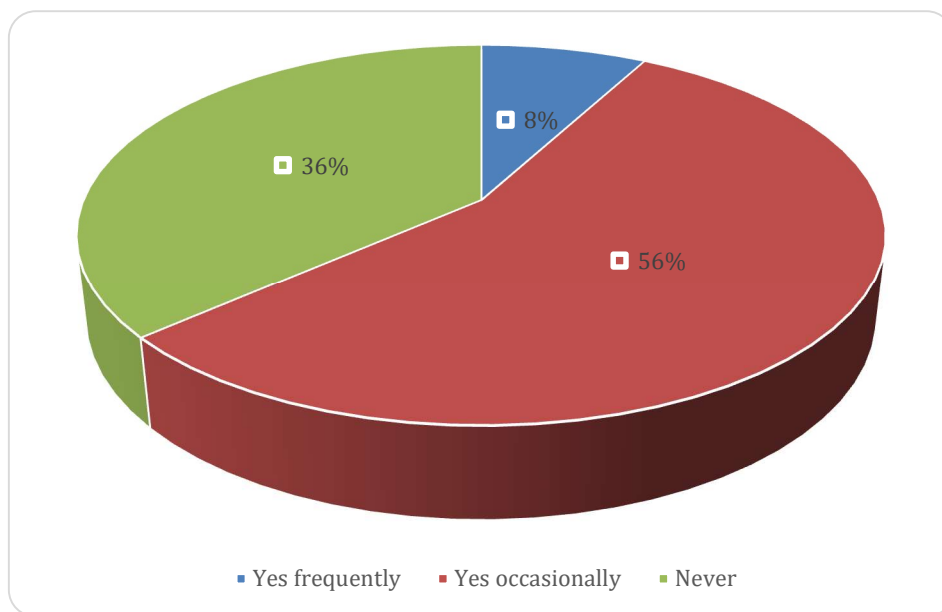
Figure 4. 26: Finding cultural root



The data results show that finding a social group that shares one's cultural background is important for many students, as evidenced by the statistics, which shows that a significant majority of 33% and 27% students consider it to be important or somewhat important respectively. This implies that students think highly of interacting with peers who are knowledgeable of and compassionate to their cultural experiences, values, and worldviews. The 16% of the respondents who think it is very important reveals the significance of cultural connection, demonstrating a great desire for a sense of community and belonging. The need for emotional support, a sense of familiarity in a foreign academic setting, and a shared identity can all be linked to this desire for cultural. Additionally only 19% of students said that finding a social group that reflects their cultural background is not important. This could be because

they are focused on other elements of their academic lives, have had prior experiences, and may be adaptive. However, the prevailing trend emphasizes how crucial cultural ties are to students' general wellbeing, academic motivation, and sense of belonging. Establishing inclusive environments that encourage interactions between students from different backgrounds and supporting cultural diversity programs are some ways that institutions might address this issue. By doing this, teachers can support students in fostering a sense of belonging, improving their academic performance, and advancing intercultural understanding.

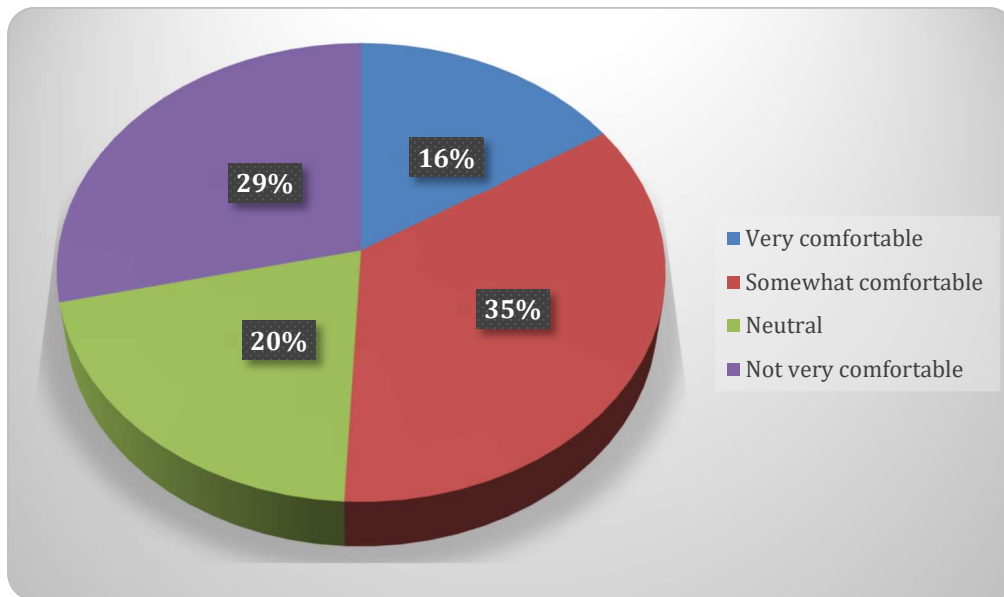
Figure 4. 27: Experience on discrimination



According to the findings, there is an alarming pattern of racial, ethnic, or national discrimination among students; the majority (64%) report having encountered it at some point. The data indicating that 8% of students and 56% of students have experienced discrimination on a regular basis points to a widespread problem that may have long-term effects on students' sense of identity, mental health, and academic achievement. Discrimination on a regular basis can create a negative learning atmosphere where students find it difficult to concentrate on their academics and realize their full potential. These experiences may also result in low self-esteem, marginalization, and feelings of loneliness. However, 36% of students report not having faced this kind of discrimination. This statistic could be explained by a number of things, such as a welcoming educational atmosphere, strong social networks, or a lack of knowledge about what other students are going through. This should not, however, minimize how serious the problem is, as even random acts of discrimination can have a big effect. The results highlight how

important it is for educational institutions to actively fight discrimination, encourage diversity, and establish a secure and friendly atmosphere for all students. Initiatives aimed at promoting diversity and inclusion, educational programs, and assistance services that cultivate an atmosphere of respect compassion, and understanding can help achieve this. Teachers can guarantee that every student have an equal chance to prosper by recognizing and combating discrimination.

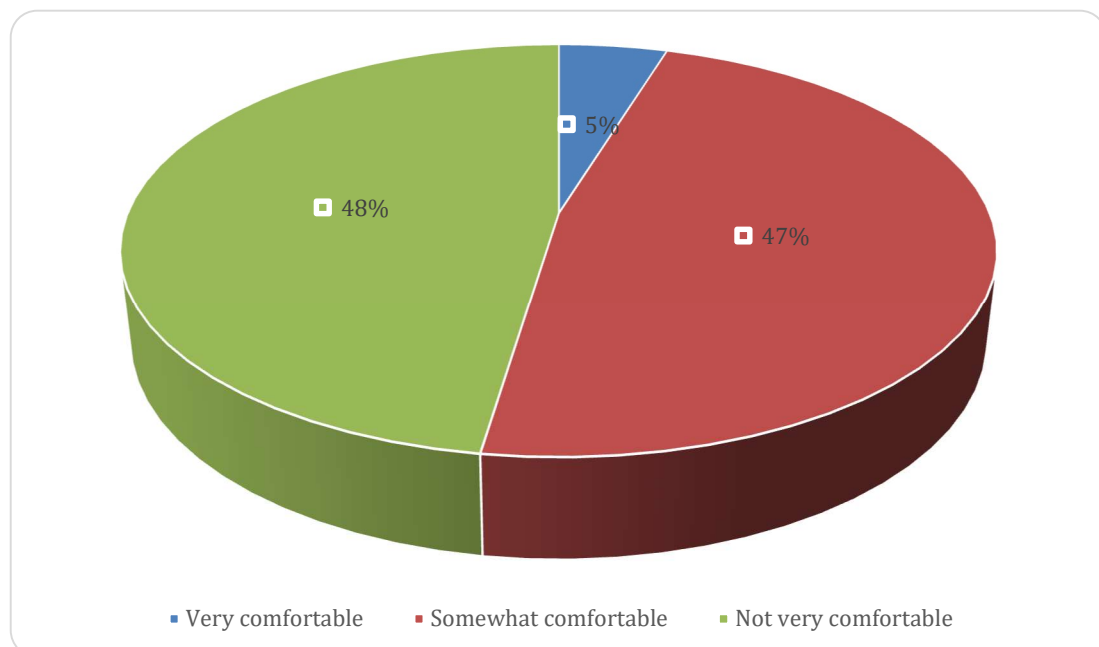
Figure 4. 28: Standing up to the discrimination



The data reveals a deep insight into people's comfort levels when dealing with situations that includes discrimination. It's clear level of self-assurance and they may had some experience with diversity or have already developed coping strategies to deal with such discriminatory situations. Additionally that individuals have varying degrees of confidence in handling these challenges. On one hand, a significant portion of people, 35%, feel somewhat comfortable, that shows a moderate, 16% of individuals feel very comfortable representing a high degree of confidence, likely due to extensive experience, strong social support, or a history of successfully crossed challenging situations. On the other hand, a substantial minority, 29% is feeling not very comfortable, suggesting uncertainty, lack of skills, or limited experience in navigating discriminatory situations effectively and they may benefit from education and training programs that enhance their skills and confidence. Moreover, 20% have a neutral approach, potentially due to limited exposure, unclear expectations, or a lack of understanding about how to respond to discriminatory situations. This group may require guidance on how to respond to such situations. The varying comfort levels highlight the need for a comprehensive

approach to addressing discrimination. It's essential to provide d targeted support and resources to empower individuals in addressing discrimination, such as workshops, training sessions, and awareness campaigns. By understanding these comfort levels, we can develop strategies to promote inclusivity and equity, fostering a supportive environment where individuals feel confident in addressing discrimination. Ultimately, the data emphasizes the importance of acknowledging and addressing the varying comfort levels and confidence of individuals in navigating discriminatory situations, ensuring everyone feels empowered to confront prejudice and bias effectively. By doing so, we can create a more andequitable society where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

Figure 4.29: Comfort in distance



The data reveals varying levels of comfort among respondents when it comes to being away from family and friends for an extended period. Only 5% feel "very comfortable" with prolonged separation, indicating a small group of highly independent and adaptable individuals who may have past experiences that help them manage extended absences from their support networks. These individuals likely prioritize personal growth, self-reliance, and the opportunities that come with being away, such as pursuing education or career advancements. Their comfort might be linked to their ability to maintain emotional ties through technology, a strong sense of independence, or personality traits that favour solitude and self-discovery. The 47% of respondents feel "somewhat comfortable" with being away, reflecting a moderate level of adaptability. This group likely sees the benefits of separation, such as increased independence and exposure to new environments, but still highly values their relationships and

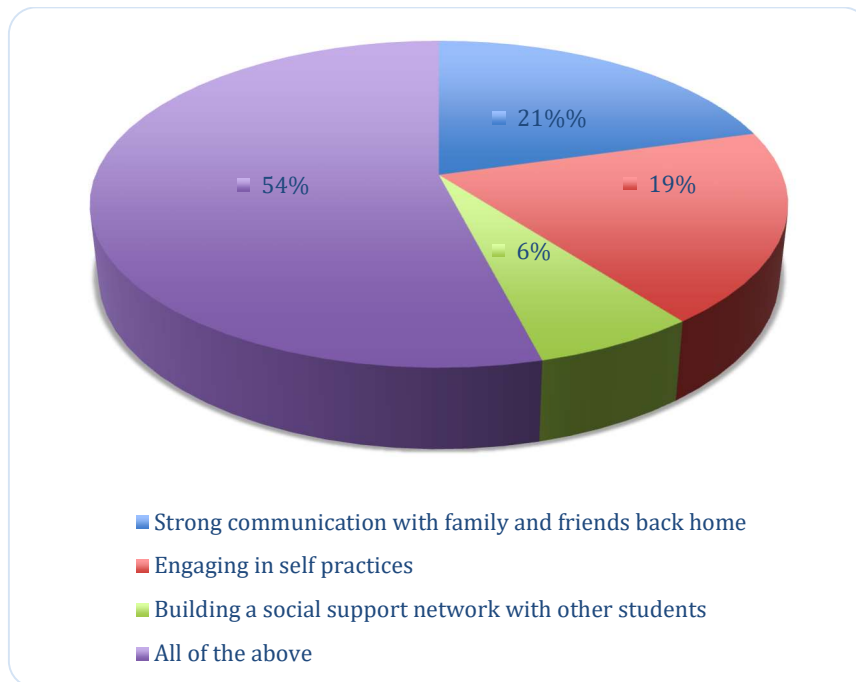
emotional support systems. Their comfort level may vary based on the length of separation, the availability of social support in the new setting, and the ease of staying in touch with loved ones. For them, technology plays a key role in maintaining connections, helping to ease feelings of homesickness and isolation. However, ongoing interactions with family and friends remain crucial, highlighting their need to balance independence with emotional connection. The largest group, 48%, reports feeling "not very comfortable" with being away for long periods, indicating a significant emotional reliance on their support networks. For nearly half of the respondents, the idea of prolonged separation brings feelings of anxiety, loneliness, and missing out on important moments. These individuals may struggle with homesickness, impacting their overall well-being and ability to perform in situations that require extended time away, such as studying abroad, relocating for work, or long-term travel. The emotional burden of being distant from loved ones can outweigh the potential benefits of new experiences, leading them to avoid opportunities that involve such separations. This discomfort is often influenced by cultural factors, as some cultures place a strong emphasis on close family ties and community, making long separations particularly challenging. Personal experiences, such as difficulties adapting to new environments or struggles with maintaining long-distance relationships, can also contribute to their reluctance. For these respondents, being away from their social circle may feel isolating, making it difficult to embrace the independence that comes with living far from familiar faces. They may benefit from stronger support systems, such as mental health resources, community groups, or frequent visits, to help them manage the lack of direct contact with family and friends. The data highlights that comfort levels with extended separation from loved ones vary widely, influenced by personal, cultural, and past experiences. While a small minority is comfortable with independence, nearly half of the respondents find it difficult to be away for long periods, underscoring the importance of emotional connections and support. This analysis emphasizes the need for tailored support structures to help individuals cope with the challenges of prolonged separation, enabling them to better adapt and thrive in new environments .

Coping with distance

The results demonstrate that students employ a complex coping strategy for dealing with stress, anxiety, or loneliness when studying overseas. The majority, or 54%, combine three crucial strategies: taking care of oneself, staying in close contact with friends and family, and developing a network of fellow students for social support. Maintaining healthy connections with loved ones, putting one's health first, and creating a sense of community among peers are

all suggested by this diversity. Being able to communicate effectively with friends and family provided emotional comfort and familiarity in a strange place. Good communication minimizes loneliness and homesickness by providing frequent updates on events and encouraging candid discussion.

Figure 4.30: Coping with distance



Activities related to physical and mental health are included in self-care practices, which are used by 54% of students including exercising, meditation, or different hobbies. These activities keep students fit and relaxed, hence reducing stress and anxiety by providing a good balance between their studying and life. Another equally important aspect is the development of a social support network with fellow students, since such a network contributes to the sense of belonging and being affiliated with individuals who could understand their experiences. The network may offer emotional support, practical advice, and even a new perspective that would somehow allow them to cope more effectively with challenges and celebrate successes. Data presented reveal a balanced approach toward the struggle with stress, anxiety, or loneliness during studies abroad. All these can be put together to build resilience through strong communication, good self-care practices, and social support in a new environment. These coping mechanisms may be encouraged through the resources and initiatives of the institutions to engage students: counselling services, social activities, and peer mentoring programs. "The complexity of recognizing studying abroad will better equip students to excel academically, personally, and emotionally.

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Migration is a natural process that often happens depending on the social economic, demographic, cultural, political, and environmental factors related to the migrant group. Migration is not a mere shift of people from place of residence to another. Student migration which is also known as brain drain, refers to the emigration of highly skilled youth and educated individuals from their home country to another, often resulting in a loss of valuable human capital in which the phenomenon has significant implications for both the source and destination countries, as well as for the global economy. This section presents the findings of the study, which aimed to explore the prospects and challenges faced by Indian students who migrate abroad for higher education. The data collected has been analysed to identify key themes and trends, providing insights into the experiences of Indian students abroad. The findings are organized to offer a comprehensive understanding of the opportunities and challenges encountered by Indian students in foreign countries. The following section presents the results of the study, highlighting the most significant aspects of Indian students' life abroad.

5.2 COST OF EDUCATION IN HOME COUNTRY

The results obtained from the data reveals that the youth migrated for higher studies abroad mainly prioritize factors like academic quality, program offerings, location, career opportunities, and personal growth over education costs. A notable group of students considers costs important, weighing them against other benefits, with some prioritizing affordability above other considerations. This highlights the influence of education costs on decision-making, emphasizing the need for institutions and policymakers to consider pricing and financial aid to attract international students and support for them.

5.3 EDUCATIONAL QUALITY IN HOME COUNTRY

The data obtained shows that the quality of education in one's area is a crucial factor for individuals considering migration for higher studies, with many giving importance for the standards of education as a basis for choice. The need for specialized knowledge and skills

which is not readily available in their home country leads to this desire, often due to lack of resources, outdated curricula, or inadequate expertise. And as a result, individuals seek foreign institutions with advanced programs, modern research facilities, and distinguished staff. The emphasis on quality education reveals an aspirational mind-set, with migrants striving for excellence and seeking the best possible education to acquire skills, knowledge, and credentials in their chosen field. This desire for high-quality education is a primary motivator for migration, emphasizing the value placed on exceptional educational standards.

5.4 DESIRED FIELD OF STUDY IN HOME COUNTRY

The results of the data shows that the limited availability of desired fields of study in one's home country is a significant constraint for students, leading to frustration and disappointment. Many students are unable to pursue their specific interests due to limited resources, outdated curricula, or lack of specialized programs in corner areas. This can lead to brain drain, worsen the existing disparities in the sector, as students from privileged backgrounds have more access to information and means to pursue foreign educational programs and this can result in diminished academic enjoyment, fewer career options, and decreased economic growth prospects for underprivileged students. Policymakers and educators can help address these issues by developing programs that cater to diverse student needs and interests, while also supporting those who seek to study abroad to achieve their academic goals.

5.5 EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN HOME COUNTRY

The results shows that most students are hopeless about job prospects in their home country after graduation, with a significant majority rating employment opportunities as poor or average. Only a small minority believe job opportunities are good, indicating an uneven distribution of responses that highlights the challenging job market. This widespread discouragement is likely caused by factors such as job scarcity, high competition, and mismatch between graduate skills and employer requirements. As a result, new graduates experience stress, anxiety, and uncertainty, leading them to seek alternatives like migration or further education to enhance their employability and this will not only leads to brain drain but also results in underutilization of trained professionals, impacting economic growth and development. By acknowledging these challenges, policymakers and stakeholders can work to

address them and create a more supportive environment for graduates to contribute positively to their home country's economy.

5.6 SOCIO ECONOMIC CONDITIONS THE HOME COUNTRY

The findings reveals that the socio-economic factors like poverty and political instability play a crucial role in shaping individuals' decisions to migrate for higher studies, with a stunning majority viewing these conditions as important. Harsh realities of poverty and political instability can suppress academic growth, prompting individuals to seek better opportunities abroad, leading to brain drain. While a small minority may not consider these factors important due to their privileged positions, the majority's concerns highlight the need for policymakers and stakeholders to create a supportive environment for academic pursuits, addressing the root causes of migration and striving for talent retention.

5.7 PERSONAL SAFETY CONCERNS IN HOME COUNTRY

The findings shows that personal safety is a significant concern for many individuals, with a majority considering it as important or very and extremely important. This concern is likely driven by issues like crime, violence, terrorism, and political upheaval, which can make individuals feel exposed and fearful, prompting them to seek safer environments for education and settling down. The importance of personal safety can impact decisions to migrate, influencing immigration and education policy. By recognizing this concern, policymakers and educational institutions can focus on addressing safety issues and creating a welcoming and secure environments for students, ultimately supporting their well-being and academic success.

5.8 DESIRED FIELD OF STUDY IN DESTINATION COUNTRY

The results shows that the availability of desired fields of study in the destination country is a key factor for migration, with many students expecting to pursue their academic interests abroad that majority of the students find that their desired fields are readily available, offering access to specialized knowledge, advanced research, and renowned faculty, thereby enhancing their academic and professional potential. The wide range of programs available fulfil to diverse interests and goals, making the destination country attractive for students seeking to expand their academic horizons. While some students may still face limited options, the overall

positive response indicates that destination countries generally provide a supportive academic environment for students to pursue their passions and achieve their goals.

5.9 COST OF EDUCATION IN THE DESTINATION COUNTRY

The findings reveals that the cost of education in the destination country is affordable by majority , while a significant minority consider it unaffordable, indicating financial concerns are a notable but not overwhelming challenge. The willingness of many students to pay for education despite financial burdens suggests a desire for quality education. The mixed responses reflect diverse student financial backgrounds and priorities, highlighting the importance of support mechanisms like scholarships and financial aid in making education abroad more accessible. Addressing affordability concerns through targeted support can help ensure financial challenges that don't limit access to higher education, fostering a diverse academic community.

5.10 EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN THE DESTINATIONS COUNTRY

The results revealed that most respondents view job opportunities in the destination country after graduation positively, indicating a favourable job market. Many graduates are confident about their career prospects. While some respondents consider opportunities average, the overall sentiment is positive, suggesting graduates feel equipped to enter the workforce and secure relevant jobs. This positive attitude can be attributed to factors like the reputation of educational institutions, quality of education, and demand for skilled professionals in the destination country. A welcoming job market reinforces the destination country's reputation as a higher-education hub for career prospects, not just academic pursuits. By understanding these perceptions, educators and policymakers can tailor programs to labour market requirements, equipping graduates with necessary skills for success and contributing to the economy.

5.11 COMFORT WITH TEACHING STYLE

The data shows that majority of the students feel comfortable with the teaching style and academic expectations in the destination country. Students are adaptable and open to new academic settings .A significant majority of students can cross academic expectations and teaching styles with ease. Quality education, supportive faculty and peers, and clear academic

expectations contribute to a high comfort level. Students are able to thrive and reach their full potential in the destination country. The destination country is an attractive option for higher education abroad. Understanding student comfort levels can help educators and policymakers refine their approaches to foster a supportive academic community.

5.12 ACADEMIC PREPARATIONS ABROAD

The findings disclose that the majority of students are confident that their academic preparation from their home country has successfully translated to their studies abroad which had demonstrated the effectiveness of their prior education in preparing them for international studies. This positive assessment suggests that students feel their destination country's education system has provided a solid foundation in critical thinking, problem-solving, and subject-specific knowledge, enabling them to adapt and excel in a foreign academic environment, build upon their existing knowledge and skills, and bridge minimal gaps. The success of academic preparation underscores the value of international collaboration and standardization in education, suggesting recognition and respect for academic credentials and learning outcomes across borders. This confidence enables students to thrive in a globalized higher education landscape, and informs educators and policymakers to refine curricula and teaching methods, ensuring students are well-equipped for international academic success.

5.13 FUTURE EARNING POTENTIAL

From the findings it is understood that studying abroad is widely believed to enhance future earning potential, with most respondents agreeing that it increases earning potential to a very large extent, attributing this to the development of valuable skills, adaptability, and competitiveness in the global job market. Employers value international experience as a sign of independence, problem-solving ability, and competence in diverse work environments, leading to better job prospects and higher salaries. While some respondents believe the impact is moderate, notable factors like field of study, institution reputation, and local economic conditions, others recognize the financial burden and potential obstacles like foreign qualification recognition and entry-level expenses. Despite these complexities, the majority view international education as a valuable investment in their career, with earning capacity being a major benefit, which increase employability and salaries. However, individual

circumstances, field of study, and effective utilization of the experience abroad influence the degree to which studying abroad enhances earning potential.

5.14 BECOMING A COMPETITIVE CANDIDATE

It shows that studying abroad is widely believed to significantly enhance job market competitiveness, with many students thinking it boosts competitiveness to a large or very large extent. This confidence stems from the development of valuable skills like language proficiency, cultural adaptability, and global perspectives, which employers highly prize. Studying abroad is seen as a key differentiator in the job market, providing a unique skill set and experience necessary to flourish in a globalizing economy. The experience of studying in a foreign country and cultivating an international network of contacts is particularly valued. Overall, students have a strong belief in the value of international experience, highlighting the importance of supporting them in their pursuit of studying abroad to capitalize on the career benefits.

5.15 SHAPING CAREER GOALS ABROAD

It has been founded that studying abroad has an intense impact on international students' career aspirations, leading to a clarification of professional goals for many. It helps students become more focused on a specific career path, along with broadening their perspectives and encouraging exploration of alternative fields or industries. This transformation is attributed to unique experiences and opportunities such as diverse perspectives, networking, and specialized resources. Overall, studying abroad serves as a catalyst for career growth, sharpening existing goals or introducing new possibilities, highlighting the importance of targeted support services and resources to help international students navigate their career journeys and achieve professional goals.

5.16 GROWTH AS AN ALL ROUND INDIVIDUAL

The findings shows that studying abroad is a transformative experience that enhances personal, social, and intellectual skills, enhances growth and self-development. It improves communication skills, adaptability, and independence, while sharpening critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. By immersing oneself in diverse cultures and educational systems, individuals gain a deeper understanding of global perspectives, develop empathy, and cultivate a more open-minded and inclusive worldview. Through expanded global connections, they also

access international opportunities, resources, and innovative ideas, preparing them for success in an increasingly interconnected world.

5.17 CULTURAL EXPLORATION AS A FACTOR

The findings discovered that the students are drawn to studying abroad not only for academic purposes but also to experience a new cultural environment and way of life. Cultural attractions and foreign country lifestyle play a significant role in their decision-making process. They seek to broaden their horizons by visiting cultural attractions, participating in local customs and traditions, and immersing themselves in the local lifestyle, including food, music, and social scene. Students aim for a specific experience that combines academic growth with personal enrichment and cultural exploration. Therefore, educators and policymakers should highlight the unique cultural offerings of their institutions and destinations to attract students seeking a deep study abroad experience, ultimately fostering a diverse and internationally-minded student body equipped to succeed in an interdependent world.

5.18 CULTURAL SHOCK EXPERIENCE

The data reveals that international students are aware of potential difficulties in adapting to a new cultural and environmental setup and are open to seeking help when needed. While some students are confident in their ability to fit in with the new culture, others foresee significant challenges and uncomfortable adjustments. This highlights the need for providing international students with focused support networks during the initial adjustment period, including cultural orientation programs, mentorship programs, and counselling services. By offering these resources, educational institutions can facilitate a smoother transition, address the diverse needs of the student body, and enable students to focus on their studies, leading to a rewarding and successful study abroad experience.

5.19 ADAPTING TO A NEW CULTURE

The majority of students enjoy adapting to new social customs and cultures that demonstrates a high degree of cultural adaptability, curiosity, and enthusiasm. These students are likely to prosper in international educational settings, actively seeking out opportunities to engage with diverse cultural practices and norms and they will form meaningful connections with peers from diverse backgrounds, navigate unfamiliar social situations with no difficulty and develop a deeper understanding of different cultural perspectives. Another group is open to adapting to new customs, recognizing the challenges involved and willing to invest time and effort into learning and adapting. A smaller minority prefers familiar cultural settings and may face more

challenges in adapting to new social customs, requiring more support, time, and encouragement to adjust. Overall, most students are well-equipped to adapt to new social customs, with many actively enjoying the process, which bodes well for their ability to thrive in international educational settings, develop into globally-minded individuals, and navigate an increasingly interconnected world.

5.20 SEEKING LANGUAGE HELP

The findings of the study gives the results that the students exhibit a promising trend in seeking help when facing language difficulties, showcasing confidence and a willingness to overcome linguistic challenges. Many students are comfortable asking for assistance, acknowledging that language barriers can impact their wellbeing and academic achievement. However, a subgroup may feel frustrated or isolated when encountering language obstacles, necessitating extra support and encouragement. To bridge this gap, fostering a culture of inclusivity, promoting a growth mind-set, and providing accessible language support services can empower students to confidently seek help, ultimately ensuring that language barriers do not hinder their academic success or personal growth.

5.21 LANGUAGE BARRIRES AS AN OBSTACLE

The survey's findings highlight the complex impact of language barriers on academic achievement, revealing diverse perspectives on their significance. Respondents downplay the importance of language challenges, as well as emphasize their crucial role in academic success. Language barriers are seen as a significant but not only the single factor in determining academic success, indicating mild difficulties that can be overcome with support. However, for others, language barriers pose major problems requiring specialized attention. These differing viewpoints emphasize the varying effects of language difficulties on individuals based on their unique circumstances, available resources, and academic settings. Overall, the findings stress the need for customized support systems, inclusive teaching techniques, and language resources to address the range of issues raised by language barriers and ensure equal opportunities for academic success among students from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

5.22 FINDING CULTURAL ROOT

The data results highlight the importance of finding a social group that shares one's cultural background for many students, as they value interacting with peers who understand and have a rapport with their cultural experiences, values, and worldviews. This desire for cultural connection arise from the need for emotional support, a sense of familiarity in a foreign

academic setting, and a shared identity. While some students may be focused on other aspects of their academic lives or have had prior experiences that make them more adaptable, the prevailing trend emphasizes the significance of cultural ties to students' overall wellbeing, academic motivation, and sense of belonging. To address this, institutions can establish inclusive environments that encourage interactions between students from diverse backgrounds and support cultural diversity programs, ultimately helping students foster a sense of belonging, improve their academic performance, and advance intercultural understanding.

5.23 EXPERIENCE ON DISCRIMINATION

The findings reveal a disturbing pattern of racial, ethnic, or national discrimination among students, with many reporting encounters with discrimination at some point. Regular experiences of discrimination can create a toxic learning environment, negatively impacting students' sense of identity, mental health, and academic achievement and this can lead to low self-esteem, marginalization, and feelings of loneliness. While some students may not have faced discrimination, possibly due to a welcoming educational atmosphere or strong social networks, the problem is still widespread and serious, with even isolated incidents having a significant impact. The results emphasize the need for educational institutions to actively combat discrimination, promote diversity and inclusion, and establish a safe and supportive atmosphere for all students. Initiatives such as diversity programs, educational initiatives, and support services can help foster an environment of respect, compassion, and understanding, ensuring equal opportunities for all students to thrive.

5.24 STANDING UP TO THE DISCRIMINATION

The findings give insight into individuals' comfort levels when dealing with discriminatory situations, revealing varying degrees of confidence. Some people feel comfortable handling these challenges, likely due to experience, social support, or successful navigation of similar situations. Others feel uncertain or lack skills, indicating a need for education and training programs to enhance their confidence and another group requires guidance on responding to discriminatory situations. The varying comfort levels highlight the need for a comprehensive approach to addressing discrimination, including targeted support and resources like workshops, training sessions, and awareness campaigns. By understanding these comfort levels, strategies can be developed to promote inclusivity and equity, fostering a supportive environment where individuals feel confident addressing discrimination and confronting prejudice and bias effectively. This ultimately contributes to creating a more inclusive and equitable society where everyone can thrive.

5.25 COMFORT IN DISTANCE

The study reveals that individuals exhibit varying levels of comfort when facing extended periods away from family and friends, with some embracing independence and others struggling with emotional reliance on their support networks. Notably, a small group of highly adaptable individuals prioritizes personal growth and self-reliance, while a larger group values relationships and emotional support but still sees benefits in separation. Conversely, a significant portion of respondents experiences anxiety, loneliness, and difficulties adapting to new environments, highlighting the importance of emotional connections and support. Furthermore, comfort levels are influenced by personal, cultural, and past experiences, emphasizing the need for tailored support structures to help individuals cope with prolonged separation and thrive in new environments.

5.26 COPING WITH DISTANCE

The study reveals that international students employ a variety of coping strategy to manage stress, anxiety, and loneliness while studying abroad, majority of the respondents utilizing a combination of three key approaches: self-care, maintaining close relationships with friends and family, and building a social support network with fellow students. This comprehensive approach enables students to prioritize their physical and mental well-being through activities like exercise, meditation, and hobbies, while also fostering a sense of community and belonging among peers who share similar experiences. Effective communication with loved ones provides emotional comfort, familiarity, and minimizes feelings of loneliness and homesickness, allowing students to maintain healthy connections and balance their academic and personal life. The development of a social support network with fellow students offers emotional support, practical advice, and new perspectives, enabling students to cope more effectively with challenges and celebrate successes. Overall, the findings suggest that a balanced approach to coping with stress, anxiety, and loneliness while studying abroad involves strong communication, good self-care practices, and social support, which can be reinforced through institutional resources and initiatives such as counselling services, social activities, and peer mentoring programs to promote resilience and academic, personal, and emotional success.

5.27 CONCLUSION

Migration, the movement of individuals or groups from one place to another, has been a defining feature of human history which shapes the social, economic, and cultural fabric of societies around the world. In today's increasingly interconnected and interdependent world,

migration has emerged as a complex and complicated global phenomenon that is driven by a range of factors including economic inequality, conflict, environmental degradation, and technological advancements. As people move across borders in search of better opportunities, safety, and security, they bring with them their skills, knowledge, cultures, and experiences, contributing to the diversity and richness of their host communities. With millions of people on the move each year, migration has become a pressing global issue, posing challenges and opportunities for individuals, communities, and nations alike. As the world struggles with the complexities of migration, it is essential to understand its causes, consequences, and implications, and to develop effective strategies to manage its impact, maximize its benefits, and protect the rights and dignity of all migrants.

Student migration has become a significant aspect of the global education landscape, with millions of students crossing borders each year to pursue higher education. This phenomenon is driven by various factors, including globalization, technological advancements, and the desire for better prospects. Students are drawn to countries with renowned universities, diverse cultural experiences, and promising career opportunities. However, this movement has profound implications for both sending and receiving countries. Sending countries may experience a "brain drain" as talented students migrate, leading to a loss of skilled workforce and potential economic growth. On the other hand, receiving countries can benefit from the economic contributions and cultural diversity that international students bring. These students not only enrich the academic environment but also contribute to the local economy through tuition fees, living expenses, and potential entrepreneurship. In recent decades, countries like the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and Canada have emerged as popular destinations for international students. These countries offer world-class education, research opportunities, and cultural diversity, making them attractive to students seeking global exposure.

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted student migration patterns, disrupting the traditional study abroad experience for many students. Border closures, travel restrictions, and the shift to online learning have forced students to adapt to new realities. Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, it has also accelerated the adoption of digital technologies in education. This shift may potentially reshape the future of student migration, with virtual student mobility becoming more prevalent. The increasing affordability of online education, coupled with the growing demand for international qualifications, may lead to a rise in virtual student mobility. Additionally, the global economic recovery and the increasing emphasis on skills-based

education may drive students to seek opportunities in countries with strong job markets and innovative industries. As the world recovers from the pandemic, student migration is likely to continue evolving. Countries will need to adapt to changing circumstances, addressing challenges such as visa restrictions, cultural integration, and financial burdens. By fostering a welcoming and supportive environment for international students, countries can reap the benefits of their contributions to education, research, and economic development. Student migration is a complex phenomenon that will continue to shape the global landscape. As countries strive to attract and retain international students, it is essential to understand the implications of this movement and address the challenges that arise. By doing so, we can create a more inclusive and supportive environment for students to thrive, driving innovation, economic growth, and cultural exchange.

This study aims to understand the prospects and challenges of the youth migrated for higher studies abroad. Through this study it has been understood that the increasing trend of young people, especially from developing countries like India, migrating abroad for higher education is due to the complex mix of economic, social, political, and cultural factors. And these factors play a crucial role in shaping the choices of potential students, including considerations like the cost of education, the quality and availability of academic programs, employment prospects, socio-economic conditions, and concerns about personal safety. While education costs remain a factor, many young adults place greater emphasis on academic quality, specialized fields of study, and potential career opportunities rather than just affordability. This trend reflects a strong desire for personal and professional growth, prompting many to seek educational institutions abroad that offer not only advanced academic programs but also an environment conducive to developing essential skills and competencies. In addition to that the perceived lack of high-quality education, limited program offerings, and poor job prospects in their home countries often compel students to look for better opportunities abroad that promise improved educational outcomes, employability, and future earnings.

Socio-economic conditions in home countries, such as poverty, political instability, and inadequate job markets, also drive young people to seek better opportunities abroad. Many students view studying abroad as a way to escape challenging socio-economic backgrounds and to enhance their future living standards and career prospects. Concerns about safety and security further influence migration decisions, as students often prefer countries with lower crime rates, better political stability, and safer environments for living and learning. Cultural factors are also significant, as many students are motivated by the opportunity to experience

new cultures, lifestyles, and traditions, expand their social networks, and develop a global perspective. These cultural experiences not only enrich students' lives but also prepare them for an increasingly interconnected world, cultivating valuable intercultural skills and perspectives.

However, the migration of young people for higher education also poses significant challenges for both the individuals and their home countries. This trend can lead to a "brain drain," where highly skilled individuals leave their home countries, potentially weakening the intellectual and creative capacities needed for national development. The departure of young talent can exacerbate existing socio-economic inequalities, as only those with sufficient financial resources or privileged backgrounds can afford to study abroad. This can widen the gap between those who can pursue international education and those who cannot, deepening social and economic divides. Therefore, it is essential for policymakers, educational institutions, and other stakeholders to collaborate to address the root causes of migration and create supportive environments that retain talent and ensure equitable access to quality education. Efforts to improve domestic education quality, provide targeted financial support, and promote inclusive, culturally diverse academic communities can help mitigate the negative impacts of migration and foster a balanced global exchange of knowledge and skills.

While studying abroad offers numerous benefits, international students also face significant challenges. The experience can be marked by culture shock, language barriers, and feelings of isolation and homesickness. Adapting to a new environment and culture requires significant effort, resilience, and support from both host institutions and home communities. Despite their willingness to embrace new cultures, many students struggle to navigate unfamiliar social landscapes and form meaningful connections with peers from diverse backgrounds, which can impact their academic performance, mental health, and overall well-being. To address these challenges, host institutions should provide resources such as cultural orientation programs, language support, and counselling services to help students adjust and feel more at home, reducing culture shock and enhancing their focus on academic and personal growth.

Recognizing the potential benefits of migration is also crucial for both home and host countries. For host countries, international students contribute to a more diverse academic community, fostering cross-cultural exchange and global understanding. These students bring unique perspectives, knowledge, and skills that enrich the learning experiences of their peers and faculty. Moreover, they contribute to the economic vitality of host countries through tuition fees, living expenses, and consumer spending. For home countries, the migration of young

individuals for education abroad can yield long-term benefits, as many return with valuable skills, expertise, and international networks. By encouraging these students to return, home countries can benefit from their enhanced competencies, promoting innovation, entrepreneurship, and economic development.

In conclusion, student migration for higher education is a complex issue that reflects global aspirations for personal, professional, and academic growth. While migration offers opportunities for development and intercultural exchange, it also presents challenges that must be managed to ensure fair outcomes for all involved. Policymakers, educators, and institutions must collaborate to address the causes of migration, create inclusive environments for international students, and develop strategies to retain talent and support sustainable development in both home and host countries. By balancing the benefits and challenges of migration, a global education system can be created that values diversity, promotes equity, and prepares individuals for success in an interconnected world.

5.28 SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings of the study, here are some suggestions that could enhance the experiences of students migrating abroad for higher education and address the challenges they face:

Pre-departure Orientation Programs: Offer comprehensive pre-departure training that addresses not only logistical concerns but also intercultural communication, coping strategies for homesickness, and ways to navigate discrimination. This could include language preparation and mental health support, preparing students for the academic and social challenges they might face.

Cultural Integration Support Abroad: Universities and host countries could implement more robust support systems to help international students integrate into their new environments. This might involve language assistance, cultural mentorship programs, and social activities that foster inclusion and mitigate feelings of isolation.

Strengthening Alumni Networks: Establishing strong global networks through alumni associations can provide current students with mentorship opportunities, access to resources, and emotional support. These networks could be platforms for career guidance, internship opportunities, and sharing experiences to help new migrants adjust.

Mental Health Services: Given the emotional distress many students experience due to homesickness and discrimination, universities could offer enhanced mental health services tailored to the needs of international students. This could include peer counseling, support groups, or partnerships with mental health professionals who understand the unique challenges of cultural adaptation.

Career and Skill Development: Collaborating with universities abroad to provide career services that cater specifically to international students could bridge the gap between their studies and future employment. Offering workshops on global job market dynamics, resume building, and networking strategies could help students convert their international education into tangible career opportunities.

Collaborative Policy Advocacy: Policymakers in Kerala could work with educational institutions to advocate for the rights and well-being of Malayali students abroad, emphasizing the need for equitable treatment and support in host countries. Advocacy could focus on anti-discrimination policies, inclusive practices, and the creation of welcoming environments for international students.

Technology and Virtual Support: Creating online platforms where students can engage with their peers, mentors, and professionals both in their home country and abroad could alleviate feelings of isolation. Virtual communities could offer academic support, social interaction, and opportunities for cultural exchange.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

1)Age:

- a) 18-22 years old
- b) 23-27 years old
- c) 28+ years old

2)Gender:

- a) Male
- b) Female
- c) Non-binary
- d) Prefer not to say

3)Country of Origin: _____

4)Highest level of education completed in your home country:

- a) High School Diploma
- b) Associate's Degree
- c) Bachelor's Degree
- d) Other

5)Cost of education in your home country:

- a) Not a factor
- b) Somewhat important
- c) Important
- d) Very important
- e) Extremely important

6)Quality of education in your desired field of study in your home country:

- a) Not a factor
- b) Somewhat important
- c) Important
- d) Very important
- e) Extremely important

7)Availability of your desired field of study in your home country:

- a) Not available
- b) Available, but limited options
- c) Readily available

8)Employment opportunities after graduation in your home country:

- a) Poor
- b) Average
- c) Good
- d) Excellent

9)Socioeconomic conditions (poverty, political instability) in your home country:

- a) Not a concern
- b) Minor concern
- c) Major concern
- d) Extreme concern

10)Destination country-----

11)Personal safety concerns in your home country:

- a) Not a concern
- b) Minor concern
- c) Major concern
- d) Extreme concern

12)Availability of your desired field of study in the destination country:

- a) Not available
- b) Available, but limited options
- c) Readily available

13)Cost of education in the destination country (including scholarships/financial aid):

- a) Not affordable
- b) Somewhat affordable
- c) Affordable
- d) Very affordable

14)Employment opportunities after graduation in the destination country:

- a) Poor
- b) Average
- c) Good
- d) Excellent

15) How comfortable are you with the teaching style and academic expectations in your host country?

- a) Very comfortable
- b) Somewhat comfortable
- c) Neutral
- d) Somewhat uncomfortable
- e) Very uncomfortable

16) How well do you feel your academic preparation from your home country has translated to success in your studies abroad?

- (i) Very well
- (ii) Somewhat well
- (iii) Neutral
- (iv) Somewhat poorly
- (v) Very poorly

17) Do you believe studying abroad will increase your future earning potential?

- a) Strongly agree
- b) Somewhat agree
- c) Neutral
- d) Somewhat disagree
- e) Strongly disagree

18) To what extent do you believe your experience studying abroad will make you a more competitive candidate in the job market?

- (i) To a very large extent
- (ii) To a large extent

(iii) To a moderate extent

(iv) To a small extent

(v) Not at all

19) How have your career goals changed since migrating to study abroad?

i) They haven't changed significantly.

ii) I've become more focused on a specific career path.

iii) I'm now considering careers not previously on my radar.

iv) I'm unsure about my career goals due to the change in environment

20) In what ways do you believe studying abroad has made you a more all-rounded individual?

(Select all that apply)

(i) Improved communication skills

(ii) Enhanced critical thinking skills

(iii) Increased cultural awareness

(iv) Developed greater independence

(v) Broadened personal network

21) Cultural attractions and lifestyle in the destination country

i) Not a factor

ii) Somewhat important

iii) Important

iv) Very important

v) Extremely important

22) How likely do you think you are to experience culture shock?

a) Very likely – Significant cultural differences might be overwhelming.

b) Somewhat likely – I might need support adjusting initially.

c) Not very likely – I'm confident in adapting to new environments

23) How comfortable are you adapting to new social customs and etiquette?

- a) Very comfortable – I enjoy embracing new cultures.
- b) Somewhat comfortable – I'm open to learning but may need time to adjust.
- c) Not very comfortable – I prefer familiar cultural settings

24) How comfortable are you asking for help when facing language difficulties?

- a) Very comfortable – I'm not afraid to ask for clarification or assistance.
- b) Somewhat comfortable – I might hesitate initially but will eventually ask.
- c) Not very comfortable – Language difficulties might cause frustration or isolation.

25) How likely do you think language barriers will affect your academic performance?

- a) Very likely
- b) Somewhat likely
- c) Not very likely

26) How important is it for you to find a social group that shares your cultural background?

- (a) Very important – Having a familiar support network is essential.
- (b) Somewhat important – I'd like a mix of cultural connections.
- (c) Not very important – Openness to meeting people from diverse backgrounds is my priority.

27) Have you ever faced discrimination based on your race, ethnicity, or nationality?

- (a) Yes, frequently
- (b) Yes, occasionally
- (c) Never

28) How comfortable are you navigating situations where you might feel discriminated against?

- (a) Very comfortable – I can advocate for myself and seek support.
- (b) Somewhat comfortable – I might need some guidance on how to handle discrimination.

(c) Not very comfortable – Discrimination could be a major challenge for me

29)How comfortable are you being away from family and friends for an extended period?

(a) Very comfortable

(b) Somewhat comfortable

(c) Not very comfortable

30)What coping mechanisms do you have for dealing with stress, anxiety, or loneliness while abroad?

(a) Strong communication with family and friends back home

(b) Engaging in self-care practices

(c) Building a social support network with other students

(d) All of the above
