



EXPLORING TERM-TIME PAID WORK AMONG INDIAN INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN THE UK

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INTRODUCTION

International education has been promoted in the literature as currency to gain competitive advantages in the labour market (Altbach and Knight, 2007). Study abroad is also seen as a source of social transformation and privilege among students in developing nation due to its perceived value and quality of education that help them pursue their dream career (Adnett, 2010). There is growing evidence of student mobility and migration worldwide and students crossing the border to achieve educational attainment have been increasing as we talk (Escolano, 1986). It is assumed that students seek to secure educational advantages by paying full attention and dedication to their learning and academic life, however, a substantial amount of literature indicates that student's participation in the labour market is growing and many find working in temporary, part-time position during their term-time education for many reasons (Darmody and Smyth, 2008; Bass, 2006, 2012, 2014). This is particularly seen in developed nations i.e. the UK or Australia (Canny, 2002; Curtis and Shani, 2002). The rationale for taking part in flexible employment has been to utilise free time and work opportunities for easy money to support the high cost of living and gain soft skills through work experience. Despite all benefits, term time engagement in paid work often affect student's achievement in the class and they found themselves disadvantaged in academic achievement (Callender, 2008). The flexible employment is normally associated with poor working conditions, less pay, hard work and theorised as 'the precarious labour' which is insecure and temporary (Standing, 2011). Scholars have failed to understand why student tend to choose part-time work while in pursuit of a world-class education. This study aims to fill this lacuna by looking at Indian international students studying at a post-graduate level in British universities.

THE CONTEXT

Study abroad experiences are highly valued when it comes to labour market return of investment in international education (Rizvi, 2005 & 2011). The perceived value of study abroad attracts students and families to select anglophone/developed countries those are a global producer of knowledge and have a central stake in providing quality education to students normally coming from developing nations. The UK has been dominating as a key player in the global education market and host thousands of international students every year. These international students inspire to transform their lives through academic pursuit in the UK thus are ready to pay a higher fee and bear the high cost of living. To reduce the cost of living in a high-income country, many students choose to work part-time while studying in the UK (Tomlinson, 2008; Sherry, Thomas and Chui, 2010). This additional commitment tends to affect

their psychological, mental and physical health and focus in education which jeopardises the entire academic journey and experiences. Literature provides evidence of this growing trend and highlights the difficult transition of international students in foreign universities. The effects of engagement in paid work often complicate with the desire of gaining work exposure to add value into students' learning but they seem to compromise academic learning by reducing the time they could have devoted to learning at the university (Ross, 2008; Try 2004). The overall experience of students at university claimed to be disadvantaged by part-time work commitment and the effect of such engagement could be detrimental to some students who are not well prepared for such work. Besides, the rise of 'precarious' work which is regarded as insecure, low paid and unsafe and of a poor working condition affecting social and mental wellbeing of students who normally consider flexible work as an opportunity (Harris and McNamara 2002; Helyer and Lee, 2014). Despite, growing evidence on students' participation in precarious work, scholars have failed to understand why international student seek to engage in such precarious work and how such engagement affects their mental, social and psychological wellbeing (Duanmu, Li and Chen, 2009). India has been sending thousands of students to almost all developed nation including the UK, but we hardly know about the experiences of such precarious existence and how it affects students' academic achievements and prospects as a whole.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

This study seeks to explore the need, experiences and impact of term-time work on academic achievements of India international students in the UK. The study adopts the notion of 'The Precariat' to explain the transformation in the labour market affecting choices and experiences of student migrants in the UK (Standing, 2011).

Objectives:

- To explore what inspire Indian students to seek employment during term time in the UK?
- To understand the experiences of Indian students working as a part-time flexible employee in the UK
- To see how term-time work engagement is affecting the academic achievements of India students in the UK
- To examine the concept 'The Precariat' in relation to their experiences and what lesson could be learned from this case.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Current literature on student mobility, educational migration and politics around international education market offers useful insight into the cost and benefits to both suppliers and consumers of international education at a global level (Rizvi, 2005; Bhandari and Blumenthal, 2011, Guruz, 2011; Sidhu, 2012). On one hand, student migration contributes to the economic gain for host country which benefits from rapidly expanding education market and domination in the knowledge economy and on the other hand, it provides opportunities to people around the world to enrich their academic knowledge through quality education in a western destination. The flow of student has been vertical- from developing to a developed nation and usually favours English speaking nations including the UK and US. This is also a cross-cultural and cross border learning experiences which consist of a range of possibilities and challenges that students usually face during their transition through western education. A limited but significant amount of literature on student migration largely associated with the policy and politics which problematise student migration due to claims of exploitation of immigration routes or security and safety risks to students in the host society. This sort of literature is found in Australia (Marginson, 2011) and UK (McDonalds, 2014; Williams, 2012) where a change in the immigration policy sensitised student migration. Compared to this, scholars have been focusing on students' learning approaches, coping strategies, learning difficulties and academic attainments (Lebric et.al. 2008; Burnapp, 2006). It is found that students from developing nations often face a language barrier (Brown and Jones, 2011), lack of critical thinking (Brown, 2008), reading habits, lack of time management and plagiarism issues (Le ha, 2006) during their education in the UK (Morrison et.al. 2005; Montgomery, 2010;). Besides these much-talked topics, a growing literature suggests students taking advantages of part-time work opportunity to support their living and gain work experience which could add currency to their western academic achievements. However, this literature represents a downside of student life in the host society where students are engaged in precarious work and found struggling to cope with the effect such work could have on their academic achievements (Humphrey, 2006; Nyland et.al. 2009). Term-time work engagement often complicates the academic progress of students and increase the risk of failure or pass with grades which do not promise greater employability of their credentials (Canny 2002; Callender, 2008). This becomes paramount when students trapped in precarious work which is poor in condition and economic gain, but the cost of such engagement is so high that could lead to jeopardising their career aspirations. Given this context, scholars have failed to explain the need and impact of term-time work on the academic achievement of India students studying at a British university). This is despite India sending students to the UK in ever-increasing number for decades. This study aims to address this gap by understanding why Indian students seek to work in a precarious position in the UK during their education and what impact it has on their academic achievements (Hawthorn, 2014; Mukherjee and Chanda, 2012). This study will contribute to our understanding of 'the precariat' by using Indian student migrants as a case. It will attempt to showcase how student migrants go through a

distinct trajectory of challenges, risk and uncertainty at a very young stage of their career.

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