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Educational Migration: Lived Experiences of Female Migrants Pre & Post-Pandemic in India

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Abstract

The women of the current generation are more aware of their capabilities and aspirations. Thus, they are willing to migrate wherever the best opportunities take them. With globalisation, convenience and favourable circumstances have entered the majority of our lives. They have more self-esteem and societal respect and are increasingly functioning as more independent, autonomous beings capable of living more fulfilling lives. The general notion of migration in India is always linked to the unorganised sector. However, that constitutes only one type of migration. It categorises migration reasons as work/employment, business, education, marriage, moving after birth, moving with a household, and any other. Despite all of the empowerment and benefits of women migrating for education, they still face challenges and discrimination while negotiating traditional norms and expectations as they seek to redefine their private and public spheres. Whether intrastate or interstate or migrating from other countries in India, women face difficulties based on language, culture, religion, identity, etc. Covid-19 has affected every aspect of the world, from the economy, employment, job security, and medical advancement to the most minor sectors. Academia was another sector that suffered similarly. The migrated students faced many changes and challenges due to the reverse migration caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the lockdown. Female students, on whom there was the pressure of domestic chores (because of our patriarchal society), were most likely to be adversely affected. Thus, this paper will look at the challenges, experiences, and burdens that these female migrants face. The paper will make use of various sets of interviews conducted with various female migrant participants.

Key Words: Educational Migration, Female Students, COVID-19, Lived Experiences, Double Burden, Gender

Introduction

With globalisation, ease and comfort have entered our lives. Its consequences have made individuals not only dream but fulfil them as well. The females of the current generation are more enlightened about their dreams, aspirations and capabilities. On this ground, they are willing to mobile wherever the best opportunities take them. Due to obstacles in achieving their dreams and few opportunities available to them at their native place, women migrate for various reasons such as educational facilities, job opportunities, income generation and other factors. They have higher self-esteem and societal respect and are increasingly functioning as more independent, autonomous beings capable of leading more meaningful lives (Madhok & Raj, 2011).

The Census of India lists the reasons for which individuals opt for migration. These reasons include work/employment, business, education, marriage, moving after birth, moving with a household, etc. However, the general notion of migration in India has always been linked to the unorganised sector. However, that constitutes only one section of migration. The Census of India divides migration into two types, i.e., by birthplace and by place of last residence. When a person is listed in the census at a place, i.e., a village or town, distinct from their place of birth, they are considered a migrant by place of birth.

The theory of intervening options attempts to describe the likelihood of migration. It states that opportunities to settle at the destination influence likelihood more than distance or population pressure at the starting point. According to an IndiaSpend analysis of Census data (Hindustan Times, 2017), women who migrated for work and education grew faster than men who moved for similar reasons between 2001 and 2011. According to the Zelinsky Model of Migration Transition, the kind of migration that takes place within a country is determined by its level of development or type of society. It focuses on the stages of economic and demographic development. It argues that demographic conditions and migratory patterns are related to urbanisation, industrialisation and modernisation levels. The youth will likely be attracted to cities, states, or places in India with high wages and strong labour markets. Due to this, these places are more likely to have higher educational institutes (Chandrashekar & Sharma, 2014). According to Lee (1975), each location has unique positive and negative characteristics. While positive aspects draw people in or attract individuals from other places, harmful factors repel them. Education has been identified as a catalyst for social, economic, and cognitive change in sociological research (Williams, 2009).

Despite all of the empowerment and benefits of women migrating for educational opportunities, they continue to face challenges and discrimination as they negotiate traditional norms and expectations in their efforts to redefine their private and public spheres. Women face difficulties because of language, culture, religion, identity, and other factors, whether they are intrastate or interstate migrants or migrants from other countries in India. Mallet et al. (1999) observe that sociocultural qualities and behaviours are more challenging to change and are usually the last to adjust during acculturation.

In Indian society, gender inequality in higher education has long been a problem, especially for females from rural areas and lower socioeconomic backgrounds. India has made great strides in achieving universal school enrollment over the past few decades and has implemented measures to address issues like gender disparity in the classroom. However, there is still a deficit in schooling (Manjulata & Sapna, 2018). Traditional role expectations lead to gender inequities. Women still confront unfair gender roles in traditional families with higher education levels. Standpoint epistemology contends that marginalised groups have different perspectives on what and why something is true, valuable, moral, or just. In addition, it asserts that women are underrepresented in science, methodology, research, and other fields of knowledge

Women have historically had a lower status than men in patriarchal nations. They are given subordinate roles in various professions and specialities because they are considered less than men. The academic community is one such area where women experience prejudice regarding accessibility and opportunity. Significant gender discrepancies in education still exist in many contexts despite tremendous improvements, mainly hurting girls. 125.5 million boys and 118.5 million girls do not attend school worldwide. According to UNESCO, women still comprise about two-thirds of all illiterate adults.

The majority of studies on migration have tended to concentrate on permanent migration. The majority of migration studies conducted in our nation have focused on migratory labourers, then on returned migration, refugees, and other displaced individuals (Longkumer, 2010). Research on the migration of Indian college students has been comparatively underutilised. And research on female migrant students is a little hard to be pondered in the patriarchal society.

Thus, this paper aims to reflect on the experiences and encounters those female migrant students in India face. It further seeks to enlighten and break away from the general notion of migration, especially in India, as an unorganised sector. It intends to discover how gender, language, religion, region, and societal expectations impact their migration experience and adaptation level in the new habitat. It further aims to critically understand the interrelation of female migrant students, the COVID-19 pandemic and reverse migration. This would give a comprehensive analysis of their experiences in uncertain times.

Educational Migration and Gender

The economic, societal, and human development of any nation depends on higher education. India is home to one of the world's most extensive higher education systems, with resources for instruction and training in almost every field of human creativity and intellectual pursuit (Swain, 2022). It serves as the basis for much contemporary technology and is also the source of energy that facilitates our daily activities.

Educational migration can be defined as the migration done for educational purposes. Raghuram (2013) considers student migration as a distinct form as knowledge being the motivation and rationale for migration. Students' educational migration decisions were discovered to be embedded in lifelong mobility aspirations. The latest report by the National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA) (2012) confirmed that lack of access to higher education is concentrated in a few states, which helps explain student migration to more developed destinations with better educational facilities. Jha and Kumar (2017) suggested that students from deprived regions are forced to migrate in search of better higher education opportunities mainly in professional and technical streams. Availability of the educational institution is the major priority taken into consideration when making a decision to migrate. Apart from educational institutes rankings, students carefully considered the city in which the institution was located in terms of living and studying costs, quality of life, employment opportunities, lifestyle, infrastructure, and other sociocultural factors when selecting a higher education institution.

The interactions between each individual make up the social system, and society is a particular type of social system. Society bestows power, and this has an impact on gender. Patriarchal societies and families, like India, prioritise their male child's dreams and aspirations over their female child's. There is vast recognised inequality in terms of access, opportunities,

achievability and possibilities for women in India. There are considerable differences in women's and men's access to opportunities to exert power over educational structure in their societies. Gender identities and complex family relations that arbitrated and interfered with migration, however, increasingly came into focus, and women and men mattered to immigration differently (Sondhi & Raghuram. 2021). There is inequality in gender relations, and societal institutions define the woman's status and ability to participate in decision-making. Since migration is majorly the function of the family/household decision-making process, the relative status of females within the household significantly influences it (Mahapatro, 2013).

The desire of all young women to pursue higher education and employment has increased due to globalisation. Although globalisation has had an impact on society, particularly for women, Madhok & Raj (2011) point out that there is still a split between the haves and the have-nots, the wealthy and the impoverished, the English-speaking and the vernacular-speaking, for which the judgement is still pending. According to Peggy Froerer (2012), a girl's educational level and aspirations affect her likelihood of achieving those goals. These prospects' potential is mainly governed by social and economic limitations and factors outside of their control. The idea of mobility functions as an escape from societal control and roles, in contrast to imagined futures associated with pursuing lofty aims and global ambitions.

Discussions between academics and policymakers have focused on the increasing importance of students. Studies on this group have proliferated as a result of the recent sharp increase in international educational migration. These studies have found the presence of acculturation, alienation, language proficiency, intercultural communication, social fluidity, and racism, among many in their experiences of migration. Little research has been done on educational migration from a gendered lens.

When making a decision to migrate women have to deal with the questions of safety and security in a new and unfamiliar place away from familiar home spaces (Sondhi & King, 2017). Certain minority groups experience exclusion and, occasionally, disengagement due to the racial and gender composition. Women migrants appear to encounter double discrimination based on their formal documentary status and their racialised and gendered performances (Li & Zizzi, 2018). Social interactions among students outside of the classroom highlight the ways in which racism and gendered power dynamics intersect with the destination. For instance, O'Connor (2019) highlights how Muslim women studying at an Irish university feel a lower

sense of belonging in part because they do not feel comfortable socialising in pubs. Sondhi (2019) points out in her research on Indian students in Canada that the expected gendered and often heteronormative performance in the majority of higher education institutions leads to the exclusion of those whose gender subjectivities are not in alignment with these hegemonic performances.

In the Indian context, minute studies have been done concerning internal educational migration. Thus, there is a need for more investigation in the domain, with an emphasis on female student migrants.

According to the United Nations report "Education during COVID-19 and Beyond", the COVID-19 pandemic has affected nearly 1.6 billion learners in more than 190 countries and all continents (Bharti, 2020). Covid-19 affected every aspect of the world, from the economy, employment, job security, and medical advancement to the most minor sectors. Academia was another sector that suffered similarly. The pandemic brought up unexpected difficulties for the education system. Passive learning, obstacles to high-quality research, ill-equipped professors for online classrooms, declining student enrollment, declining Placement trends, and an impact on students' mental and psychological well-being all had an impact. In their findings, Singh et al. (2022) acknowledged that during the pandemic, students had compromised learning and placement experience, inadequate digital resources and pressure to repay loans. In accordance with their destination and migration stream, student migrants were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic to varied degrees.

The migrated students faced several changes and challenges due to the reverse migration caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the lockdowns. Female students were most likely to be adversely affected by the pressure of domestic chores (because of our patriarchal society). The internal migration of students in India has not been as widely examined as the Indian students who migrate to pursue their studies overseas. During the pandemic, reports on the disruptions caused by the pandemic on student migration were mainly about international student migrants (Singh et al., 2022).

Theoretical Framework

Migration as a phenomenon holds different rationalities for different categories of migrants; some choose to move voluntarily, while others may be forced to move. Different reasons, patterns and motives are behind an individual's migration decision. Stouffer's (1940,1960)

theory of intervening opportunities attempts to describe the likelihood of migration. It says that likelihood is influenced most by opportunities to settle at the destination and less by distance or population pressure at the starting point. Owing to the uneven distribution of universities throughout different regions, mobility takes place where universities are more readily available and of a higher calibre than in their own countries. The Zelinsky Model of Migration Transition (1971) thus claims that the type of migration that occurs within a country depends on how developed it is or what type of society it is.

Certain factors play a major role in the process of migration and its decision-making. These factors have positive and negative attributes attached to them. Lee (1966) divides factors causing migration into two groups, i.e. Push Factors and Pull Factors. Push factors include things that are unfavourable about the area that one lives in, such as not enough opportunities, less educational institutions, pollution etc. Pull factors include things that attract one to another area, such as the availability of opportunities, education, security, etc.

The push factors include inadequate educational facilities, technical limitations, no exposure to personality development, no job-orientated courses, low growth rate, gender discrimination, and fewer entrepreneurial opportunities, among many others. On the other hand, Pull factors include educational opportunities, job security, accessibility, no power dynamics, gender neutrality and sensitivity (Beine et al., 2014; Bhardwaj (2019).

In India, feminists from marginalised groups have emphasised the need for such a strategy to understand and address their situation. Ruth Manorma contends that caste, class and gender all impact the females' experience and argues for an integrated approach to consider this (MV, 2018). By recognising that all facets of identity enrich women's lived experiences while compounding and complicating the various forms of oppression and marginalisation they encounter, critical race theorist Kimberlé Crenshaw introduced the concept of intersectionality in 1989. She provided a framework that must be applied to all circumstances involving women.

Intersectionality is an analytical framework for comprehending how a person's social and political identities interact to produce various forms of privilege and discrimination. It means that women can not separate out multiple injustices because they experience them all at once due to intersectionality. Women's experiences in different intersectional social contexts are influenced by their intersecting identities, which also adds to the load on individuals who suffer from numerous subordinate identities and obscures their challenges (Nair, 2020).

Sandra Harding, an American feminist theorist, coined the term standpoint theory to categorise epistemologies that emphasise women's knowledge. It asserts that the perspective of the oppressed group should take precedence over the perspective of members of the dominant culture. It states that critical knowledge-generation projects should be started from the viewpoints of oppressed people. The dominant knowledge systems and practices that underestimate the value of women's contributions to epistemology exclude them from study and inquiry, and portray women's epistemic advantage as secondary, all of which worsen gender hierarchies, are opposed by feminist standpoint theory (Chauhan, 2022). According to the standpoint theory, one's knowledge is influenced by their positionality as well as their social, political, and historical context.

The experiences of exclusion produce different responses. Some women assert their agency by withdrawing from spaces in which they do not feel included and find other inclusive spaces instead (O'Connor, 2019). Still, others choose to adapt their gender performances to fit better into hegemonic gender frames while continuing to disrupt other norms, such as race and sexuality (Sondhi, 2019).

Research Methodology

Since the paper aims to examine women's experiences with educational migration, a mixed research method, both qualitative and quantitative, was used to collect data. The findings were based on primary data gathered through interviews. A structured questionnaire was prepared for the interview with open ended questions. The snowball sampling method is used to collect data. The purpose of choosing the snowball method was to study the hidden population.

The questionnaire was developed with seven sections with a total of 26 questions, namely Demographic Information (6 questions), Pre-Migration Experience (3 questions), Migration Experience (4 questions), During the Pandemic (4 questions), Challenges and Empowerment (5 questions), Post-Migration Reflections (3 questions) and Additional Comments (1 question). The specifics of the study's goals were explained to each participant. The instructed questionnaire was presented to the respondents who had provided their informed consent.

The study's population consists of 50 female students who have moved to gain educational opportunities to fulfil their dreams and aspirations. The respondents interviewed were aged between 18-35, with migration periods ranging from 1 year to 10 years. The researcher got in

contact with respondents with the help of the snowball sampling method. The respondents were further selected according to their availability. Some of the areas where the researcher interviewed respondents were libraries, hostels, canteens and sometimes when respondents were loitering on the campus.

The respondents had a background in various fields, including medicine, commerce, women's studies, B.Sc., biochemistry, BA, MA, teaching, and MBA, amongst others. The respondents interviewed belonged to different regions and were studying in different educational institutions in India. The respondents' different cultural, social, geographical, and economic identities are important for gathering critical and compressive data. This would give a better and more inclusive understanding of their experiences, encounters and exposure to the new habitat.

Findings and Discussion

The loneliness that comes with moving from one place to another is felt immediately. Communication is vital to life, yet it can be challenging to handle alone due to a language barrier. The same is true of how their culture and religion influence one's identity. Losing religious ceremonies, social networks, and cultural norms, changing to a new community, and adjusting to identity and self-perception are only a few of the difficulties faced by migrants that may have an impact on their mental health (Dinesh & Matthew, 2005). India is a melting pot of cultures and religions; therefore, one recognises cultural distinctions even when travelling from one region to another within the same state. Depending on a learner's psychological and physical health, social relationships, and broader institutional and environmental factors, their educational experiences will vary (Hart, 2018).
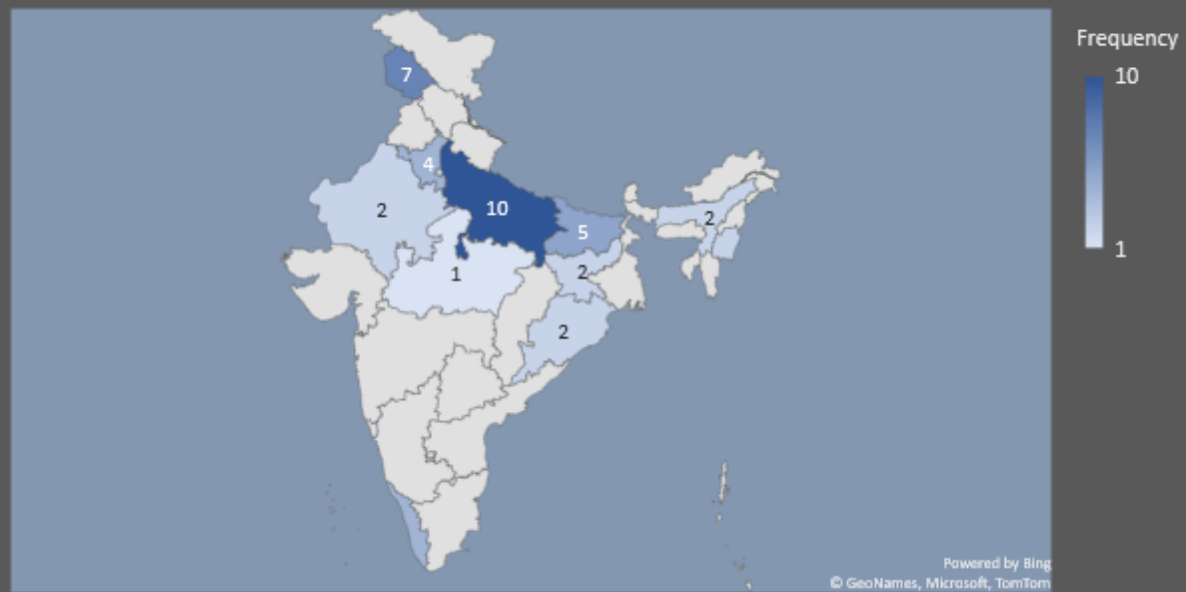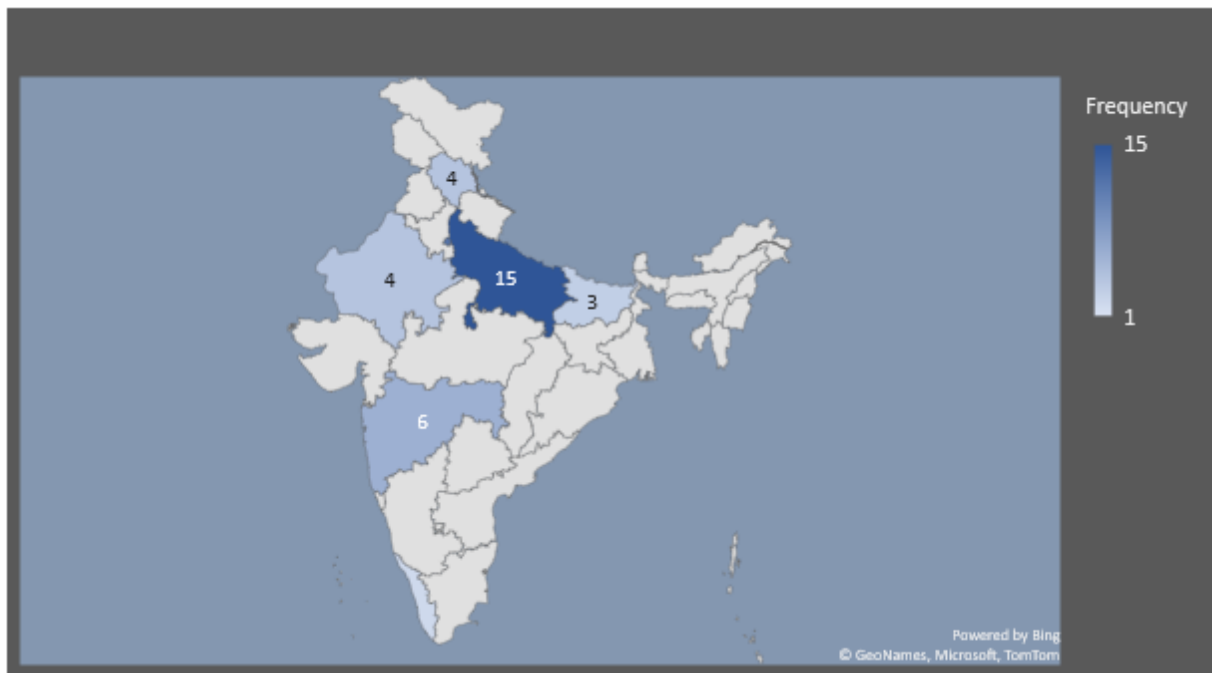
Demographic information of students interviewed

This section focuses on the demographic information of the respondents, focusing on their age, native state and destination state.

Age

- 17-20
- 21-23
- 24-26
- 27-30
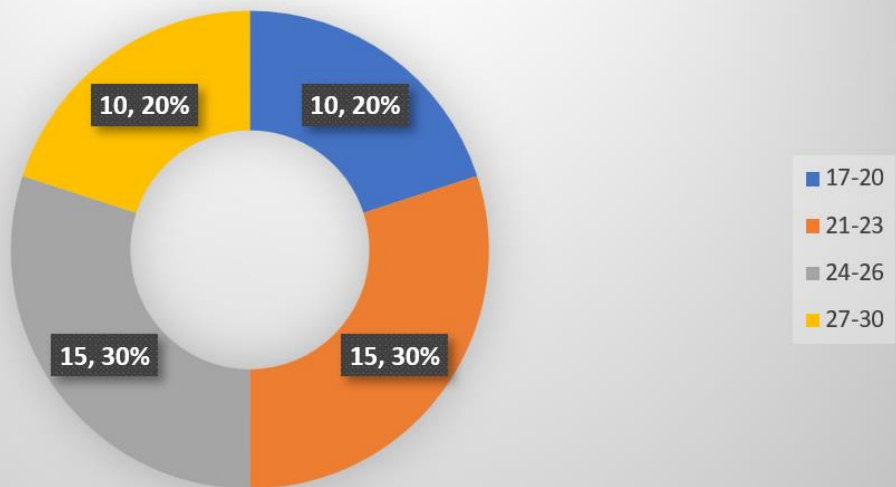
Native State

Pre-Migration Experience

This section of the paper deals with the experiences of migrant female students before doing migration. It comprises three questions concerned with the motivation, challenges they anticipated and the reaction of family/friends regarding educational migration.

Respondents reflected on the importance of quality education and the numerous opportunities that would be available to them after migration. They also hoped for quality higher education from a prestigious university or academic institution that was not available in their native place. Anand (2015) found the lack of quality education facilities to be the major reason for the out-migration of students from Bihar. There was also a desire for better learning, exposure and independence, which encouraged them to migrate. Findings from recent studies on migration from Northeast India to Delhi suggest that the main drivers are the dearth of educational infrastructure, escalating unemployment issues, and social and political unrest (Marchang, 2011; Remesh, 2012; Sachdeva, 2018; Usha & Shimray, 2010).

The respondents were aware of potential differences in their new environment, including those related to language, religion, gender, food, customs, and geography. In a patriarchal society, it is particularly difficult for women to travel in order to follow their aspirations. They move because they are encouraged to do so by someone in their social circle

or their family. They frequently have to deal with rejection of their decisions from the people they know. They frequently relocate as a result of their own volition in order to realize their aspirations.

Migration Experience

This section deals with the experiences of female students after migrating to a new habitat. it deals with four questions which are concerned with the challenges at arrival and stay. This section also inquiries about who was their support system during their migration and transition. Lastly, it tends to know the differences in terms of societal, cultural and religious expectations between the new and native habitats.

At first, adjusting to a new place was difficult. The respondent experienced loneliness and homesickness as a result of difficulties adjusting to their new environment. Regional, religious, and cultural disparities existed, and it was challenging to get a sense of the new place's dialect and customs. They encountered gendered obstacles at the same time, such as social expectations and judgments, which made it harder for them to acclimate to a new place. In spite of these obstacles, the responders made adjustments gradually. They immediately settled in with the senior support and friendships. Paradoxically, this made matters worse because there was little assistance from the administration, wardens and staff. As a result, they went through a lot of highs and lows in exciting and emotional situations. They were excited that they had moved to a place where their dreams and feelings could finally find a voice, even though acclimating to the new environment was difficult. The respondents also disclosed the challenges they faced in locating appropriate housing or accommodation, which escalated significantly because of their religious beliefs.

Limitations on attire and excursion duration are significant concerns. Additionally, there were instances of self-consciousness because moving to a new location was difficult and often resulted in the imposition of other's opinions, which caused people to lose confidence in themselves.

During the Pandemic: Effect of the Covid-19 on Migration

This section deals with the COVID-19 Pandemic and its effect on migrant female students. It comprises four questions concerned with how COVID-19, lockdown, and revere migration impacted their professional and personal lives, and any disruptions they faced in terms of academic progress or research or internship.

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted people's lives, particularly regarding education. Most respondents struggled to adjust to online learning and the lack of physical classes. Some developed terrible habits due to the disruption in their education. They faced challenges as they were expected to adjust quickly and be multitaskers. The pandemic also caused feelings of hopelessness and affected mental health. Overall, the pandemic severely affected education, motivation, and daily routines.

The experiences of respondents also shed light on the impact of migration and the pandemic on the individual's personal and professional life. It highlights the difficulties faced during travel and the lack of opportunities for professional growth. They also felt irritated and experienced problems with academics. The individual experienced disruptions and difficulties during their extended degree period, relying heavily on technology for online studies. Slow internet and lack of interactive classes were challenges. The lack of offline classes made it difficult to maintain discipline, but the family accommodated their needs. Academic progress was slower, and they felt that studying only online was ineffective. Lack of accessibility affected their ability to attend offline internships, resulting in a loss of academic learning.

The impact on academics was negative due to reverse migration. They had to migrate back to their native place due to multiple lockdowns. Initially, it was immensely challenging to adjust at home as their surroundings of study changed. And, the home was the place where they used to come to holiday and enjoy but not to be professionally engaged. Reverse migration had a significant impact on female students. The patriarchal society we live in views and associates females with the home and its duty. Feminity is linked with household chores. So, when female students migrated back to their homes, they were unconsciously expected to support the female members of the house in their duties and be engaged in household work like cooking, washing, cleaning, ironing, etc. Ironically, this was not accepted by the male children of the house, as echoed by the majority of respondents. This caused a double burden on the female students. The burdens mentioned earlier didn't only have physical characteristics, but they also impacted female students mentally and psychologically. Neither were they able to concentrate on their professional academic life nor were they able to mingle with their family members due to the gender discrimination they faced.

However, some respondents highlighted the positive experience of the pandemic. To them, the pandemic provided a break from college and taught them the importance of privacy and

education. It was noticed that personal growth had occurred, and the individual felt more responsible and mature. A respondent mentioned coming from a well-off family, so the impact on financial stability was minimal. For some respondents, the migration had a positive impact as it allowed for the exploration of different parts of the world, exposure to diverse cultures, and the development of necessary skills for personal and professional life. In terms of their personal life, they become closer to their family.

Some respondents had mixed experiences. Initially, it was hard, but as they had to come up with life's pace, their families' responsibilities, expectations, and aspirations bound them to adjust to the pandemic phenomena. They felt a sense of loss but were at ease ultimately. The individual found it challenging but manageable during online classes, with support from their family and teachers. They prioritised education while also helping with household chores. Time management and patience were necessary during the pandemic, and they used a digital planner to divide tasks and ensure completion. The support of essential and relevant technologies enabled them to cope with hardships.

Challenges and Empowerment

This section talks about the challenges faced by them. It consists of five questions concerned with the encounters of prejudices, discrimination and unfairness. It further aims to be aware of how they dealt with these counters.

Respondents encountered differences while migrating, such as adapting to a new place, safety and security, mental health, restrictions and differential treatment. These challenges further can be specified as facing patriarchal attitudes, studying while living in a hostel, dealing with formalities, experiencing discrimination based on religion, struggling with regional and language differences, and lacking security and safe accommodation.

Instances of differential treatment were reported by respondents based on gender, language, culture, religion, region, food and other aspects. Respondents highlighted language as one of the main hurdles in adapting to the new place. Though they were aware that they would have to learn and assimilate into an entirely new habitat with a different language background, it was still difficult and burdensome for them. Even if they were aware of the local language of the new place, their tone or accent paved the way for the initial discrimination, and they were mocked for that. Some respondents also echoed the experience of being duped as they could not understand the local language smoothly. With language, respondents faced regional

differences. Respondents from diverse regional identities with different vernaculars were often ridiculed.

Respondents also acknowledged encountering gender discrimination in their personal as well as professional lives. As women migrants, there were many social limitations for them. In terms of their personal lives, coming from middle-class conservative family or not fully developed places, a lot of things were not comfortable and normal for them, which became barriers to their adaptation level. In terms of professional lives, to reach their institute or do their research work or explore a new place, they had to travel a lot to unknown places. The respondents mention travelling alone at night as a common occurrence. Due to this, most of the time, they subconsciously were in fear of safety and security. Thus, this limited their social mobility. Some respondents experienced gender discrimination and bias in their campus and classes. Respondents echoed that gender equality is a far-fetched dream in the real world. There was a general inherent bias towards the male gender for stereotypical reasons. Some respondents reflected that their field was not only male-dominated; patriarchy reigned supreme there. Every day was a challenge for them, and their issues were not considered seriously.

Discrimination based on student migrants' food habits is concerning and goes against the principles of inclusivity. It is possible to create a more inclusive atmosphere for all kids by acknowledging and valuing the diversity of eating choices. Peers and teachers who are not aware of or sensitive to cultural differences may stereotype and pass judgment on the dietary choices of immigrant kids. Stereotypes about foreign eating habits can arise from cultural ignorance and social conventions. Organizations lacking comprehensive policies could unintentionally foster a climate that sustains prejudice based on dietary preferences. When their dietary choices are the target of criticism or ridicule, migrant students may feel alone and alienated, which can exacerbate feelings of hopelessness and loneliness. Long-term mental health effects of prejudice against migrant students may include feelings of discouragement and depression. Addressing discrimination related to their food habits is crucial for fostering a supportive educational environment. By understanding the causes and effects of such discrimination, institutions can implement interventions to promote inclusivity and protect the mental health of all students.

Respondents also highlighted how they experienced low self-esteem because of the rude behaviours of their wardens in hostels and landlords of their paying guests (PG). Essential compassion and politeness are expected from them. Migrating to a new place demands a lot of

fear, anxiety and tension, and not getting proper treatment from the authorities or administration blows the morale of the migrant students away. Respondents also echoed differential treatment due to their religious identity. Their religious identity hurdled their access to accommodation. They also encountered bias, stigma and stereotypes due to their religious identity.

On the other hand, some respondents experienced a positive impact of educational migration as it helped them to live independently. Living away from their families has helped them to grow, gain experience, and become more confident and independent. It has also exposed them to new opportunities, allowing them to learn about the world, society, and people. Additionally, it has improved their ability to adapt and adjust to new environments. Living independently has contributed to their personal growth and empowerment.

Female migrant students challenge and subvert the traditional patriarchal framework of their new habitat by every act of expressing their preferred gender roles, frames and performances.

Post Migration Reflection

This section comprises three questions, which are focused on personal growth and their future plans. This part investigated and explored various reasons for staying or returning home, going abroad for studies, and exploring new places.

Respondents are optimistic about their future and are making choices that they believe will benefit their careers. Despite facing differential treatment due to their different identities, respondents feel a sense of comfort and love where they currently live. They are constantly learning and willing to relocate for new opportunities.

They have ambitions to study abroad and make conscious decisions. They have public relations experience and a solid determination to achieve their dreams. Some of the reasons mentioned include personal commitments, pursuing further education, career advancement, job opportunities, professional and personal growth, completing a degree, and settling down in a particular place. The decision to stay or go depends on individual circumstances and available opportunities.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Gender differences arise from the distribution of power by society. This paper, in its entirety, is a tapestry woven with the threads of diverse experiences. It portrays individuals' challenges in pursuing education, growth, and opportunity. From the anticipation of migration to the realities of adaptation, from the disruptive influence of a pandemic to the dynamics of discrimination, the narrative underscores the complexity of human experiences in an interconnected world. Migration is not merely a change of location; it is a transformative journey that shapes identities, broadens perspectives, and fosters personal evolution. The complex process of migration, adaptation, and personal growth that people experience when they go to new regions is illustrated in this paper.

The complexity of personal expectations, where navigation might be challenging due to gender conventions, regional cultural variances, and religious issues. It becomes apparent that while migration offers new opportunities, it exposes individuals to discrimination, security concerns, and societal biases. The accounts of gender and religious discrimination underscore the importance of fostering inclusive environments. However, within these hardships, there is a resounding theme of empowerment. Facing these challenges head-on has led to personal growth, independence, and the acquisition of skills that extend beyond academics. From the anticipation of migration to the realities of adaptation, from the disruptive influence of a pandemic to the dynamics of discrimination, the narrative underscores the complexity of human experiences in an interconnected world.

Implementing inclusive and preventive strategies is critical to ensure that female student migrants feel at ease in their new setting. The first and most crucial thing educational institutions may do to make them feel comfortable is implement measures. Institutions ought to take action to help students to become acquainted with the campus. To help students feel at ease and make the adjustment process easier, educators should embrace gender diversity and the usage of different languages. Both in terms of the individual and the larger picture, migratory students should try to engage in conversation with others in their hostels, campus, and other literary groups. It would help them to share and discuss their difficulties and understand the experiences of others as well. Thus, the process and result of socialisation would give them a platform to cope up with issues they encounter in the new location. There is also a need for gender-inclusive policies and discussions at the university, college, and national levels.

The government should keep in mind the gendered perspective and experiences. It is imperative that we consider the viewpoint of female students in a world where gender roles and prejudices are not equal.

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