

Brain Drain Intentions: Role of Internet and Social Media in Stimulating Migration Decision

Dr Bhawana Bhardwaj

Assistant Professor

Himachal Pradesh University

bhawnabhardwaj113@gmail.com

Dr Dipanker Sharma

Associate Professor

Shoolini University University

dipankersharma@gmail.com

Abstract

Social media and internet are acknowledged as important growth engines in modern world. Internet and social media has touched political, social, cultural dimensions of a country and also have played a role in connecting people across the globe. Since long, developing countries are facing problem of exodus of workers i.e. people are leaving their home countries due to various reasons. Social connections and easy accessibility of information has influenced migration intentions also. Since social media and internet has penetrated each aspect of our lives it also has influenced intentions and decisions to stay or leave their home country. Internet and social media acts as a major source of information for prospective migrants. This paper highlights various factors through which media and internet can influence or stimulate migration decisions.

Introduction

Brain drain owing to cross border migration of skilled professionals has always remained a matter of concern for developing countries. Numbers of studies have focused on cross border mobility of people which leads to brain drain. Some of the major factors that can act as a reason for emigration of human capital are economic, political, social and cultural factors. In contemporary era where internet and social media has touched and affected political, social, cultural factors with in a country it also has played a role in connecting people across the countries. Social media and internet are acknowledged as one of the important growth engines in modern world. They have connected the remotest corners of the nation with modern world. As per a report, India has around 462.1 million internet users (which makes approx 34 percent of population) out of which 430.3 million use the internet from mobile phones (79% of the total web traffic). 282 million are active users spending approximately 7 hours per day on the internet.

Active social media penetration in India is 19% of the total population and global average is 42% of the total population (TRAI, 2018).

With the technological revolution internet and social media have become important component of individual's lifestyle. It has also connected individuals with the outer world and has become an important mode of communication. Communication pattern has changed and evolved with time. Human communication started with the oral communication and with time it evolved to script, to print, wired electronics, wireless electronics and lastly to digital medium. Digital media and internet in the early 1990s brought paradigm shift in communication pattern and channel. Digital technology has compressed the distance between national and global boundaries (Harvey, 1991). Ideas, views and Information offered and shared by digital media leads to the creation of a network and influences intercultural relationships of virtual community (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). Internet and social media has altered our thinking, actions and lives. Hence, internet and social media have confirmed their impact on each facet of humanity (Chen, 2012).

Since long, developing countries are facing a problem of exodus of workers i.e people are leaving their home countries due to various reasons (Chaichian, 2011; Kainth, 2009). The emigrants also take away their skills, knowledge and competence along with them and are harnessed by developed countries. This phenomenon is referred to as brain drain. Factors namely demand of trained and skilled professional in developed countries, competitive salaries, superior technology, standards of living, quality of work life, and career progression etc. are some of the dominant factors leading to brain drain (Hazarika, 2013; Docquier and Marfouk, 2006). Since social media and internet has penetrated each aspect of our lives it also has influenced intensions and decisions to stay or leave their home country.

Previous studies related to brain drain have focused on the antecedents and outcomes of the emigration. However, the role of social media and internet is still to be explored. There is a dearth of study related to role social media and internet in influencing brain drain intensions. In this paper an attempt has been made to answer the question "To what extent and how internet and digital media influences the intensions of people to move from home country to foreign location. The paper will contribute to literature related to brain drain and have practical implications to policy makers as well.

Brain Drain: An Overview

It has been estimated that around 3.25 percent of world's population live outside their home country (UN, 2016) out of which 58 per cent live in the developed countries. As per International migration report, 2017, United States (46.1 million), Germany (11.1 million) and Russia (11.0 million) are the top destination country. Shortages of human resource in skilled professions like medical, engineering and sciences etc. have been faced by both developed and developing countries. Likelihood of increased competition to lure best talent from developing countries leads to shortage of human resources in source countries. Since developed countries provide better salary, infrastructure, facilities, lifestyles etc. the professional from developing

countries prefer to move to such countries. Resultantly developing countries face a problem of human resource shortage and brain drain.

Various factors like salary, employment, training, better infrastructure, attributed, quality of life etc. have been identified as some of the major reasons for brain drain. However, with advancement of technology is also playing a role in migration decision (Bhardwaj B, 2017). Availability and access of relevant information related to migration and destination country is one of the important factors influencing migration decisions. Internet and Social media can play a significant role behind motivation or reinforcing migration decision (Braga, 2007). Earlier studies related to brain drain and migrations of human resources have been much focused on antecedent or outcome of brain drain. However, in contemporary world internet and social media has affected each aspect of life. We cannot ignore their role in influencing brain drain intentions. This paper tries to contribute to the research related to brain drain by understanding the role of social media and internet in influencing brain drain intention. Various research works related to migration, brain drain, social media and internet have been reviewed to understand how internet can affect brain drain interventions.

Role of Internet and Social Media in Influencing Brain Drain Intentions: Social Network Theory

Social network theory focuses on the role of social relationships in transmitting information, channeling personal or media influence, and enabling attitudinal or behavioral change (Liu, Sindhu, Beacom and Valente, 2017). Traditionally, migration decision has been taken on the basis of information collected from various sources such as network abroad, consultants, relatives and friends. However, with internet and social media penetrating individual lives dependence has largely shifted on these areas. Use of internet and social media has marked their presence worldwide with around 95 percent population residing in an area covered by a mobile network.

Internet usage and smart phone penetration worldwide is on rise. Increased internet usage and smart phones diffusion worldwide is growing and influencing each facet of our life. The population of individual using internet has increased from 1,024 million in 2005 to 3,488 million in 2016 (ICT Facts and Figures, 2016). Migration decision and intentions largely depend upon the information availability which can come from sources such as friends, family, relatives, previous migrants or social network. However, with digital revolution internet has become one of the most widely used and obvious sources of information. Due to massive information, available on internet and social media it is affecting our social life (Graham, Schroeder and Taylor, 2013; Dutton, 2009).

Media plays an important role in influencing views and actions of individuals (McCullagh, 2002; Kohring & Matthes, 2007; UNESCO, 2015). Migration decisions are influenced by availability of information and internet and social media stimulates migration by making quick access to information about destination country. Thus, the information available from these sources helps in clarifying hazy ideas of migration and potential destinations.

Accessibility to information through internet help in discovery of place and affects virtual plans for emigration.

A durable network based on friendship, kinship, community etc. make up strong ties acts as a social capital. This network has always proved as a facilitating tool for migration. However, with internet and social media people with brain drain intension find it easy to gain information which facilitates their movement. Thus, as the social network theory suggests the migration intensions and decisions can be influenced by human networks that create and facilitate moving. It has been observed that strong network between the people of same origin (e.g. same country) increases the chances of migration flow as well (Massey, 1990 and Polyzos, 2006). Admittance to relevant information related to labour market and the risks associated while entering the foreign country, substantially reduce the costs cross border mobility which in turn promote international travel. Few years ago, international migration was referred to as radical departure which totally cut the social relationship of the emigrants (Faist, 2000). However, internet and social media has changed the trend facilitating a close connection between immigrants and non-immigrants (Vertovec, 2006; Horst, 2006).

Brain drain and emigration decisions are not impulsive rather have a well distinguished stages (Brown & More 1970; McHugh 1984; Kley 2011). Internet and social media play a role in each phase starting from the phase of intension to move till the settling downing in foreign country. Support of internet and social media helps in overcoming constraints and helps in finding out new places (Thulin & Vilhelmson 2016; Schutz, 2011). The information flow on the internet facilitates adjustment of the expatriates (Hattingh, Matthee and Lotriet, 2014). Customized, simple and rationalized information regarding locations, education, culture, jobs, education, housing, social, political and social environments in distant places makes socializing and adaptation easier. Thus, it is evident that migration interest, intentions, and action are influenced by social media and internet (Stevenson 2009; Hiller & Franz 2004 ; DaVanzo 1981 & Massey 1990, Thulin and Vilhelmson, 2014).

Another way internet and social media plays a role in migration decisions and intensions is web-based place-marketing strategies. Online marketing campaigns attracts visitors, tourists, and migrants (Urban 2002; Gertner et al. 2007). This further instigate migration interest and migration intentions (Vilhelmson & Thulin 2014). Lack of information enhances the chances of impulsiveness of a prospective migrant (Burrell & Anderson, 2008; Thulin and Vilhelmson, 2016). In such situation, internet and social media can be used for accessing information and migration opportunities (Hiller and Franz, 2004). Internet provides scope for new opportunities and thus reinforces decision to move (Burrell and Anderson, 2008). It also plays a role in changing perception and decision to leave or love a country (Palm, 2002). Moreover, a positive relation has been identified between migration planning and internet usage (Vilhelmson & Thulin, 2013).

Another important way social media and internet trigger migration intensions is that it acts a key tool of communication and networking. It has been observed that there is increase in the size of prospective migrants' network with increased use of internet (Lif, 2016). That is the

reason that these virtual networks are also being used to forecast migration flows. This is one of the factors that affect the choice of destination country as well. Also, it facilitates accessibility and insights of culture as well as lifestyle of target country. This increase in openness and exposure reinforce chances of migration (Braga, 2017). Motivational effects of internet and social network on potential migrants has been supported by various studies (Wegge, 1998; Massey et al., 1993; Lif, 2016).

Expatriates share information through online social network regarding geophysical conditions, location and thus prove a platform of interaction and clarification of doubts by prospective migrants. This information permits users to conveniently find their connections in the destination countries. Expatriates settlement and adjustment in foreign country has always remained an area of concern and has been considered as a major reason for their failure. Social media and internet may make adjustment easier by developing social contacts. Access to digital maps through internet makes easy availability of spatial information and also provides information regarding travel routes (Lif, 2016). Internet and social media play a significant role be familiar with undefined horizon, and make users acquainted with new places and locations (Schutz,1970; Van Egmond 2007). Even unemployed people with little knowledge of job avenues in foreign countries can now find opportunities through digital media (Kitching, 1990). The ease to keep connected with family and friends also reinforce the decision to migrate (Vihelmsen & Thulin, 2013).

Thus, on the basis of literature Table 1 explains the role of internet and social media in stimulating brain drain.

Figure1: Stimulating Role of Social Media and Internet

S.NO	Stimulating Factor	References
1	Network of migrants	Massey, 1990 at Polyzos, 2006; Lif, 2016
2	Maintaining social ties and keep connected with family	Lif, 2016, Vihelmsen & Thulin, 2013
3	Information about job opportunity, housing, education, life style and leisure activities etc which reinforces migration decision	Lif, 2016, Schutz,1970; Van Egmond 2007,
4	Restrain the effect of 'obstacles' or hurdles	Lif, 2016, Thulin & Vilhelmsen 2014; Schutz, 2011
5	Information about opportunities, travel routes and connecting migrants to the destination	Thulin & Vilhelmsen 2014; Schutz, 2011; Lif, 2016
6	Information about migration flows and insight on how migrants chose target country	Lif, 2016,

7	Minimizing the risk and costs of migration	Lif, 2016
8	Assist in adjustment	Lif, 2016, Hattingh, Matthee and Lotriet

Sources: Review of literature

Conclusion and Discussion

Digital era has penetrated in each and every aspect of our life. Brain drain and migration studies have identified various factors that trigger brain drain intensions. Social media and internet is also one of the factors which play a vital role by acting as a primary source of information. A review of existing studies has shown that there is shortage of studies focusing on the role internet and social media's influence on migration studies. Research related to brain drain & brain drain intensions will be incomplete if we ignore the role of social media and internet. This paper contributes to the study of brain drain and migration studies by review the past researches to identify stimulating role of internet and social media. We have identified various factors which lead to reinforce of migration intensions. Thus we conclude that social media and internet triggers brain drain intension by providing information, building a strong networks, lowering down the risk of migration, moderating the impact of hurdles , providing an access to job opportunities, facilitates adjustment and keep connected with family and friends

Internet and social media provides information on migration area and number of destination. Through the accessibility to these media foreign places can be quickly accessed through virtual network. Future consequences of migration decision can be seen leading to stimulating to the concrete migration intensions. Access to pertinent information reduces the time between migration intentions and the final decision (Taylor 1969). This study makes it clear that social media and internet play a major role in shaping intensions regarding exodus of people. With increase in affordable and resourceful communication systems, remote and inaccessible lands can be discovered. Based on the factors identified as reasons to affect migration intensions future studies can be conducted to empirically test the role of internet and social media on brain drain intensions. Also, future studies can also be taken up the inhibiting role of media and intensions on brain drain intensions.

References

Bhardwaj, B. (2017). Migration Vulnerability: Role of Digital Media and Internet in Stimulating and Inhibiting Brain Drain. International Journal of Advances in Management and Economics, 6(6), 24-32.

Boyd, D. M., & Ellison, N. B. (2007). Social network sites: Definition, history, and scholarship. Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 13(1), 210- 230.

Braga, M. (2007). *Dreaming another life- The role of Foreign media in Migration decision-Evidence from Albania*. Retrieved on 19/6/2017 from <http://www.edge-page.net/jamb2007/papers/DreamingAnotherLife.pdf>.

Brown L. A., Moore E. G. (1970). *The intra-urban migration process: A perspective*. *Geografiska Annaler, Series B*, 52, 1–13; *Yearbook of the General Systems Society*, 15, 109–122.

Burrell, J. & K. Anderson (2008). *I have great desire to look beyond my world’: trajectories of information and communication technology and use among Ghanaians living abroad*. *New Media and Society*, 10, 203–224.

Chaichian, M.A. (2011). *The new phase of globalization & brain drain*. *International Journal of Social Economics*, 39(1/2), 18-38.

Chen, G. M. (2012). *The impact of new media on intercultural communication in global context*. *China Media Research*, 8(2), 1-10.

Docquier, F., Marfouk, A. (2006). *International migration by educational attainment*, In Ozden, C. & Schiff, M. (Eds), *International Migration, Remittances and Development*, 151-199, N.Y: McMillan.

Dutton, W.H. (2009). *The fifth estate emerging through the network of networks*. *Prometheus*, 27, 1–15.

Faist, T. (2010). *Trans-nationalization in international migration: implications for the study of citizenship and culture*. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 23(2), 189-222.

Graham, M., Schroeder, R. & Taylor, G. (2013). *Re: Search*. *New Media & Society*, 15(8), 1366–1373.

Harvey, D. (1991). *The condition of postmodernity: An enquiry into the origins of cultural change*. Wiley- Blackwell.

Hattingh, M., Matthee, M. & Lotriet, H. (2014). *The expatriate information flow model: Towards understanding Internet usage in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*. *Research Article –SACJ*, 53, 15-31.

Hazarika, L. (2013). *Health workforce in India: assessment of availability, production and distribution*. *WHO South East Asia Journal of Public Health*, 2, 106-112.

Hiller, H. & Franz, T. (2004). *New Ties, Old Ties and Lost Ties: The use of the internet in diaspora*. *New Media & Society*, 6, 731–752.

Horst, H. A. (2006). *The blessings and burdens of communication: cell phones in Jamaican transnational social fields*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-0374.2006.00138.x>

ICT facts and figures (2016) retrieved from <http://www.itu.int/en/itu>

ICT Facts and Figures (2016). Retrieved 22 August, 2019 from <http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Pages/facts/default.aspx>

International Migration report, 2017. Retrieved 22 August, 2019 from, Retrieved 22 August, 2019.

Kainth, G.S. (2009). *Push and pull factors of migration: a case of brick kiln industry of Punjab State*. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Social Sciences*, 1(1), 82-116.

Kohring, M., & Matthes, J. (2007). *Trust in news media development and validation of a multidimensional scale*. *Communication Research*, 34(2), 231-252.

Lif, O. (2016). *Migration in the internet age. The 21st century: When refugees went online*. Retrieved from on 17.6/2017 from <http://lup.lub.lu.se/luur/download?func=downloadFile&recordId=8873467&fileId=8873468>

Liu, W., Sidhu, A., Beacom, A.M and Valente, T.W.(2017). *Social Network Theory*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118783764.wbieme0092>

Massey, D., Arango, J., Hugo, G., Kouaouchi, A., Pellegrino, A. & Taylor, J.E. (1998). *Worlds in Motion. Understanding International Migration at the End of the Millennium*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Massey, D.S. (1990). *Social structure, household strategies, and the cumulative causation of migration*. *Population Index*, 56, 3–26.

McCullagh, C. (2002). *Media Power – A Sociological Introduction*. New York, New York: Palgrave.

McHugh, K. (1984). *Explaining migration intentions and destination selection*. *The Professional Geographer*, 36, 315–325.

Palm, R. (2002). *The Internet and Home Purchase*. *Geosciences Faculty Publications*, 18. Accessed from http://scholarworks.gsu.edu/geosciences_facpub/18.

Paul, M., Liat, R., Eric, G. (2016). *Digital Crossroads: Civic Media and Migration*. Retrieved on 15/6/2017 from <https://media.ifa.de/ifa-Edition-Kultur-und-Aussenpolitik/Digital-Crossroads.html>

Schutz, A. (1970). *Reflections on the problem of relevance*. In Zaner, R. (ed.), New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Stevenson, B. (2009). *The internet and job search*. In Autor, D.H., (ed.), *Studies of Labor Market Intermediation*, 67–86. Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research.

Thulin, E. & Vilhelmson, B. (2016), *The internet and desire to move: the role of virtual practices in the inspiration phase of migration*.doi 10.1111/tesg.12144.

Thulin, E. & Vilhelmson, B. (2014). *Virtual practices and migration plans: a qualitative study of urban young adults*. *Population, Space and Place*,20, 389–401.

TRAI, 2018. *Recommendations on Privacy, Security and Ownership of the Data in the Telecom Sector*. Retrieved 22 July, from <https://main.trai.gov.in/sites/default/files/RecommendationDataPrivacy...>

United Nations (2016). *International migration report*. Retrieved May 21, 2017, from <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/publications/migrationreport/docs/MigrationReport2015.pdf>.

UNESCO (2015). *World trends in freedom of expression and media development*. Accessed on 15/6/2017 from <unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002349/234933e.pdf>.

Van Egmond, T. (2007). *Understanding western tourists in developing countries*. Wallingford: CABI Publishing.

Vertovec, S. (2006). *Migrant transnationalism and modes of transformation*. *International Migration Review*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1747-7379.2004.tb00226.x>

Vilhelmson, B. & E. Thulin (2013). *Does the internet encourage people to move? an exploratory study of Swedish young adults' migration experiences and plans*. *Geoforum*, 74, 209–216.

Wegge, Simone A. (1998). *Chain migration and information networks: evidence from nineteenth-century hesse-cassel*. *The Journal of Economic History*, 58 (4), 957–86. Retrieved on 16/6/2017 from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2566846>