CHAPTER VII
SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

Students going to different countries for higher studies is not a new phenomenon in the history of mankind. A Chinese historical text mentions that in the year 639 A.D. the Emperor Taitusng established an institute of higher education. In the modern times, due to globalization, technology and advancement and improvement of communication system, people of different cultures can easily communicate and share their knowledge and experience with one another. Therefore, cross-border flow of students for higher studies has been boosted. As a result, major emphasis is on opening up markets for foreign students in several countries.

There are several factors which necessitate for or compel overseas education and contribute to its successful completion. A proper understanding of all these factors not only contribute to the growing academic activity under the discipline the sociology of Education but also is necessary for making the overseas education more appropriate than wasteful. The present study, therefore, aims at properly understanding the role of all such factors in the larger context of overseas education in general by taking a specific case study of Iranians’higher education in five Indian cities, namely Mysore, Bangalore, Pune, Delhi, and Hyderabad.

7.2 Theoretical frame work

The theoretical literature on migration and international students’ mobility are substantial. There are scholars who have expressed their views concerning, theories and models related to size, direction, motivation, mechanism of migration and international students’ mobility. Space does not permit a comprehensive review of all theories concerning migration and international student’s mobility. The present study is based on push and pull theory. Push-Pull model have been used most often to explain international students dispositions and expectations towards studying abroad and migration.
7.3 Gaps in knowledge

While the subject of overseas education has attracted the attention of scholars all over the world, the specific area of Iranians studying in India is not much researched into. The available studies are either not sociological taking note of the whole range of factors influencing it, or not empirical or field based. The findings of the studies mentioned in the second chapter may be summarized in the following words to provide a base for identifying the research gaps, which are the starting point of the present research:

1. The main factors that push younger generation from their countries for higher studies include political persecution and uncertainty, social tensions, lack of sufficient individual and social freedom, inadequacy of jobs other opportunities of life, lack of job security etc.
2. The brain drain process, in which educated and bright youths leave their home land, is facilitated by certain “pull factors” like career prospects, better living standards, joyful education, security, family links, admissions based on performance in the entrance examination, social and political freedom, professional considerations, quality education at lower costs, familiar or adjustable language and culture and so on in the receiving countries.
3. There are certain other factors, which are neither pushing nor pulling in nature, but are basic or preliminary in overseas studies. They include, intellectuality of the student, economically favourable family background and institution of reservation quotas (irrespective of whether politically oriented or social justice oriented), helping the beneficiary groups and so on. Similarly success in the scientific Olympiads held in Iran also fetched admission to reputed foreign universities.

From the foregoing summary, the following research gaps become clear:

1. Though the overseas studies are influenced by several factors like push factors, pull factors, and basic or initial advantages, none of the studies seems to have attempted to study all of them. In the sense, holistic approach to the subject of overseas education is lacking in the available literature.
2. Use of intensive field work methods at the grassroots level, to understand the real life situations, problems and survival strategies of students studying in other than their own countries, is also not found.

3. Certain other factors like achievement motivation, religious teachings encouraging the overseas studies, social nexus, nature of relationship between the parent country and the host country, widening horizons of the students, changing expectations of parents and teachers, globalization and such other processes of social change and experiences (success or failure stories) of earlier students also have a bearing on the overseas studies. But those are not covered by the available studies.

4. Few of the available studies were conducted by professionally trained sociologists using the concepts, theories, methods and approaches of sociology.

The present study, therefore, is intended to bridge these gaps in knowledge to the extent possible within its limits.

7.4 Research Issues

The broad questions like which particular factors promote or hinder the overseas studies and what is the relative importance of each of these factors are reformulated thus to meet the requirements of an empirical and descriptive study conducted by a single researcher:

1. Are there initial advantages or basic factors that provide them the access to Indian education?

2. What are the factors that push them from Iran and pull to India?

3. Are there factors, other than the push and the pull factors, which promote or hinder the Iranians’ education in India? If “yes,” which are they?

4. How do Iranians live and study in India? Which problems they encounter in India and how do they manage with them?

The present study has tried to find answer to these questions by interviewing the Iranian students studying in Mysore, Bangalore, Pune, Delhi, and Hyderabad cities and by adopting holistic (sociological) approach to all the factors that influence
their education in India. It is, therefore, that the statement of the research problem is “the role of sociological factors in Iranian’s higher education in Indian cities.”

7.5 Importance of the Study

The present study assumed significance from the points of view of both academic importance and practical utility to the sending (Iran) and the receiving (India) countries. With the advancement of science and technology and of international relations, new and newer processes of social changes have been operating. The multi-dimensional overseas education, for instance, is becoming unplanned, highly expensive and less rewarding, attracting the attention of development planners, educationists and researchers. Thus the present study is of relevance to sociology of education, sociology of economic development and social change studies.

7.6 Objectives of the Study

Since the present study has aimed at finding empirical and descriptive answers to the research issues stated already, it has got the following objectives:

1. To understand the history of sending Iranians to study abroad.
2. To understand socio-economic background of the Iranian students studying in India.
3. To analyze the “push factors” operating in the sending country and “pull factors” operating in the receiving country and assess their relative role in the overseas education.
4. To examine the problems of the Iranians students relating to their stay and study in India and also their survival strategies.
5. To make policy suggestions.

7.7 Hypotheses of the Study

Following directional hypotheses are formulated and tested in the present study:

1. Students coming from higher socio-economic backgrounds are more inclined to study in foreign countries than those having lower socio-economic conditions.
2. Meritorious students have better chances of being encouraged to and selected for overseas education.
3. Iranian students come to India because of their Iranian friends or relatives in India.
4. Students educated in India tend to work outside Iran.

7.8 Selection of Sample Respondents

In order to collect data for this study, a sample of only 10 per cent of the students pursuing higher education was selected, using stratified random sample technique. The respondents for this study consisted of Iranian students, who have come to India under student visa or research visa and who study in India for more than 6 months. A sample of 468 students was selected for in-depth interviews. Besides, 6 case studies were conducted by drawing one student from each level and course of education he or she is studying.

The total sample of 468 respondents consists of both male and female who are studying at different levels of education thus: Bachelor degree (310), Master degree (106), and Ph. D. degree (52).

After introducing the research topic in the first chapter along with the background, hypotheses and research issues, objectives, research design and methodology, scope, limitation and significance of the study, the second chapter is devoted to review of literature and third chapter throws light on the profile of Iran, history of Iranian higher educational system etc. The profile of the students selected for the study along with a brief introduction to the cities from where sample of students are selected are dealt in the fourth chapter.

The Push and Pull factors favouring the student to move from Iran to India have dealt in the Chapter five. While chapter six dealt with the problems of Iranian students relating to their stay and study in India and also their survival strategies.

Chapter seven provides a concluding remarks-summary of the findings and policy suggestions.
7.9 Main Findings of the Study:

7.9.1 Demographic Details

The gender based classification of respondents shows that 54.7 per cent were males and the remaining 45.3 per cent were females.

About 68 per cent of the respondents belonged to the age group of less than 25 years of age and only 3.42 per cent of the total respondents were aged more than 40 years of age.

Of the total sample, 73.93 per cent were unmarried and 24.79 per cent were married. The remaining (1.29 per cent) were divorcees.

Before leaving Iran, 62.82 per cent of respondents studied up to high school. Only 37 per cent of the students were graduates when they left Iran, including 11.11 per cent postgraduates.

Religion-wise breakup of the sample respondents clearly revealed that 96.58 per cent were Muslims and the remaining 3.42 per cent were Christians.

Most of the sample students were pursuing lower levels of education (bachelors) compared to a small number of them were pursuing higher degrees. The male – female variation is found among the students pursuing Ph. D. degrees, where males are in large numbers as compared to the females.

The parents of the sample students were all educated up to including masters degree and Ph.D.degrees .And the were engaged in professional, agriculture followed by construction

A majority (60 per cent) of respondents were students irrespective of gender and a very few were engaged in private jobs or were unemployed before they came to India.
A relative majority of the households (38 per cent) among the students had a monthly income of less than Rs. 25000 and their monthly expenditure was between Rs 10000 to 14000.

About 97.50 per cent of the respondents were either self financed or supported by the family. The burden on either Indian government (2.14 per cent) or of the Iranian government (0.43 per cent) was negligible. However most of the government support goes to pursue Ph. D than to the study bachelor and master courses.

Only 1.2 per cent of the sample respondents published books and nearly 11 per cent of them published articles in different journals.

7.9.2 Push factors (Iran)

Most of the students from Iran coming for education to India were above average in their intellectual capacity.

The push factors in Iran had positive impact and thereby facilitated for the students to go to India and the pull factors congenial from the Indian side to attracted the Iranian students to study at the Indian educational institutes are dealt with

The first and the foremost important push factor was the family background to support the children’s education abroad, as a large section of students were either self financed or supported by the family.

In Iran, admission to government universities was limited to a fixed quota and private universities charged too high fees which pushed large number of the students to other countries, where the cost of education was low.

The government of Iran also imposed restrictions for admission by imposing entrance test at all levels for admissions for seats in the government institutions.
The government of Iran also evolved a policy to reserve seats in the government institutions for various sections of population.

Another push factor which had a direct bearing on the Iranian students to go abroad for their studies was the policy of the government of Iran to undergo military service compulsorily.

The educational system in Iran seemed to be slightly different in terms of duration, where it took longer time (years) for several courses than those in India.

Since there was a limited choice of course or subject for a student in Iran, he or she preferred to go to other countries.

The students more or less equally opposed the practice of the inclusion of religious teachings as a part of the course work, which acted as a push factor and forced many students to go to other countries for their studies.

The question of lack of personal freedom in the society was considered as a push factor for a large section of the students to go abroad for higher studies.

The issue related to gender discrimination in the community was also a factor which pushed students especially female ones to look for other countries for higher studies.

The unemployment was not an important factor that pushed the Iranian students to India.

Though problems in the family are a universal phenomenon, it was not considered as a push factor by the students as a choice to abroad for higher studies.
In Iran the method of study was also different as compared to that in India which induced students to go abroad.

Social factors were major push factors, and economic factor was the lowest pull factor for students studying in India.

Age had significant influence over social factors and cultural factors, students in the age group of 21-25 and 26-30 years had high scores and students in the age group of below 20 and between 31-35 years had the least scores. Students pushed to in the age group of 26-30 years and 36-40 years had maximum scores and students in the age group of below 20 years had the least scores.

Genderwise, male and female students differed only in educational factor, where female students had significantly higher scores than male students.

Marital status had significant influence over social factors, where married and divorces had high and unmarried had the least scores.

Religion had significant influence over only one push factor, i.e., on cultural factor where Muslim students had higher scores than Christian students in cultural factor.

Course of study of the Iranian students had significant influence over two push factors namely social and economic and the total scores. In social, economic and in any other push factors, it was found that as the educational levels increased, the mean scores on those particular factors also increased linearly and significantly.

7.9.3 Pull Factors (India)

English language having international acceptance is an important among them and necessity for those who migrate to other countries. As India offers English as a medium of instruction, it attracts students from other countries including Iran.

Several pull factors related to education attracted students from Iran which included getting the desired qualifications, Indian qualification recognized by the international community, the availability of subject of their choice for the study, and
the continuity of education from bachelor’s degree to Ph. D. degree without appearing for entrance test or examination. In addition the availability of reputed faculty, prospects of getting a scholarship and university facilities with minimal efforts have also been the pulling factors.

Students considered that the cost of studying in India was lower as compared to that in other countries. Similarly the lower cost of living with better facilities (74.20 per cent), easy means of transportation to commute to and from Iran (79.48 per cent) and grant of visa without much hurdles (76.93 per cent) were the major factors which attracted students from Iran to India for higher studies.

There was a general feeling that students studying abroad would have higher matrimonial value back in their country.

A large majority of students (86.32 per cent) expressed that they considered going abroad for higher studies having a direct bearing on their social status. Irrespective of course of study or gender of the student almost every one admitted that their foreign visit for higher studies improved their social status.

The local hospitality and helpfulness of the Indian community as a pulling factor for attracted students from Iran to India

Initial contact at the place of migration made a person to settle down comfortably in a strange environment About 71 per cent of the sample students admitted that they had either a relative or a friend in India, which played a crucial role in deciding India as their destination for higher studies.

However, the existence of Iranian Students Association in India had not work as an important pull factor as is evident from opinions of a large section of students,

India is a peace loving country where several religions coexist. There is a sizeable Muslim population in the country and hence it was an additional attraction
for other Islamic nations to look for India as a safe place for their student folk to pursue higher education.

Irrespective of the course of study and gender the three factors, safety for foreign students in India, presence of friends and relatives and the cultural similarities between Iran and India were the important attracting factors for Iranians to select Indian universities for their higher studies.

Educational factors were major pull factors, and economic factor was lowest pull factor for students studying in India.

Respondents aged 21-25 years and 26-30 years had higher pull factors compared to respondents aged 31-35 years, who had the least scores in social factors and cultural factors.

Gender-wise comparison revealed that male students had higher scores than female students in social as well as cultural pull factors.

Marital status had significance over social, cultural and total factors, where married students had high scores, followed by bachelor degree students having the least divorces.

Religion and course of study had no significant over pull factors.

7.9.4. GENERAL

Most of the Ph.D. students and bachelor degree students came alone to India, while most of the master degree students came with their parents or spouses.

Most of the master degree and bachelor degree students got the knowledge about India through educational institutions, whereas many of the Ph.D. students had seen information through newspapers.

Majority of the Ph.D., students adjusted easily with culture, followed by bachelors and master degree students who found it difficult to adjust with the culture
Students studying for masters did not have much difficulty with the language, followed by bachelor and Ph.D., degree students who had some language problems.

Majority among the Iranian students reported a liking for music, radio, TV, cinema, etc as a leisure time recreation including the songs or movie of Indian

The sample respondents usually referred the problems, including food problems, they encountered to their family followed by friends. Majority of the Ph.D. students referred to their families compared to those who referred to friends, Islamic Association of Iranian Students and so on. Where as, bachelor degree and master degree students, they referred to both families and to friends also.

Majority of the Ph.D. students and bachelor students preferred both Iranian and Indian, while most of the master degree students preferred Iranian alone.

Ph.D. students were satisfied more than students studying in bachelor degree and master degree courses by their professors’ teaching ability.

As far as the examination system is considered, bachelor students were not happy compared to students pursuing master or Ph.D. degrees.

Most of the master degree students indicated that they were not given appropriate grades even when deserved unlike in the case of the local students. However, this opinion was not expressed by students studying in bachelor and Ph.D. degrees.

Majority of the Ph.D. students and bachelor students were satisfied with their academic progress, and they were proud of their institutions than master degree students.

The sample students were of the opinion that they were better informed the host country. Such were equal with their counterparts in Iran who were studying the same course.
Most of the respondents were of the view that the degrees awarded by the Iranian universities were superior or equivalent to those of the Indian universities. However, the masters degree students indicated that Indian and Iranian universities are equal compared to students studying in bachelors and Ph.D. degrees.

Master degree students felt that they were more secured than students in bachelors and Ph.D. degrees in India.

Majority of the respondents had a good opinion about the local community. Iranian students showed interest in Hindu festivals and actually participated in them.

Majority of the respondents were attracted by the simple Indian family life, the ideals of democracy and economic values which they liked to replicate in Iran.

Most of the Ph.D. and bachelor students opted for simple life, whereas some of the master degree students opted for higher standard of educational system.

Majority of the students reported that their families in Iran never supported any suggestion or decision to settle abroad permanently. The respondents also expressed their desire to stay in Iran after completing their studies or research and also prefer to work or settle permanently in Iran, while a majority of the Ph.D. students wanted to settle permanently outside Iran.

However the respondents were of the opinion that the isolation from international research center, low income from the profession, bureaucracy and inefficiency in government organizations, dissatisfaction with social and cultural life inside, the economic instability and uncertainty of lack of social security in Iran and the political pressure, etc were some of the reasons for making a decision by the students not to return to Iran after the completion of their studies or research.

Contrarily, other respondents reported that the discrimination against women in society, limited job opportunity inside Iran and the military service were not important issues or the main difficulty inside the country for not returning the students to Iran after completing their studies or research.
When one compares the proficiency of English language before and after periods, the trend shows positive development. The bachelor and PhD degree students felt that they had good command over English compared to students in master degrees. Such an improvement in the proficiency of English language was more pronounced in the case of female students.

7.10 Verification of the Hypotheses

1. Students coming from higher socio-economic backgrounds are more inclined to study in foreign countries than those having lower socio-economic conditions.

Hypothesis 1 is accepted as we find that most of the students who were studying in India were coming from higher socio-economic backgrounds and were more inclined to study in foreign countries than those having lower socio-economic conditions.

2. Meritorious students have better chances of being encouraged to and selected for overseas education.

Hypothesis 2 is also accepted as we find from Tables in previous chapters, that every one the students from Iran coming for education in India is merited and above average in his/her intellectual capacity.

3. Iranian students come to India because of their Iranian friends or relatives in India.

It was found that majority of the sample (71 per cent) indicated that they came to India because of their Iranian friends or relatives, who were already staying in India. They provided the initial support. Hence hypothesis 3 is accepted.

4. Students educated in India tended to work outside Iran.

It was found that 37.6 per cent of the respondents indicated that after completing their studies or research they preferred to work or settle down permanently outside Iran. However, majority of them (62.4 per cent) reported that they preferred to work in Iran and also settle permanently in Iran. Hence hypothesis 4 is rejected.
7.11 Recommendations:

Specific recommendations derived from this study to universities in India and Iran and also to governments of both the countries include the following:

Multicultural training workshops are to be conducted to those who come in contact with international students to be more aware of intercultural diversities and adjustment process and for more effectiveness in working with them.

It is important for supervisors to be aware that because of limitations of time and research visa, they should assist the students in the best ways they can.

An institution receiving international students should take overall responsibility for the well being of their students during their stay in India in terms of providing university accommodation at a reasonable cost, especially for married students with families. This would help overseas students to overcome the problems of isolation and homesickness.

Colleges and universities should seek ways to create opportunities for international students to interact and develop close relationships with host national students. The host national students, should be encouraged to seek interaction with international students, perhaps as peer advisors, conversation partners, or study partners.

It is necessary for Indian universities to improve the system by introducing changes in the method of teaching and examination system.

Student’s visa should be issued only on production of certificate showing the fluency in English language by students.

Educational institutions should continuously provide and support opportunities for students to improve their language skills.
Universities should provide students with opportunities for temporary employment to overcome their financial difficulties.

Cultural training may also prove helpful to international students and the host country students for understanding the nature and dynamics of international students’ relationships.

It is fundamental for Iranian universities to improve their quality of education in order to meet Iranian students’ expectations for higher education. Provide educational loans, scholarships for brilliant applicants from low-income background

Revise the regulations of military service for male persons and reduction of the period of military service at least during peace conditions.

Provide facilities for Iranian students to pursue their studies up to doctoral level without passing an entrance examination

Substantial increase in the number of seats to different courses in government universities would give several students the benefit of studying in the country.

Introduce regulations to levy reasonable fees in non-governmental universities.

Reduction of the period of graduation courses in Iran and it should also be a three years period like that in India as against the present system of 4 years in Iran.

The Iranian government should introduce new subjects and courses in the Iranian universities for the benefit of its students. Such a measure will help the students to avoid dependence on foreign countries for such subjects or courses.

Introduce English language as the medium of instruction in the educational institution as it will enable Iranian students to compete with the international academia.
Recommendations to Iranian students:

Try to acquire as much information as possible about the host country, Host University, program of study, problems of before going to India or any other country.

Try to improve the proficiency in English before opting for higher studies abroad.

Recommendations to Iranian Embassy and Associations:

Introduce the system of hosting a welcome party for fresher students, along with the selected few old students. Such a party will help the new comers to familiarize themselves with each other and also have first hand information about Indian society, especially the educational system.

Provide English courses for language proficiency.

Help and facilitate for proper hostel accommodation for Iranian students in the college or university with the help of university authorities or through the Indian government.

7.12. Suggestions for Future Research:

As sociology of education is a growing discipline, it is essential to conduct more and more studies on education especially a higher education abroad.

Hypothetically a theme like changing life styles of Iranian students in Iran and its impact on the family and the community” may be taken any for research to social changes among the Iranians due to their oversea higher education abroad.

Further an extensive research is needed in order to have an in-depth understanding of the socio-cultural background and the problems of adaptation of international students both at the host country during their study and after settling back in their country.
Future research is may also be conducted on the same theme by extending the scope of the sample drawn from a broader geographical area across national boundaries.

Another study of importance will be by extending the scope to include samples from other Asians, non-Asians as well as students in countries such as USA, UK, Canada, which are major study destinations for international students to test the validity of the findings and conclusions of this study.