



Indian Students in South Korea

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International education landscape

- Internationalization of higher education:
 - International students at tertiary level increased from 2 - 3.6 / 2.1 - 4.1 m (2000-10)
 - USA remains the most preferred destination (19%), UK (11%), Australia (8%)
 - China tops the list of source countries (16%), India (6%), Republic of Korea (4%)
- Emergence of higher education hubs in Australia, Singapore, Japan, Hong Kong, Korea, China and elsewhere in Asia-Pacific to stem brain-drain and attract students from Asia and elsewhere.
 - 45,757 Chinese students in Korea and 25,660 Korean students in Japan, for instance
- Indian students are still an important exception:
 - 86% still go to top 5 traditional destinations. Only 1,152 in Malaysia (0.6%), 576 in Japan, 486 in Korea, 357 in Thailand, 46 in Hong Kong, for instance.

Internationalization of higher education in Korea

- Relaxation of visa regulations
- Numerous scholarships for foreign students
- Local campuses of reputed foreign universities
- *World Class University* project for renowned academics from outside
- Massive funding for research-oriented programs and institutes
- Restructuring of higher education sector to improve quality – ban on sub-standard institutions from admitting foreign students
- Special funding for Korean universities offering courses in English

Survey

- No known survey with Indian students in Korea
- Questionnaire adapted from *Survey of International Students* (Ministry of Education, New Zealand, 2004) and *International Student Survey* (City of Melbourne, Australia, 2010)
- Online survey over 2 weeks in July 2013 with the help of ISA Korea & SNU
- Social media was used to reach out to students
- 48 responses
- No interest expressed by Korean HEIs / Indian Embassy in survey results, despite offer of sharing them. Barring SNU, no support in the survey also.

Brief profile of respondents

- **Geographical:**

- From 16 Indian states
- Studying in 16 Korean cities (75% since 3 years or less)

- **Demographic:**

- 67% in the age-group 26-30 years (15% above 30 years)
- 88% male (despite 95% finding it safe / highly safe)
- 21% married (to Indians) – 10 in relationships (1 with a Korean)

- **Academic:**

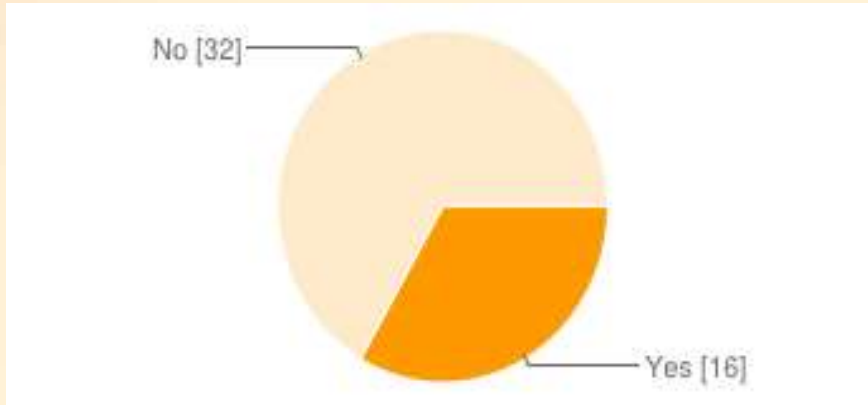
- 90% never studied abroad before Korea
- 67% pursuing PhD
- 75% studying engineering and natural sciences (44% / 31%)
- 67% have a Korean scholarship, 21% from Indian government / employer

Choosing Korea

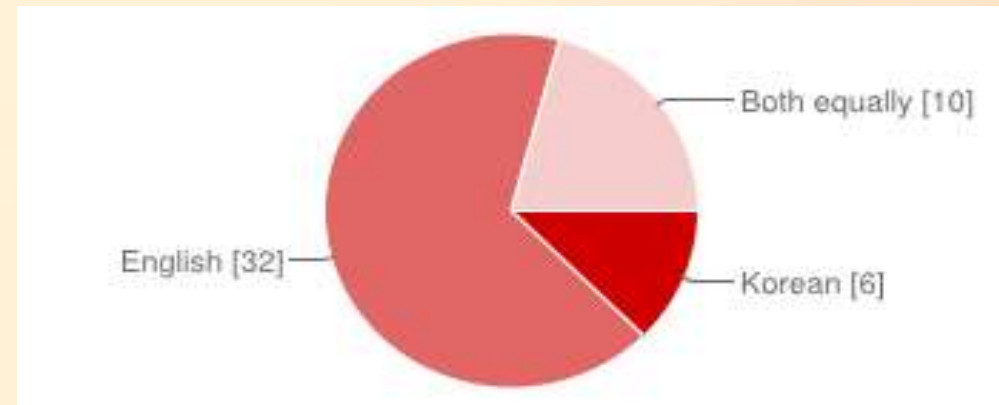
- 71% say Korea not first choice – 85% prefer English-speaking countries
- Scholarships and quality of education emerge as very important factors
- ‘Desire to gain international experience’ was also rated highly (also among other surveys with Indian students in Europe)
- Information dissemination does not play major role – British, French and Germans organize huge dissemination events across major Indian cities
- Perception of Korean government that international students may choose Korea due to lower costs does not hold too much in our case
- 73% did not consider the opportunity to live in Korea permanently later as a motivational factor ‘at all’

Language

Korean language classes before studies



Studies in Korea primarily in



Academic Fallout

Classes not always in English – difficult to understand accent / lectures or work in group projects with Korean students

Sociocultural Fallout

Limited interactions with Korean students or host society – ghettoisation

Korean HEIs

- **Courses**

- Course content and its professional utility, assessment procedures ranked very highly

- **Teachers**

- Well-qualified, but not well-trained to teach – teaching speed quite fast
- Expect students to work and produce like machines without much ‘analytical skills’
- Raising questions and classroom interactions not favorably looked upon
- Barring Americans, don’t empathize with foreign students
- IPR issues

- **Services**

- 67% highly rate overall services provided by international students office
- Counseling, learning support, associations, sports, etc. poorly ranked in relative terms

Support structures

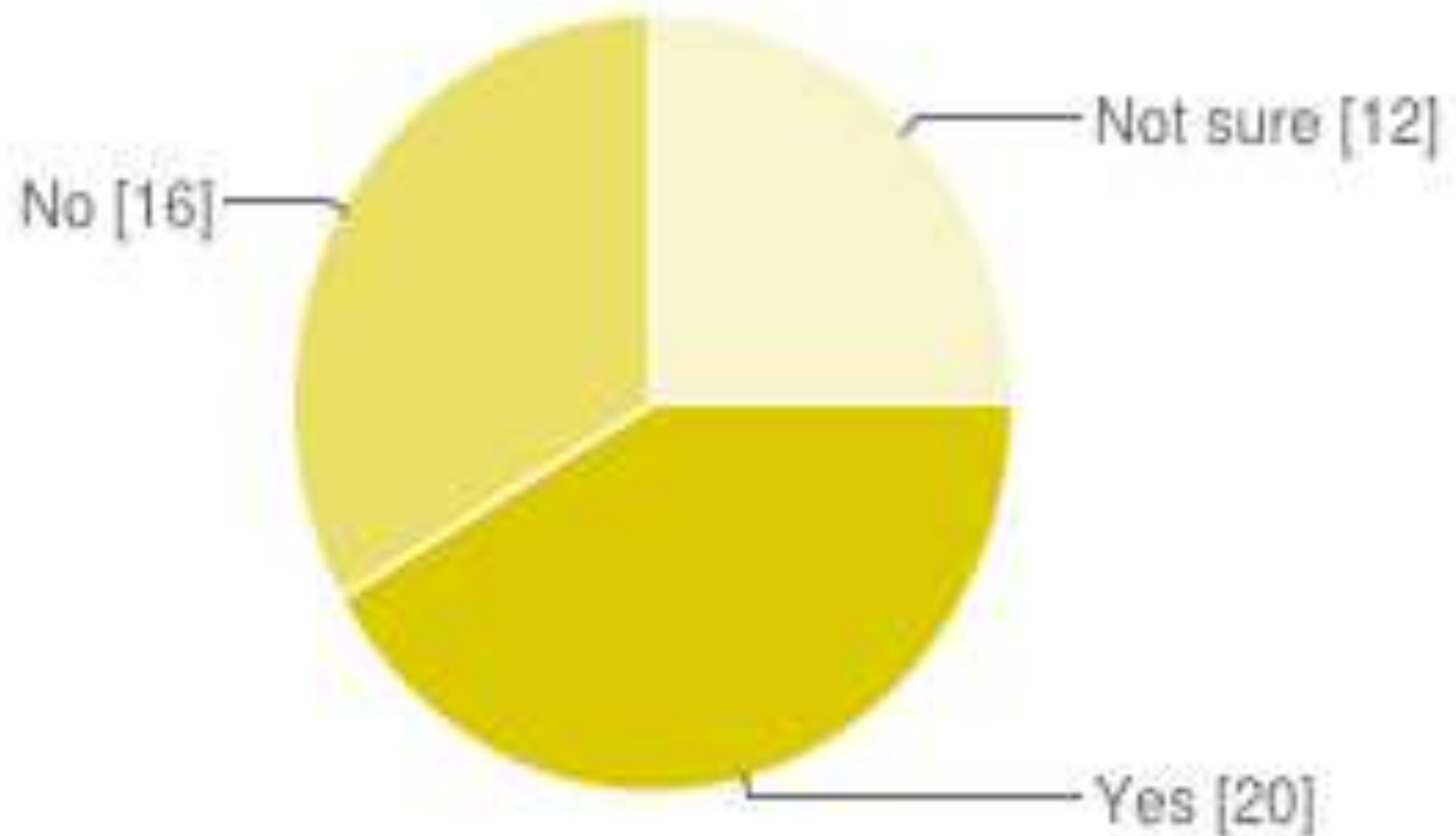
- **Formal (moderately to highly satisfied):**

- Educational institutions – 75%
- Korean government offices – 63%
- Host society – 58%
- Indian embassy / consulates – 41%

- **Informal:**

- Fellow Indian students for psychological (sick, homesick, troubled) and living support (accommodation, food, etc.)
- Fellow Korean students where language is an issue (Korean life, finding way around, official work, educational issues and problems, etc.)

Recommend family/friends to study in Korea?



Conclusions

- Korean government's efforts at improving the quality of education and increasing the number of scholarships have paid off handsomely
- Introducing English courses has attracted Indian students, but the flip side is they don't learn the language and face a whole series of resultant issues at the educational, emotional and social levels
- Following have taken a serious toll on overall impressions about Korea:
 - Limited Korean language skills
 - Limited intercultural understanding between teachers and students
 - Limited exchange between Indian and Korean students and society
 - Limited access to Indian food
 - 88% males – most don't know how to cook / don't like to
 - 67% pursuing PhD / overall work pressure, with little time to cook
 - Limited personal time and leisure to vent off work and psychosocial pressures / to interact with students / wider society / travel around which improves overall experience

Recommendations

- Regular independent surveys with international students
- Start out life in Korea with:
 - General orientation to Korean society, culture, educational system and its expectations
 - Small trips with other students to expose them to Korean geography, history, culture, etc.
 - Intensive Korean language course
- Provision of cheap international / Indian food options on- and off-campus
- Multicultural orientation for faculty, university staff and Korean students
- Counseling, sports, leisure, interactional and extra-curricular activities involving local and international students as well as faculty
- Enabling and flexible institutional environment for creative expressions
- Strict action against any form of discrimination at the institutional / social level