



## RUSSIA AND UKRAINE WAR AN IMPACT ON INDIAN STUDENTS

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**ABSTRACT**

The Russia-Ukraine border has significantly disrupted the MBBS education of Indian students, causing displacement, disruption of studies and uncertainty about their future. As a result, many students tried to transfer to other countries such as Georgia, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan for courses or had difficulty resuming studies. In the 2022 Russia-Ukraine conflict, these students face not only actual and potential challenges to their safety, shelter, food and return home, but also the uncertainty of their educational opportunities back home. The return of 20,000 Indian students, including MBBS students from war-torn Ukraine to India, led to an internet outage, raising many questions about the future of these aspiring doctors who had to stop their medical education in Ukraine due to security concerns. This data is based on secondary source. This paper focuses on the loss of MBBS students studying in Ukraine and their academic career. A number of case studies have been collected in this regard.

**KEYWORDS :****INTRODUCTION**

The Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 has caused a humanitarian crisis impacting millions of individuals within Ukraine and globally. While war-related healthcare delivery has been discussed in both the academic biomedical literature and in non-peer-reviewed sources, little academic attention has been paid to overseas medical students who have had to abandon their education. These constitute nearly a third of the 80,000 international students in Ukraine and represent a valuable part of the global healthcare workforce (Shubhajeet Roy, 2022).

Indian Government actively respond about the safety of Indian citizen in Russia and Ukraine. The government to rescue its citizens stranded in neighbouring countries of Ukraine during the 2022. The citizens were transported from Hungary, Romania, Moldova, and Slovakia to India with assistance from these countries (Gupta, Shishir, 2022)

According to the Ukraine government statistics from its Ministry of Education and Science place just over 18,000 Indian students in the country. Hotspots for Indian students in Ukraine included Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Bogomolets National Medical University and Kyiv Medical University of UAFM (Dollar exchange stopped; 2022). In an affidavit submitted by Indian government in Kerala High Court on 2 March 2022 the government estimated 20,000 Indian nationals in Ukraine. (60 per cent of Indians in Ukraine crossed, 2 March 2022).

It is a true tragedy and loss to the medical community that these young students who have dedicated themselves to a field of helping others are will now never be able to realize their potential. Many of these bombardments have destroyed the key infrastructure of medical universities throughout Ukraine. The long-term effects on medical education in Ukraine are catastrophic with the lack of resources and infrastructure to support it. Tsagkaris et al. classified the consequences of the aforementioned war into four categories: physical injury and mental health consequences to Ukrainians (not only soldiers but also civilians); destruction of healthcare establishments; destruction of non-healthcare critical infrastructure; and impact on the environment (via the use of toxins and/or nuclear radiation during the war) (Al-Shamsi M, 2017) Medical students and healthcare workers will suffer tremendously from the consequences of war.

The International Federation of Medical Students' Associations (IFMSA) and medical students around the world are calling for an immediate end to the violence in Ukraine

and the restoration of peace (International Federation of Medical Students Association, 2022). The enormous death toll, physical damage, and potential displacement of civilians are deeply worrying Ukrainians. The strain on the Ukrainian medical system is unprecedented as Russia's invasion of Ukraine enters its fifth week. From the depletion of medical supplies, to the lack of critical staff, including doctors and nurses, and direct attacks on hospital infrastructure, critical interventions are needed. Ready medical students may be selected to serve as frontline workers in Ukrainian hospitals. The enormous death toll, material damage, and displacement of civilians are deeply worrying Ukrainians. The strain on the Ukrainian medical system is unprecedented as Russia's invasion of Ukraine enters its fifth week. From the depletion of medical supplies, to the lack of critical staff, including doctors and nurses, and direct attacks on hospital infrastructure, critical interventions are required. Medical students who are ready to serve as frontline workers in Ukrainian hospitals can be selected.

Displaced Ukrainian medical students can also serve in a safe environment, organizing relief efforts in neighboring countries such as Romania, Poland and Hungary, where many refugees have fled. We urge medical students, healthcare workers and young people around the world to stand up for peace and follow the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality in their work and communication.

**Impacts of Students**

1. Evacuation and Security Issues: The Government of India has evacuated many Indians from studies under the 'Operation Ganga' initiative due to the immediate dangers posed by the conflict.
2. Disruption of educational travel: Due to the war, many universities were closed and academic programs were suspended, disrupting students' academic schedules.
3. Challenges in academic transfer: While some students transfer and resume studies, others face difficulties with transfers, including financial burdens and lack of smooth processes with some universities.

**Adaptation and Future Prospects**

1. Looking for alternative study destinations: Students have moved to countries like Georgia, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan to pursue their education, which have become new hubs for Indian medical students.
2. Seeking government support: Some students have petitioned the Supreme Court to allow them to transfer to Indian medical colleges as a one-time measure to ensure that their education is not stalled forever.

Russia always tops the list of best countries for MBBS abroad for Indian students. Thanks to the warm and friendly relationship Russia and India have shared over the past 75 years. With a significant number of Indian students among international students in Russian medical universities, similar fears and apprehensions are observed in the minds of students and their parents who are currently studying or will soon join medical universities in Russia for medical education. Actually, the situation between Russia and Ukraine does not have any negative impact on the MBBS students in Russia and they are living their normal lives as usual. MBBS studies of Indian students in Russia are not disrupted due to Russia-Ukraine situation. (<https://www.ruseducation.in/impact,25/12/2025>)

#### **NMC's Stand**

The National Medical Council (NMC) has taken a stand that states should not decide whether students who have returned from war-torn Ukraine to continue their medical education in India. In response to a query by Kannur-based health activist Dr Babu KV through the Right to Information Act, the medical education regulator said the NMC is considering accommodation for foreign medical graduates and will not entertain any other requests for now. This means around 18,000 (Pandey, Nikhil, ed., 2022) medical students who have returned from Ukraine, including around 3,900 from Kerala, will have to wait for the NMC to upload the policy decision on its website. Earlier, the West Bengal government allowed admission of medical students in private medical colleges in the name of "Observer Ship" which led to controversy. Students are waiting for a national level policy to enable them to continue their education in India. Although various state governments have taken a sympathetic approach to the concerns of students and their parents, the Supreme Court has allowed the Medical Education Regulatory Authority to decide the matter by June 29. Before the regulatory body took a policy decision, the West Bengal government had allowed 394 students from various private medical colleges in the state to undergo "examination" from June 1. The West Bengal government appealed to the NMC to accommodate the students to ensure continuity of education. "The observer ship is illegal and may set a precedent in other states. The NMC is underestimating the West Bengal government's decision on the observer ship," said Dr. Babu.

#### **Honourable SC's Stand,**

The petition demanded that medical students evacuated from Ukraine in the wake of the Russia-Ukraine war should be shifted to Indian medical colleges at once. Several medical students evacuated from Ukraine in the wake of the Russia-Ukraine crisis have approached the Supreme Court seeking directions to ensure their continued education. The petitioners, who are Indian citizens, claim that the education of nearly 14,000 Indian students who have been displaced in the wake of the ongoing war has come to a complete halt. The petition, filed by advocate Ashwarya Sinha, sought to shift medical students from Ukraine to Indian medical colleges simultaneously in the same academic year.

The petition also sought a direction to the Center to issue necessary directions to the Commission under the National Medical Commission Act to formulate guidelines and SOPs in this regard. The petition also sought directions to provide adequate infrastructural, educational and financial assistance for the continuation of medical education of displaced Indian students. In view of this extraordinary situation, the students urged the Supreme Court to exercise its jurisdiction under Article 142 of the Constitution of India and formulate guidelines. It was pointed out that despite their repeated appeals to the National Medical Commission and other authorities to allow the displaced students to be shifted to Indian medical institutions, no decision has been taken till date. The petitioners submitted that several countries like

Ghana, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Egypt have issued statements stating that adequate arrangements are being made in their countries to accommodate the students evacuated from Ukraine in their existing medical institutions, despite taking note of the unusual situation. The petition stated that the Supreme Court, in its order in the case of Farzana Batool vs. Union of India & Others, observed that the State has a strong responsibility to ensure access to education at all levels and stressed the importance of creating an environment that enables students to pursue vocational education.

#### **Case Study**

**Case Study-1:** Tanvi Wadhwa, a student from Ferozepur, Punjab, who is studying at the Bukovinian State Medical University in Ukraine, is worried about missing a semester and joining the university. "I attended online classes for eight months. We were hopeful that we would go back after the war ended. Some students had gone back by different routes but I didn't want to take that risk. I looked at all the options from Georgia to Poland and decided to come to Uzbekistan. The university allowed us to go back for a semester. I was initially worried about missing a semester but later I changed my mind and it was a worthwhile decision," she said and worried a lot.

**Case Study-2:** Amit, from Begusarai, Bihar, spent a night in a basement in Ukraine when Russia invaded. He was among the students evacuated by the Indian government under the 'Operation Ganga' initiative. 'Operation Ganga' is an initiative launched by the Indian government to bring back Indians stranded in Ukraine. A total of 18,282 Indians were evacuated under this initiative.

I thought I wouldn't make it, I would die or I would be stranded in Ukraine. After I returned home to India, my family and I were relieved, but the endless cycle of uncertainty about what would happen next began. I had completed my MBBS in Ukraine for three years and starting over or pursuing anything else was not an option I wanted to consider. Later I decided to go to Uzbekistan," says Amit. The above words are by Amit.

**Case Study-3:** Deepika Kaidala Jayaramiah, a student from Karnataka, said that after witnessing the war situation in front of her, moving to a peaceful country was a priority. "I had only read about war in history books. I never imagined that I would see that situation myself. After it became clear that going to Ukraine was no longer an option, I decided to resume my medical journey in Uzbekistan," she sadly.

**Case Study-4:** Samarth Rajput, a final-year student at Xiamen University in China, told CNBCTV18.com that he and his classmates switched to online classes in March 2020, following COVID restrictions. "But shortly after that, all the apps we used to take classes on were banned. All our recorded lectures on chat and Ding Talk were forwarded because WhatsApp was banned in China. India banning (Chinese) apps has led to chaos," said Rajput. It all our fate.

**Case Study-5:** Ashutosh Kumar, a medical student from Jiujiang Medical University in China, told CNBCTV18.com that he has been in India since January 2020 and is not sure when he will be able to return to his studies. "Currently, I am in my fourth year, final semester. We are also holding protests and demanding that the students be sent back to the university or practical classes be arranged in India," But he is in dilemma whether he will complete MBBS Degree or not.

**Case Study-6:** Samarkand State Medical University Vice Chancellor Dr. Zafar Aminov said that when the war broke out, the Indian Embassy approached the affected students to inquire if they could seek a transfer. "We examined the needs of such students and ultimately decided that reinstating them with one semester was a viable option to provide parity. Later, we formed a team to facilitate the transfers and also made

special arrangements for these students. We hired 30 more Indian teachers to ensure there were no accent problems.' These are the words of Dr Zafar.

**Case Study-7:** Mr Kumar is studying to become the first doctor not only in his family but in his entire village. Having failed to gain admission to a government college, moving to Ukraine was the next most affordable option. "I would have had to pay around \$150,000 (£113,000) at a private Indian medical college, but the entire six-year course in Ukraine cost me around \$30,000. However, I took a huge loan and my father had to sell part of our ancestral land (to fund my studies)," said Mr Kumar.

**Case Study-8:** Andhra student named Rithika from Obulavaripalli, Kadapa (Dt.), joined at Ukraine Medical College and they suffered a lot academically, financially and ethically. Their future was hop less, parents sold their property like lands, houses and sites and joined at Ukraine. Their position is bad like their more than 50 students from AP economically academically without MBBS degree through the Operation Ganga they came alive to India they are in the middle MBBS education no one is dare enough to join them at Indian Medical college. Norms are different Middle class people suffered a lot.

## CONCLUSION

The war between Russia and Ukraine create a big trouble on educational sector, particularly MBBS studies. Ukraine is one of the factory of Medical students, most of the Indian medical student joined in Ukraine Medical Institutions. Medical students and healthcare workers suffered tremendously from the consequences of war. The students evacuated by the Indian government under the 'Operation Ganga' initiative. 'Operation Ganga' is an initiative launched by the Indian government to bring back Indians stranded in Ukraine. A total of 18,282 Indians were evacuated under this initiative. Student families are in great loss academically and financially. Its bad luck and pray to god to never repeat the situation

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