



IMPACT OF HIGHER EDUCATION ON INDIAN PHYSIOTHERAPY

Physiotherapy

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ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND: The higher education sector in India has a three tier structure comprising the university, college and course. India has one of the largest higher education systems in the world, and in terms of number of students enrolled, is the second highest after China. Higher education has traditionally been associated with higher wages. Human capital theorists argue that since wages are meant to reward workers current and future avenues, graduates should be paid more than those with lower levels of education as their skills and capabilities are assumed to be superior. This paper aims to investigate the impact of higher education on the wages of a physiotherapist, gender wage gap and regarding mobility of Indian physiotherapists to the developed countries.

METHODS: Various articles has been taken out to find out the impact of higher education on the wages of a physiotherapist, gender wage gap and regarding mobility of Indian physiotherapists to the developed countries.

RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS: Studies show that higher education has an impact on the wages of a physiotherapist (low wages and wages are gender specific) and substantial number of mobility of Indian physiotherapists to the overseas for better employment opportunities, better income and better quality of life.

KEYWORDS

Higher Education, Physiotherapy, Gender wage gap

The higher education sector in India has a three tier structure which comprises of university, college and course. Universities have the responsibility to provide graduates with knowledge in their professional field with intellectual skills and ability to apply theory to practical solutions. India has one of the largest higher education systems in the world, primarily dominated by private institutions accounting for 60% of the total institutes and 64% of the total enrolment of students. India has one of the largest higher education systems in the world in terms of number of students enrolled, the second highest after China.

Higher education has traditionally considered to be associated with higher wages. Wages are meant to reward workers' current and future revenues. "According to Becker in 1964 argued that graduates should be paid more than those with lower levels of education as their skills and capabilities are assumed to be superior". Therefore, graduates may expect certain 'extra' financial returns for their investment in education. Spence (1973) argued that graduates should possess some natural skills required to get the educational credentials, thus regardless the potential human capital gains obtained in the university, the university degree will act as a signal of such innate superior ability. In other words, some non naturally skilled individuals may also enter the higher education system, distorting the educational system. This has an effect on the difference on earnings between graduates and non graduates which has been reduced significantly over the last two decades (Sloave and O'Leary,2006).

There are few previous works studying the impact of education, and educational credentials, on the gender wage gap composition. The discrimination theory argues that female wages could be negatively affected by some stereotypes, such as: low commitment, caring nature, physical weakness, lesser need for income, etc. (Anker, 1997). Employers could believe that female workers might prefer to commit to their families rather than to their professional career under the influence of these stereotypes. In such circumstances, employers may prefer to train and reward their male employees, whose future revenues are seen more certain. Hence, the employment conditions of females, including salaries, could be negatively affected by prejudices on women's skills and preferences (Aigner and Cains,1977). Therefore, males and females should get equal returns to the higher education.

Over the last decade, a substantial number of Indian physiotherapists have sought to work and/or study overseas. "According to HCPC in 2013, 3514 Indian physiotherapists applied for registration with the, then, UK Health Professions Council (HPC); 2286 were subsequently registered, which is 27% of overseas physiotherapy HPC registrants between 2002-2012". The UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand are the principle destinations for study and work. The demand for higher education globally is growing, with the enrollment of students

worldwide doubling in the last 20 years (OECD 2008a; Van der Wende 2003). "According to Moran et al in 2005, explored the perspectives of 34 International health professionals (of which a third were physiotherapists) on working in the UK using an 'e survey'. The survey found that travel, money, and career opportunities were the primary motives for working in the UK. This survey reported that low pay was a significant issue for physiotherapists. It has been found that pay levels were not commensurate with a degree level qualification and comparisons were made with degree qualified peers and siblings who were earning substantially higher wages. Minda and Lalit (overseas returnees) identified that although pay was slightly better in the larger private hospitals it was still "horrible". Participants also linked low pay with a perception of a lack of respect (personally and professionally). The more recently qualified participants reported that they compared themselves to their non physiotherapist peers with similar qualifications, and perceived that as physiotherapists they worked as hard or harder, earned substantially less and as a result felt devalued. Some participants described feelings of turmoil in that they were not satisfied with their profession in India, but they still believed in physiotherapy, they enjoyed being with patients. Then they looked at colleagues in hospital administration and saw that they were paid substantially more and drew greater respect.

In spite of the knowledge required by the physiotherapist, some skills such as thinking ability, communication ability, problem solving ability, learning techniques and leadership quality are also required. Physiotherapists travelled overseas to destination countries where physiotherapy is a more mature profession (autonomous profession) with a level of practice and associated knowledge, research and skill base. They sought something different over there in terms of experience, practice, knowledge, respect and pay. Khadria's (2004) study identified that the emphasis of the Indian doctors was on a professional development including access to higher education opportunities; working with experts; better professional infrastructure and employment opportunities; better income and quality of life. It was also identified that variable quality physiotherapists was also contributing factor towards the lack of respect for physiotherapy; the quality of physiotherapy was in part linked to the culture of a department, and whilst culture is created, defined and altered by Indian physiotherapy (Charon 1995), it will take time and effort to change. The participants from the study who had travelled overseas identified that many of them were more focused towards leaving Indian Physiotherapy rather than about leaving physiotherapy or indeed leaving India. Several of the interviewees from the study linked variable quality and poor clinical practice with lack of respect, and this lack of respect as the cause of low pay. They identified that the challenge for an individual and the profession was to improve practice, to gain reputation and respect, and so increase the pay. The findings suggest that physiotherapists who are globally mobile ultimately want a better life incorporating the factor that they want respect for what

they do professionally, and being remunerated accordingly.

A critical goal of improving higher education in developing countries is to increase the supply of human capital. Needless to say, these large flows of healthcare personnel from developing to developed countries have generated serious concerns. Hence, it is our duty (as physiotherapists) to modify somewhat Indian Physiotherapy standards and upgrade our profession in India so that we can increase the supply of human capital in India.

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