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# Studying in America: Increased risks

The abrupt withdrawal of F-1 student visas, which has led to several cases of sudden deportation, is a cause for concern.

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Representative image of a student. Credit: iStock.

The [United States'](#) tariff war has catapulted the world into chaos and uncertainties. Jamie Dimon, CEO of [JP Morgan Chase](#), the world's fifth largest bank, says that a tariff-driven recession is now a likely outcome.

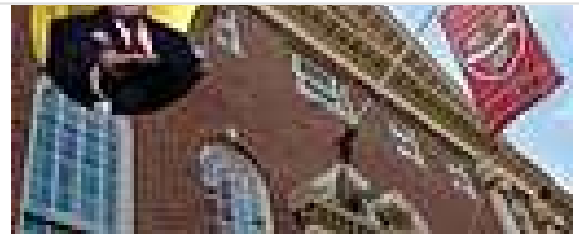
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## Impact on education and jobs

For a long time, the US has been a popular destination for Indian students to pursue higher studies. According to the Open Doors Report 2024, there were 883,908 international students in the US during the academic year 2023-24, out of which Indian students were the largest cohort with 331,602. The increase in the number of Indian students over the previous academic year, at 29.4 per cent, validates the fascination with education and employment in the US.

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Whether the world will slip into a recession or not, there will be a serious impact on education and employment in the US. Consider these developments:

The US government has initiated investigations into the functioning of more than 50 universities. Further, the government has withdrawn or reduced financial assistance to several universities, including Columbia, Cornell, Northwestern, Princeton, Pennsylvania, etc. Consequently, universities are trimming their budgets, freezing new hiring, and reducing admissions, especially in research.

Currently, as per Optional Practical Training (OPT), students are allowed to work before or after graduation for a period of 12 months, and students from Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) are given a further extension of up to 24 months, for a total of 36 months, to find a job. Now, a new bill threatens to cancel this provision, triggering panic in student communities. Without OPT, if students fail to get an H1-Visa, which is capped and competitive, they must face deportation. As per the Open Doors Report of 2024, one-third of Indian students in the US were enrolled in the OPT programme. However, as things stand, the passing of the OPT bill is uncertain.

The abrupt withdrawal of F-1 student visas, which has led to several cases of sudden deportation, is a cause for concern. US Secretary of State Marco Rubio confirmed last month that at least 300 visas have been revoked, adding that the department targeted

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These developments could lead to inflation and a higher cost of living, increased racism and anti-Indian sentiments, making living in the US challenging.

### Risk assessment

Under the circumstances, students considering higher studies in the US should assess new risks due to tariff wars, slow/negative economic growth, policy changes in universities, and student/employment visa regulations. However, settling down in the US after education with a job will be uncertain and fraught with risks.

Other popular destinations for Indian students to pursue higher studies include Europe,

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Many foreign universities have established bases in India. Hence, students should relook at Indian options for higher studies and augment their efforts, as admission into top Indian universities/institutions is more difficult than admission into universities abroad. So far, the opportunities to study in the US have outweighed the challenges, but now the situation has reversed. Therefore, students should carefully evaluate their options for higher studies and exercise caution when choosing an overseas university.

*(The author is a management and career consultant)*

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