

Internationalization of Higher Education in India: Pathways and Initiatives

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Abstract: *Internationalization is now high priority for Indian policy makers and education providers. Leading education providers in India have acknowledged internationalization to be the most eminent feature of higher education going ahead and have made efforts towards internationalizing their institution. Similarly, policy makers and education agencies have also taken initiatives to promote the 'internationalization' of Indian higher education. The trend towards internationalization of higher education has resulted in a lot of interest being shown by stakeholders in its definition and in understanding the pathways to internationalization. This paper visits the idea of Internationalization of Higher Education (IHE) and in the part that follows discusses the prevalent pathways to internationalization. The paper also identifies and comprehends certain initiatives undertaken by policy makers, education agencies and higher education providers in their effort to internationalize higher education in India. The researcher endeavors to put in place an outline of the mentioned pathways and initiatives to internationalize higher education in India.*

Keywords: *Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), Indian Higher Education, Internationalization of Higher Education (IHE), Initiatives, Internationalization, Pathways.*

I. Introduction

The Indian higher education sector is undergoing an unprecedented transformation driven by economic and demographic change [1]. 'Internationalization' of higher education has in recent decades emerged as a significant component of the higher education system and has generated a lot of interest amongst its stakeholders. A number of international trends have impacted the higher education sector to a certain extent. 'GATS' identifies education as a service sector to be liberalized [2]. "The forces responsible for the growing acceleration of internationalization include the ICT revolution, the emergence of knowledge society, growing demand for higher education, growing utilitarianism in higher education and the need of higher education institutions to generate revenue as a result of decreasing public funding" [3]. Leading Indian Universities have acknowledged 'internationalization' to be the future of higher education in India and have voiced the need to internationalize. The policymakers, aware of the many benefits of internationalization have taken steps to promote the internationalization of higher education in India through various policy initiatives. It has now become necessary for Indian HEIs to chart out a road map to internationalize their higher education in an environment of increasing competition.

The recent decades have seen a lot of interest being generated and research being done on the 'internationalization' aspect of higher education. The aspects which have generated interest amongst stakeholders include the definition, motives, approaches and challenges concerning the internationalization of higher education. Internationalization of higher education holds a lot of aspects to it, Knight rightly states that the "overall, the picture of internationalization that is emerging is one of complexity, diversity and differentiation" [4]. It has been seen that there are many terms which are used to describe the internationalization aspect of higher education. "The three common terms used by the education sector to describe the international nature of education are internationalization, cross-border education and more recently trade in education" [5].

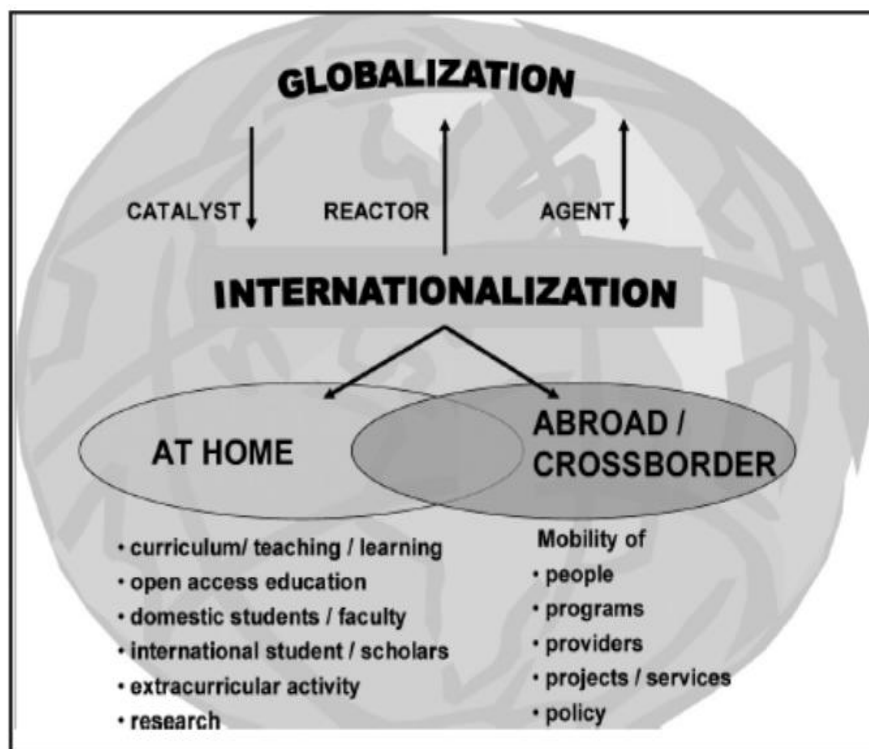
Some Indian HEIs have embraced internationalization and have readied themselves in terms of building up the infrastructure, adopting multiple internationalization dimensions and communicating the need to work towards internationalization amongst their faculty and staff. The policymakers and agencies through their new policy initiatives are now looking to support and encourage the process of internationalization. Internationalization of higher education potentially has multiple benefits at the national and institution level. The motives to internationalization may vary and may include monetary profit, research enhancement, building up the institution brand internationally and generation of goodwill amongst countries. "Profit is the major motive for the for-profit sector and for the funded non-profit sector the motive is not financial and they wish to enhance research, increase knowledge capacity and increase cultural understanding"[6]. The need to internationalize India's higher education has now been well established. The providers and policy makers are now determining ways to internationalize higher education at various levels. This paper identifies and studies the pathways and

initiatives to internationalize the higher education sector in India. The paper also makes an attempt to give insights and to develop a framework of the mentioned initiatives and pathways to enable internationalization.

II. Internationalization of Higher Education

Internationalization is a term which is now used very often by different stakeholders of the education sector. The meaning of the term internationalization in reference to the education sector for various stakeholders could mean taking education across national borders and the internationalization elements would comprise of institutional linkages, partnerships, collaborations and people mobility across international borders or even sharing teaching-learning best practices amongst institutions based across borders.

The best recognized definition is the one put forth by Jane Knight and has been accepted by UNSECO. Knight defines Internationalization of Higher Education (IHE) as “the process of integrating an international, intercultural and global dimension into the purpose, functions (teaching, service, research) and delivery of higher education at the institutional and national levels” [7]. This definition by Knight brings to the fore along with other elements the aspect of integration of the ‘intercultural dimension’ of internationalization of higher education.



Source: Knight, 2012.

Figure 1: Two pillars of Internationalization

Knight says that cross border education’ is only a part of internationalization and the term is often inaccurately confused with internationalization and further adds that there are two pillars to internationalization, one which is at home and the other pillar being abroad/ cross border [8]. Fig 1 shows the two pillars of internationalization and also mentions the constituents of the two pillars of internationalization [9].

III. Pathways and Initiatives to Internationalization

Internationalization has many facets to it which include international mobility of students and faculty, collaboration with foreign providers, promotion of sports and cultural activities and establishment of overseas campuses amongst others. Each facet provides a potential pathway towards internationalization. Off all the pathways to internationalization, student mobility is the most visible and significant pathway. Over the past years Indian HEIs have made attempts to build up capacity to attract international students. Some Indian education providers including the private HEIs have been successful in enrolling international students in good numbers. Internationalization of higher education in India can have different pathways and an institution should select the one that is most suited to its core competencies and character. In India the internationalization of higher education at the HEI level can come about in different and multiple pathways. Fig. 2 shows some of the prevalent pathways to internationalization.

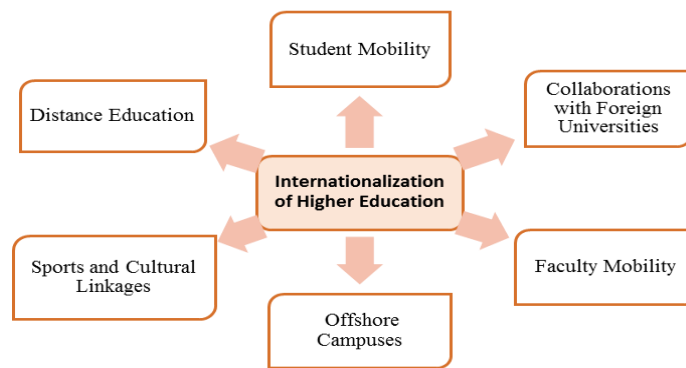


Figure 2: Pathways to Internationalization

The policy makers, over the years have taken steps towards internationalization and have framed policies to promote Indian higher education overseas. Recently, the Ministry of Human Resource Development, GOI initiated a consultation meet on ‘Internationalization of Higher Education’ which was organized by the Association of Indian Universities (AIU) and Savitribai Phule Pune University (SPPU) at Pune. This consultative meet was organized to provide inputs to the Government on the issues and policies involved in the internationalization of higher education in India [10]. The University Grants Commission (UGC) has recognized internationalization as a priority area in the Tenth Plan and set up an expert committee for the Promotion of Indian Higher Education Abroad (PIHEAD) to encourage student mobility [11].

Some of the Government backed initiatives to promote internationalization include the General Cultural Scholarship Scheme (GCSC) implemented through ICCR which encourages student mobility by providing scholarships to countries from Latin America, Africa and Asia. [12]; the Global Initiative for Academic Networks (GIAN) approved by the Government of India which promotes interaction between scientists, entrepreneurs and students internationally [13] and the Connect to India programme by MHRD which encourages student mobility by offering short term programmes [14].

A number of foreign countries have taken initiatives to promote internationalization through linkages with leading Indian institutions. These tie-ups are in the form of student exchange programmes and academic collaborations in different academic areas. A case in point would be the UK-India and the US-India initiatives which include the UK-India Education and Research Initiative (UKIERI) initiative which encourages research partnerships and academic exchanges. [15]; the Generation UK India initiative which encourages student mobility and inter-country employment with an aim to support 25000 students to come to India over the next 5 years. [16]; the Indo-US 21st Century Knowledge Initiative which promotes collaboration in research and faculty exchanges [17] and the United States-India Educational Foundation (USIEF) Fulbright- Nehru programme of the US which promotes linkages between India and the US through ‘Study in India Programme’, fellowships and institutional collaborations. [18]

Many countries across the globe have internationalization strategies in place where internationalization is promoted through education agencies of respective countries. Good examples of these are the British Council which promotes UK higher education abroad, USIEF which promotes US higher education overseas and DAAD which does the same for Germany. An example of a country which has successfully internationalized and marketed their higher education abroad is that of Australia where a number of their HEIs have been successful in attracting foreign students. Internationalization is promoted mostly by facilitating enrollment of international students and initiating programmes which encourage people mobility (students and scholars) through exchanges and scholarships. The other tools used to promote internationalization include institutional partnerships and collaborations.

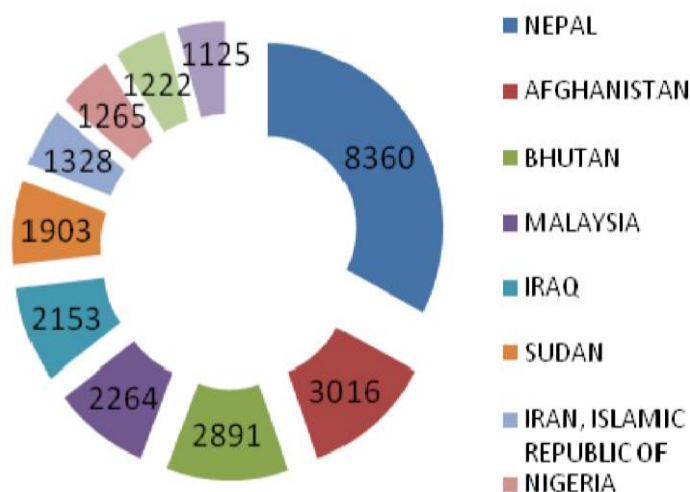
Some of the most accepted pathways and initiatives to internationalization higher education are:

3.1 International Student Mobility

International student mobility is seen as the most known, visible and sought after dimension to internationalize higher education. The number of students enrolled in tertiary education overseas has increased from 1.3 million in 1990 to nearly 4.3 million in 2011 [19]. It is estimated that this figure will be 8 million by 2025 [20]. The stated figures reinforce the importance and vitality of student mobility as a prime driver to internationalization. It can thus be said that student mobility is the most important cog for internationalization to happen and that it is imperative for education providers and policymakers to devise strategies to promote international student mobility.

In an effort to encourage international student mobility, the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA) has initiated a ‘Study India Programme’ for foreign students of Indian origin to undertake short-term visits. [21] Over 900 students from UK visited India for three weeks under the UKIERI Study India Programme to build links between the people of India and the UK. [22] Offering short term courses is a way in which some Indian HEIs have attempted to increase student mobility. The Centre for International Learning under the Symbiosis International University offers a tailor made three week ‘Study India Programme’ which combines academics with cultural activities. [23]

The enrolment of students in the Indian higher education system is fairly large. As per the data of the All India Survey in Higher Education (AISHE), the total enrolment in higher education has been estimated to be 32.3 million [24]. As per figures published by EY, FICCI [25] the inflow of international students to Indian campuses for the year 2012 stood at 31,000. Of the total inflow of international students to Indian shores, Asia contributed 67.7%, Africa 19.4% followed by North America, Europe and Oceania. The major drivers to enroll in Indian HEIs for students coming from developing countries are, better job prospects and immigration opportunity, opportunity to learn English and diversity and allure of Indian culture [26]. In comparison to the inflow of 31,000 students in the year 2012 the number of Indian students at overseas campuses stood at 1,90,055 [27]. In the year 2012-13, seven Indian Universities had more than a thousand international students. Amongst all the Universities in India having enrollment of international students, Manipal University had the largest number i.e. 2,742 with Pune being the most popular destination for international students [28].



Source: ASHIE 2013-14

Figure 3: Country wise distribution of international students enrolled in Indian HEIs (AISHE)

As per ASHIE report 2013-14 [29] the total number of international students in India stands at 39,517, with representation from 158 countries from across the globe. Amongst all international students enrolled in Indian HEIs the highest number of students are from India’s neighboring countries namely, Nepal (21%) followed by Afghanistan (8%), Bhutan at (7%) and Iraq (5%). It can be said that the top source countries are the developing countries and there is only a miniscule representation from developed countries

As student mobility figures suggest, over the years the inflow of international students into Indian HEIs has been far less than the outflow of Indian students to overseas campuses. Though it has been seen that the policy makers have been taking initiatives to attract international students, the results in terms of number of students coming to Indian education providers is not very satisfying in terms of the inflow-outflow ratio. There is a need for stakeholders at various levels to identify enablers to facilitate the inflow of international students to India in desired numbers. An important determinant to the choice of overseas education provider would be the hospitality of the host country, off-campus environment, the on-campus infrastructure and the global relevance of the education provided at the HEI. The enablers at the HEI level to facilitating international students coming to Indian HEIs would also include the ease of enrollment processes, infrastructure enhancement and readying the faculty to the needs and wants of international students.

3.2 Collaboration with Foreign Universities

Many Indian Universities now have a number of Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with their counterparts in different countries. Amity University has taken this path to internationalization and has tie-ups with over 100 international Universities. [30] The linkages are in the areas of educational tours for students, student and faculty exchange and curriculum development amongst others. Amity University has International courses in communication, engineering, fashion and management, where the benefits for the students include degrees from Universities of the world and opportunities to work abroad. [31] The Amrita University has its “Amrita Centre for International Programs” where it has tie-ups with more than 80 institutions and offers dual degree programmes semester study abroad opportunities [32].

3.3 Faculty Mobility

Faculty mobility through research collaborations is increasingly being promoted by the respective University signifying its importance as a vital internationalization dimension. The various international initiatives encourage faculty mobility and development through exchange programmes, research collaborations and conferences. Faculty development through research collaboration and faculty exchanges can lead to knowledge enhancement which in turn can improve the quality of education. Faculty mobility can potentially enable sharing of international best practices in the teaching learning process and help take internationalization to the grass root level at the home campus.

3.4 Offshore Branch Campuses

Setting up overseas campuses is a way to internationalization where the education provider goes to students based in other countries. India has a large diaspora population in many countries located across the globe and having overseas campuses could be a way to reach out to them. The challenge of Indian higher education providers here would be compete with the other international campuses based in that particular country in terms of quality and relevance of education and other aspects. Education Hubs are being developed in some small but rich countries and in fast developing countries that have well established higher education systems. Education hubs are the latest development and constitute the third wave of cross border education initiatives [33].

Table 1: Branch Campus Listing

Institution Name	Host Country	Home Country
SP Jain School of Global Management Sydney Campus	Australia	India
SP Jain Centre of Global Management	Singapore	India
Birla Institute of Technology and Science - Dubai Campus	United Arab Emirates, Dubai	India
Institute of Management Technology - Dubai	United Arab Emirates, Dubai	India
Manipal University - Dubai	United Arab Emirates, Dubai	India
SP Jain Centre of Management - Dubai Campus	United Arab Emirates, Dubai	India
Bharati Vidyapeeth University	United Arab Emirates, Dubai	India
Madurai Kamaraj University	United Arab Emirates, Ras Al Khaimah	India

Source: C-BERT (2016)

There are 232 institutions that have branch campuses across the world and there are eight Indian institutions having campuses overseas, with three host countries including UAE (6), Australia and Singapore. As per the data from C- BERT [34], the Indian institutions include SP Jain, BITS, IMT, Manipal University, Bharti Vidyapeeth and Madurai Kamraj University.

3.5 Other pathways to Internationalization

Sports and Cultural Linkages: The intercultural dimension of internationalization needs to be promoted as it is a way of appreciating the presence of foreign nationalities in Indian campuses. This is ideally done through organizing multiple cultural events and sports activities in the context of presence of students of various nationalities. The Symbiosis International Cultural Center, through its Symbiosis Centre for International Education and Center for International Education, organizes events for their international students [35].

Internationalization of Curricula: Indian universities, should look at revising and being flexible in their syllabi in the context of changing employability demands. Responding to increased globalization of the economy and movement of people across countries, Indian higher education institutions should embrace the need to internationalize their programmes and prepare their curricula accordingly. Efforts should be made to re-establish syllabi by incorporating international aspects, including commercial best practices of leading MNCs, case studies and relevant details of prominent countries and their economic and cultural environment.

Internationalization through distance education: The distance or virtual mode in reference to internationalization is an arrangement where providers deliver courses or programmes in different countries through the online mode. Ideally the distance learning programmes should be country specific and target segment specific where the education needs of the target student segment are met in terms of quality and content. The recent years have seen rapid development in the mechanisms of delivery (through ICT) of educational materials through the distance mode.

IV. Conclusion

Internationalization of higher education is an amalgamation of a number of international dimensions. People mobility and the other accepted pathways like establishing academic partnerships, forming cultural and sports linkages, research collaborations have always been considered to be the prime drivers and determinants to internationalization. However, now greater stress needs to be placed on taking internationalization to the grass root level by adopting and following international best practices in the teaching learning process and other in-campus activities. It is increasingly being recognized that along with the top management, the faculty of the respective HEIs also need to take ownership and drive internationalization at their campuses. Initiatives linked to adding internationalization dimensions require institutional support in terms of funding, providing facilities and conducting of training programmes to familiarize faculty and staff about the HEIs internationalization objectives and methods.

Indian HEIs must find ways to market their education wares abroad and devise strategies to draw students not just from developing countries but also from the developed countries. Indian HEIs have a great advantage in terms of Indian higher education being very affordable as compared to many other developed countries. Successful marketing of education needs a well thought out marketing strategy which would be based on the core competencies of the individual HEI and a detailed study of the key drivers for the respective international student to come and study in India. Another aspect which an HEI should look at is, building an environment which is conducive for students to become fit to be employed anywhere in the world and not just in India. Indian HEIs should look at readying themselves by improving the infrastructural facilities, providing good quality and globally relevant education and creating a suitable ambience for their international students. Indian HEIs should undertake measures to add multiple internationalization dimensions to their higher education and reap the many academic and economic benefits that internationalization offers.

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