



# Internationalization Of Higher Education In India: Strategic Initiatives, Challenges And Opportunities

**Jyotirmayee Behera**

Lecturer in Education

Kamakhyanagar Degree College

Kamakhyanagar, Odisha

## Abstract

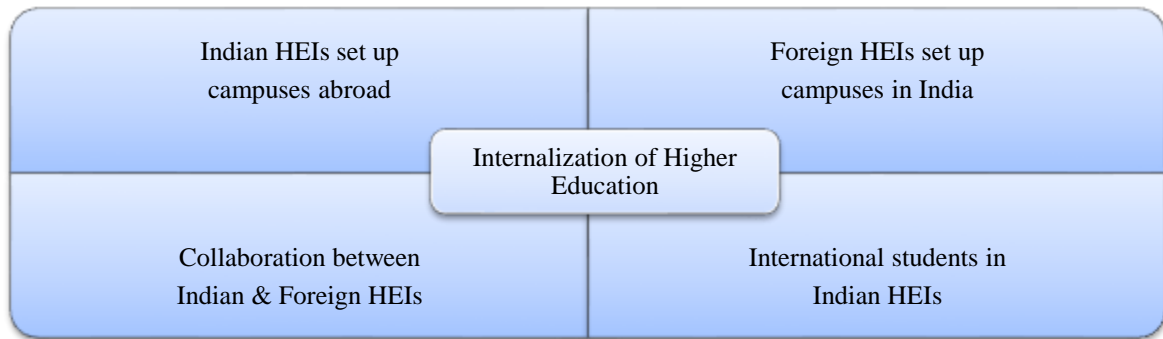
Global Citizenship requires to be aware of the global scenario. Internationalization objectives align with the concept of global citizenship. Internationalization of Higher Education will improve the Input, Process, Output of learning in the Higher Education Institutions in order to meet the standards of global knowledge society. This article discusses the Strategic Initiatives for Internationalization of Higher Education Institutions in accordance with National Education Policy-2020. The challenges which India is facing in the way of Internationalization of Higher Education and the opportunities for attracting foreign students to the sphere of Higher Education in India are also summarized in as well.

**Key Words-Global Citizenship, Internationalization of Higher Education, National Education Policy-2020, Strategic Initiatives, Challenges, Opportunities**

## 1. Introduction

In the advent of Globalisation and technological advancements, the landscape of higher education has undergone significant transformations. India has one of the largest Higher Education system in the world that stands second in terms of the Higher Education network. One of the key phenomena influencing this shift is the internalization of higher education, wherein institutions strive to foster global perspectives, enhance academic standards, and promote cultural exchange within their campuses. National Education Policy, 2020 (NEP) envisions a massive transformation in education through– “an education system rooted in Indian ethos that contributes directly to transforming India, that is Bharat, sustainably into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society, by providing high quality education to all, thereby making India a global knowledge superpower.” As per Ministry of External Affairs, there were approximately 1.5 million Indian students pursuing education abroad as on January 2023. However, in comparison, number for foreign students coming to India for the purpose of higher education as per All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2019-2020, is 49,348. In order to facilitate the mobility of students to the country NEP 2020 stressed on the five guiding pillars of Access, Equity, Quality, Affordability and Accountability.

## 2. Internalization of Higher Education: Conceptual Understanding



(Ministry of Education, Government of India)

Internationalization of Higher Education has to act as catalyst to HEIs to position themselves to cater to the needs of the global knowledge society. A few Indian higher education institutions has already appeared in the ‘world rankings’ of universities. In QS 2022 World University Ranking, 35 institutions have featured in the ranking and 63 Higher Education Institutions have figured in Times Higher Education (THE) World University Ranking 2021. The score for internationalization among all the indicators is found to be relatively poor for Indian Higher Education Institutions. The focus is on improving the potential of the Indian HEIs to do equally well in these rankings.

### 3. Strategic Programmes and Initiatives for Internalization of Higher Education

In order to achieve the objective of Internalization and harness the full potential of our higher education system, It involves significant initiatives to be taken both at institution and regulatory/government level. This synergy between national policy and institutional strategy will give a thrust to internationalization of higher education. Accordingly, these Guidelines cover various strategic programmes/initiatives for internationalization of higher education and Higher Education Institutions are encouraged to undertake these initiatives to attract the foreign students to India which are as follows:

#### 3.1. Internationalization at Home

HEIs are encouraged to put necessary effort towards ‘internationalization at home’ without compromising the requirements of the Indian context.

- i. Capacity building in internationalization initiatives
- ii. Collaborative communication between Indian and international faculty
- iii. International dimension to curricula in the sciences, social sciences, and beyond and technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), computer science, gaming to be tied up with internship and apprenticeship.
- iv. Quality residential facilities to students from abroad.
- v. On-campus support to students from abroad to provide continuous and inclusive support to international students.
- vi. Integrating incoming international students with local communities.
- vii. Friendly environment for incoming students to have a safe, positive, and holistic experience
- viii. Offering local language courses and other bridge courses as needed
- ix. Courses and programmes in subjects of knowledge of India and its languages, arts, history, culture, and global context; global literacy
- x. Incorporate internationalization objectives into the institution’s broader quality assurance processes for teaching and learning, community engagement and student satisfaction.

### 3.2. Credit Recognition under Twinning Arrangement

Under a Twinning arrangement, Indian students are enrolled with a higher education institution in India but complete part of their programme at a partnering institution from another country complying with relevant national regulations. However, the degree under Twinning arrangement shall be given solely by the Indian Higher Education Institution. Indian Higher Education Institutions are encouraged to offer degree programme under twinning arrangement.

- i. The collaborating Indian Higher Education Institution may enter into Agreement/MoUs with Foreign Higher Education Institution for recognition of credits under twinning arrangements
- ii. The existing curricula may be supplemented by the additional curricula of the collaborating universities.
- iii. The credits obtained at the Foreign Higher Education Institution shall be reflected in the transcript
- iv. Any degree to be awarded under such Twinning programme must be in conformity with the provisions of section 22 (3) of the UGC Act, 1956 and shall also be in conformity with the norms, standards and requirement for award of such degree, as laid down by the statutory authority concerned.
- v. Any course or programme, which jeopardizes the National Interest, shall not be allowed to be offered in India.
- vi. The Indian Higher Education Institutions should also make provision for exit pathways for student who are unable to complete the Twinning programme including for failing to secure VISA should be allowed to complete the programme in the Indian Higher Education Institution.
- vii. The Indian Higher Education Institution shall provide periodical report annually giving details of the number of students admitted, Programme(s) conducted, number of students awarded such degree and any other information that the Commission may seek.

### 3.3. Global Citizenship Approach

Global citizen is someone who is aware of and understands the wider world and actively works towards making our planet more equal, fair and sustainable. Higher Education Institutions may take a Global citizen approach at their institution.

- i. Developing knowledge, skills and values in our next generation which they need to engage with the world and believing that “we can all make a difference”
- ii. Empowering students with understanding of how the world works economically, politically, socially, culturally, technologically and ecologically.
- iii. HEIs may endeavor to inculcate essential values such as diversity, interdependence, empathy and perspective in students.
- iv. Credit based projects and courses in the areas of community engagement, environmental education and value-based education
- v. Short courses and workshops on human and constitutional values, respect for others, cleanliness, courtesy, democratic spirit, spirit of service, respect for public property, scientific temper, responsibility, pluralism, equality, and justice
- vi. Inculcate skill in students, such as Critical thinking, Communication Technology skills, Cross-cultural awareness, Adaptability
- vii. Global citizens to harness the knowledge, values, skills that are required to contribute in multiple contexts – locally, nationally and internationally- for building a more sustainable, resilient and compassionate world in the 21st century.

### 3.4. ICT based Internationalization

ICT can overcome traditional barriers to internationalization. The borderless nature of ICT has the potential to transform the internationalization process. Transformation with the help of ICT in itself is a motivation for Higher Education Institutions to undertake several measures to revitalize the higher education system.

- i. Addressing the concerns for access and equity through help of Massive online open courses (MOOCs), Creation of e-content and taking offering of online courses beyond physical boundaries
- ii. Infrastructure up gradation with the help of ICT to make academic, administrative and residential infrastructure global
- iii. Data collection and analysis with help of ICT to track and study preference and needs of foreign students including prospective students.
- iv. Virtual partnership with foreign experts in workshop, webinars and conferences.
- v. Renewing and updating the learning approaches with the help of technology
- vi. Effectively responding to the demand of students with the help of ICT based learning tools and collaborative learning
- vii. Leveraging the potential of technology from integrated digital learning platforms to video lessons
- viii. Exploring pedagogical opportunities of ICT in internationalization

### 3.5. Academic and Research Collaboration

Higher Education Institutions are encouraged to enter into collaborating activities, complying the relevant norms and Regulations. The activities may include:

- i. Student exchange programme for short-duration visits to reputed universities abroad , Semester-abroad programmes under Twinning Arrangement.
- ii. Faculty members are encouraged to get exposure to foreign universities in exchange programme, short-term projects etc.
- iii. Organising academic and research workshops, seminar and conferences in partnership with international universities
- iv. Establishment of Chairs abroad in the name of eminent Indian scientists/ scholars and philosophers

### 3.6. Brand Building Abroad

Higher Education Institutions are encouraged to undertake brand building exercise to make India and their institutions attractive study destinations.

- i. Preparing country specific report based on academic and market research on priorities of prospective students
- ii. Higher Education Institutions are encouraged to set up offshore campuses in order to expand the outreach of the institutions
- iii. Scholarships for foreign students to come to India.
- iv. Collaborating with foreign alumni or alumni of Indian origin living abroad for brand building exercises
- v. Publicizing best practices of our education system and at our institutions to global academic and research communities
- vi. Popularizing the language courses, bridge courses and short-term non-degree niche courses on Indian Art, Culture, Yoga, Ayurveda, Buddhism etc.
- vii. Use of digital platform and virtual mode for such brand building exercises

### 3.7. Alumni Connect

The Alumni are a strong support to any Higher Education Institution. An active Alumni Association can contribute in academic matters, student support as well as mobilization of resources – both financial and non-financial.). In order to maintain a continuous engagement with the alumni, the HEIs may undertake a number of activities:

- i. Establish an alumni cell and maintain a detailed database of the alumni living abroad (both Indian and foreign)
- ii. Sharing with the alumni regarding the latest initiatives of the institution
- iii. Virtually connecting with the alumni and inviting them for participation in conferences/webinars
- iv. Engage in community service activity with help of Alumni
- v. Honoring distinguished alumni for supporting in brand building exercise as well as overall development of the institution
- vi. Share details of alumni with Government whenever required

### 3.8. Office for International Affairs

The Office for International Affairs in each University will be an integral part of internationalization of higher education in India. This office will be responsible for undertaking various activities including:

- i. Coordinate all matters relating to welcoming and supporting foreign students
- ii. Single point contact for carrying out all collaborative activities with foreign institutions
- iii. Act as a liaison body between the foreign students and the sponsoring agency
- iv. Address the grievances of foreign students in all matters
- v. Single point contact for foreign student's registration with FRRO/e-FRRO
- vi. Facilitate networking of international students with fellow students
- vii. Sharing relevant information including the contact details of Office for International affairs in website and to government and regulatory bodies.

## 4. Challenges Facing Internationalization of Higher Education:

Despite the growing emphasis on internationalization, Indian higher education encounters several hurdles in its pursuit of global integration. These challenges include:

1. Quality Assurance: Ensuring parity with international academic standards while maintaining relevance to local contexts remains a daunting task.
2. Infrastructure and Resources: Many institutions struggle with inadequate infrastructure and resources necessary to support diverse student populations and international collaborations.
3. Regulatory Framework: Cumbersome regulatory procedures and bureaucratic red tape hinder the seamless integration of foreign students and faculty.
4. Language Barrier: English proficiency varies among students and faculty, posing a communication challenge in multicultural academic settings.
5. Financial Constraints: Limited funding and lack of sustainable financial models constrain initiatives aimed at fostering international collaborations and exchange programs

## 5. Opportunities for Internationalization of Higher Education:

Despite the challenges, internationalization opens up avenues for Indian higher education to expand its global footprint and enhance its academic prowess. Key opportunities include:

1. Diversity Enrichment: Internationalization enriches the academic environment by fostering cultural diversity, promoting cross-cultural understanding, and nurturing global citizenship among students and faculty.
2. Research Collaborations: Partnerships with foreign universities facilitate collaborative research endeavors, knowledge exchange, and access to funding opportunities.

3. Skill Enhancement: Exposure to international teaching methodologies, interdisciplinary approaches, and experiential learning enhances the employability and skill sets of students.
4. Brand Building: Establishing a global presence enhances the reputation and credibility of Indian institutions, attracting foreign students, faculty, and research partnerships.
5. Policy Reforms: Streamlining regulatory frameworks, incentivizing international collaborations, and investing in infrastructure can create an enabling environment for internationalization.
6. Implications and Way Forward: The internationalization of higher education in India has far-reaching implications for academia, industry, and society at large. It necessitates concerted efforts from policymakers, educational institutions, and stakeholders to address existing challenges and capitalize on emerging opportunities. Key strategies for fostering internationalization include:
7. Institutional Capacity Building: Investing in infrastructure, faculty development, and internationalization initiatives to enhance institutional capacity and competitiveness.
8. Policy Reforms: Reforming regulatory frameworks to facilitate the seamless integration of foreign students and faculty, streamline accreditation processes, and incentivize international collaborations.
9. Promoting Cultural Exchange: Organizing cultural exchange programs, international conferences, and study abroad opportunities to foster cross-cultural understanding and global perspectives.
10. Industry-Academia Collaboration: Strengthening partnerships between academia and industry to align curriculum with industry needs, promote research commercialization, and enhance global competitiveness.
11. Student Mobility: Encouraging student mobility through scholarships, exchange programs, and twinning arrangements with foreign universities to broaden horizons and enrich learning experiences.

## 6. Conclusion:

The internationalization of higher education in India is a multifaceted endeavor that holds immense potential to elevate the quality, relevance, and global standing of Indian institutions. By addressing challenges and leveraging opportunities, India can position itself as a hub of academic excellence, innovation, and cultural exchange in the global knowledge economy. It requires sustained commitment, collaboration, and visionary leadership to realize this transformative vision of internationalization.

## References

All India Survey on Higher Education, 2019-20, Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education.  
 National Education Policy-2020, Ministry of Human Resources Development, Government of India.  
 Report on the Akhil Bharatiya Shiksha Samagam, 2023- Thematic Session 8: Internalisation of Education.  
 Guidelines for Internationalisation of Higher Education, 2021, University Grants Commission, New Delhi.

## Websites

<https://www.education.gov.in/nep/internationalisation-education#:~:text=Agreeing%20on%20this%2C%20one%20of,of%20%E2%80%9Cinternationalization%20at%20home%E2%80%9D>.  
[https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload\\_files/mhrd/files/nep/TS8\\_Internationalisation\\_HE.pdf](https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/nep/TS8_Internationalisation_HE.pdf)  
<https://www.mea.gov.in/advanced-search-list.htm?keysrch=foreign+students+in+India>