

Pathways To Internationalise Indian Higher Education – Exploring Stakeholder’s potential

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Abstract

The internationalization of higher education has become an essential aspect of the global education system, and India is also striving towards it. The Indian higher education system is one of the oldest and largest education systems of the world and has evolved substantially over the past few decades. However, when it comes to internationalization of higher education in India there is scope for development, as part of which various measures have been undertaken by key stakeholders by opting for numerous strategies and policy measures.

This study explores the potential of stakeholders, including universities, government that have dispensed a primary role in the internationalization of higher education in India. The research work employed an exploratory research approach, where information was collected through available literature and document analysis. The findings suggest that stakeholders' involvement in internationalization is essential, and they can contribute in various ways, such as promoting international collaboration, creating opportunities for students and faculty to study and research abroad, scholarship opportunities and developing a globally competitive curriculum.

Keywords: Internationalization of Higher Education, Student Mobility, Faculty Mobility

Introduction:

Internationalisation of higher education has been defined by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as one of the methods through which education responds to various opportunities and challenges that includes elements like curriculum, learning, institutional agreements, faculty mobility, student mobility and such related operations. Internationalisation can be referred to as a process of integrating an international dimension to the teaching learning process with the purpose or function of inculcating the same within higher education with the aim of facilitating specific mandates and missions, that are defined as part of these internationalisation programmes (Rajkhowa, 2017) (OECD, 2012).

Consequently, in pursuance of above, the researcher under will determine under this study, the extent of internationalisation within India and higher education while highlighting the role of key stakeholders in facilitating the initiations development implementation of these internationalisation programmes with the aim of developing Indian higher education at par with internationalisation programmes of leading foreign nations.

Evolution of Indian Higher Education:

Indian higher education system is recognised as one of the largest across the globe, which has today gone through considerable changes during the past many decades. Therefore, higher education within India was found to be deep-rooted within Vedic studies that cover a wide range of subjects including commerce, grammar astrology, mathematics and medicine. During the Vedic period they were Gurukuls which were recognised as the centre of learning where in learners lived and learnt from their respective gurus. However, the Vedic period last till 680 after which with the advent of Mughals during the year 1526 Madarsas were established with were recognised as Islamic institutions of education in India that taught grammar, mathematics, law and philosophy to the students. The true evolution of Indian education began during the pre-independence era when the Britishers introduced the system of Europe in higher education system, which further recognised English as a medium of instruction. Therefore, the very aim of the Britishers was to establish English educated human resource so as to serve the British administration (Cuesta Medina, 2022).

Indian Education Post-Independence Period:

Once India became independent on 15th August 1947, it was left with a very small and imbalanced system of higher education with only 20 universities and 500 colleges. The first committee of independent India was formed was the university Education committee of 1948 founded by Radhakrishnan, which was formed to oversee the most crucial aspects of education and provide recommendations for improvements.

However, in order to transform the Indian higher education system the first National Education Commission or the Kothari Commission was formed in 1964 followed by the National Policy on Education in 1968 which was formed based on the recommendations of the Kothari Commission (Cuesta Medina, 2022).

It shall be recognised that the Indian higher education system has truly evolved today with recent trends in higher education reflecting upon the significance of high-quality education within the Indian economy under which Indian universities and the government both have undertaken measures for creating opportunities through which not only students that are studying in India could gain, but at the same time students from across the globe could also be attracted, something which can be achieved with extremely proficient and internationalise higher education programmes (Cuesta Medina, 2022).

Recognising The Role Of Indian Educational Institutions in Transforming Indian Higher Education:

In India there have been various universities that have entered into MoUs (memorandum of understanding) with numerous universities across the globe for facilitating the internationalisation of education. Universities have tied up with more than hundred

international universities through which the university is now able to offer its students in India such internationalisation programmes, which provides a wide exposure to students in terms of the curriculum which is offered under these programs. There are also many universities in India that have partnered with foreign universities to provide dual degree (Knight, J. ,2014).

Facilitating Faculty Mobility:

Another major contribution of Indian universities towards internationalisation of Indian higher education is in the form of faculty mobility through which Indian faculties are encouraged to enter into research collaborations with foreign universities (Yeravdekar and Tiwari, 2016). Through faculty mobility the professors which are sent overseas are able to develop more knowledge upon internationalised education and this can further result in enhancing their skills within a particular program which in turn can help in improving the overall quality of education within Indian universities (Godwin, Wit and Rumbley, 2019).

The technical know-how that are learnt by these faculty members in foreign universities can potentially be gained by the faculties during these faculty mobility programmes and accordingly these best practises can then be used by the faculties for facilitating an internationalised learning process, that can significantly uplift the quality of education across Indian universities from grassroot level (Knight, J. ,2014).

Establishing of Offshore Branch Campuses:

Another way through which universities are contributing towards internationalisation of Indian higher education is by setting up their campuses in foreign nations wherein Indian and foreign students that are located in other countries can in fact enrol themselves in these offshore campuses and accordingly benefit from the higher education programmes of these Indian universities which provide for both high quality education and at the same time exposure to opportunities in terms of dual degree programmes and extensively developed education hubs which facilitate initiatives that can allow the Indian students studying abroad to enrol themselves at Indian University , thus allowing them to gain higher education without any linguistic barrier or cultural barrier (Chattopadhyay, Marginson and Varghese, 2022) .

Factors Influencing the Internationalisation of Indian Higher Education Programmes:

Internationalisation of Indian higher education programmes have been influenced significantly by various factors which have had both a favourable and non-favourable impact upon the internationalisation of higher education within the country. Consequently, below is an analysis of these factors which shall be taken into consideration by the key stakeholders, for undertaking measures through which the internationalisation of Indian higher education could be at par with developed nations that are leading in internationalised education programmes:

a. Objectives of Internationalisation:

There are two key objectives with which the Indian government aims at internationalised higher education and these are primarily concerned with extension of diplomatic relation and secondly with enhancing the quality of domestic education which is provided to Indian students for the purpose of uplifting the current rank of India in the list of some of the best global universities across the globe when it comes to higher education. Therefore, these objectives definitely influence the position of the country in terms of it becoming a favourable destination for foreign students, through numerous programmes which aim at providing high quality education to both Indian and foreign students that are enrolled in Indian universities (Vargese, 2020).

b. Availability of Scholarships:

Another factor which can significantly influence the position of Indian higher education in the internationalisation across the globe is availability of student support. Therefore, one of the key objectives which have been undertaken by the Indian government for supporting students across the globe through its higher education programmes is the launching of scholarships which are expected to grow up to 50,000 by the year 2024. Therefore, not only this but Indian government is also striving to attain permit from foreign universities to establish their campus branches across India, an added advantage which can contribute to the potential of Indian higher education to attract more foreign students from across the world (Vargese, 2020).

c. Absence of Internationally Relevant Curriculum:

Internationalisation of Indian higher education is also restricted owing to the poor teaching standards as well as limited number of foreign faculty that is employed in higher education institutions across various states in India. Therefore, these poor teaching standards and lack of highly qualified foreign faculty is due to the extremely slow administrative process which restricts foreign faculty to teach in Indian universities for only a fixed and short duration (Vargese, 2020).

d. Promote Student Mobility:

A favourable factor which can aid in enhancing internationalisation of higher education in India is launching of the global initiative for academic network which attracts 1800 scholars from more than 56 countries to offer courses across the country during the year 2017-18 and 2018-19. Not only this, but the program was also promoted extensively by the government with the aim of increasing mobility of Indian faculty to teach across universities that are placed in leading foreign countries when it comes to higher education. Furthermore, there was another major initiative launched by the Indian government titled PM scholars returned to India, which aimed at bring all the leading Indian scholars which had already settled in abroad, country so as to fetch the talent which had left the country, by providing them with enough opportunities

in Indian higher education institutions wherein they could train students and offer technical know-how across universities in the form of various courses and programmes (Vargese, 2020).

e. Collaboration with Foreign Universities:

Collaborating with foreign universities can definitely allow our country to enhance the standards of their higher education and so India is been doing the same through the initiation of a scheme namely, the scheme for promotion of Academic research in collaboration which was launched during the year 2018 with the aim of promoting a collaboration between Indian higher educational institutions and reputed institutions abroad.

This kind of an institutional collaboration can definitely help Indian universities in enhancing the very credibility of their institutions by increasing international publications of India and faculty members and adding to their qualification of teaching abroad at reputed institutions which are today known for higher education standards and quality. One of the major steps which was undertaken by the Indian government towards the collaboration with foreign university was the MOOC Platform, a study webs of active and aspiring minds where in courses are provided to foreign students in the UK and South Africa, with the aim of enrolling the students courses that are offered in the form of an open University format.

Key Stakeholders of Higher Education in India:

The internationalisation of higher education in India has definitely helped in the expansion and globalisation of education within the country further resulting in opening borders for FDI in the field of higher education by various universities across the globe that can further help and support students to gain higher education from reputed foreign institutions within the country. Therefore, it shall be considered that when it comes to key stakeholders in terms of Internationalisation of higher education then there are two key systems which propel the same and these are:

a. Inbound supportive system:

The inbound support system is the one which is undertaken by the government when the government itself is the key stakeholders which initiates measures ,initiatives and policies for strengthening institutional capabilities of higher education institutions so as to make the courses which are provided by them capable enough to cope up with the standards of higher education which is otherwise offered internationally by recognised institutions (Kumar P. M. and Aithal, 2021).

As mentioned above the Indian government has not only initiated campus collaboration with foreign Universities but it has also facilitated the mobility of Indian professors , further

ensuring that they could gain the required skills ,knowledge and standards which can further enable them to educate Indian students with these high standards of internationalised higher education system. The government and the universities come together to establish a competitive environment within the country when it comes to higher education which can further ensure that better quality education is being provided, wherein every institution is contributing towards the standard of education and this can also result in achieving the international standards which are still not achieved by the Indian universities (Kumar P. M. and Aithal, 2021).

When it comes to support systems then too key stakeholders like the government and the universities can both provide support to foreign students to opt for higher education within India buy providing them with scholarships, dedicated skill development programmes as well as post programme employment opportunities, all of which can reinforce a positive behaviour amongst the students to choose higher education programs that are offered by Indian universities.

Last but not the least, all the constraints that restrict foreign students from opting for Indian universities when it comes to higher education shall also be removed. Long-term interest on education loans , bureaucratic involvement and lack of orientation programmes, all of these can be removed by both the universities and government which are the key stakeholders when it comes to the imposition or removal of these constraints from the higher education system.

b. Outbound Supportive System:

When it comes to the outbound support system then providing students with suitable infrastructure, experienced faculties as well as innovative and effective teaching methods across developed countries, in overseas campus of these universities is recognised as an important aspect of internationalisation of education within India. Therefore, the students after returning from the developed nations would be able to provide for better knowledge to the existing students (Kumar P. M. and Aithal, 2021).

By providing economic advantage to Indian students so as to gain foreign education, key stakeholders like the government as well as the students themselves will be able to benefit substantially, by gaining strategic knowledge which may otherwise lack across the courses and programmes are offered in Indian universities (Kumar P. M. and Aithal, 2021).

Future of Internationalisation within Indian Higher Education System:

An integration of an outbound and inbound supportive system by the stakeholders will definitely act as an amalgamation of opportunities that can be utilised by the stakeholders towards a more secure future for the Indian higher education system. With experienced students, which possess required technical knowledge from leading universities in developed nations, all of this will be able to secure knowledge which can further be utilised towards

training and teaching students across the Indian higher education system. In light of this inbound and outbound support system, the government and universities will be able to empower the inbound support system which in any way aims at uplifting the interest of students by promoting educational courses and programmes across local universities in India, backed with such infrastructure, facilities and faculty that are well trained to keep up with international standards of education, through both tie-ups with international universities and collaboration with recognised international institutions through either establishment of their branch or programmes within India.

Recommendations:

On the basis of the above analysis, below are the recommendations which can be integrated and implemented by the key stakeholders of the Indian higher education system so as to enhance the process of internationalisation of higher education across Indian higher educational institutions:

a. Training faculty across Indian universities and sending them to international universities which are found to be leaders in higher education can definitely benefit the Indian education system in terms of the knowledge that they can gain while being trained overseas.

b. Providing scholarships to foreign students can definitely act as a positive stimuli which can further facilitate more mobility of international students towards Indian higher education programmes (Bhandari and Blumenthal, 2010).

c. Providing scholarships to students which are willing to study abroad and accordingly using their skill development and talent acquisition after the completion of the courses can further act as a significant aspect in uplifting the status of internationalisation across higher educational programmes within India, so that Indian students can come back and train the faculty with the necessary skills, knowledge and technical know-how (Bhandari and Blumenthal, 2010).

d. To uplift the standard of Indian higher education and attract more student, it is important for the Indian government to continue seek and undertake research and development for the purpose of enhancing the infrastructure that is being used across Indian universities, so as to ensure that the knowledge and skill that is acquired by Indian faculty overseas can be utilised optimally through this highly upgraded and efficient educational technology and structure.

e. As recognised above amalgamation of inbound and bound support system can act as a positive stimuli which can provide for a stimuli for the rapid upgradation system of internationalisation ,through which India can send its students overseas for acquiring

knowledge and at the same time attract students mobility by encouraging more students to enrol themselves at Indian universities for availing scholarships and securing employment opportunities that can be guaranteed under these HE programmes.

Conclusion:

The above study reflects upon the extent to which Indian higher education has evolved so as to adopt and adapt to such higher education standards which can bring the standards of Indian higher education at par with the standards of higher education that are being followed across developed nations. However, it shall be considered that the route to internationalisation of Indian higher education, make it mandatory for key stakeholders, to come together and facilitate improvement within the higher education system through favourable policies, initiatives and measures, that can attract foreign student mobility and at the same time allow collaboration between Indian HE institutions overseas, for allowing the acquisition of prerequisite knowledge when it comes to standards and quality of courses which are being offered amongst leading institutions in developed countries across the globe. Ultimately, it is all about the outbound and inbound pathways, which can generate an influx of foreign students and accordingly cause an outflow of Indian faculty, for creating a clear balance in terms of acquisition of skills and upliftment of HE programmes across Indian universities.

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