

1. Internationalisation of Higher Education in India – Economy

NITI Aayog released a policy report laying out a long-term roadmap to internationalise India's higher education system, with the stated goal of turning the country into a global hub for education and research by 2047.

Meaning and Scope of Internationalisation of Higher Education

Internationalisation refers to the deliberate and systematic integration of global, international, and intercultural dimensions into the purpose, functions, and delivery of higher education.

It goes beyond student exchange and includes,

1. Cross-border mobility of students, faculty, and researchers.
2. International collaborations in teaching, curriculum design, and assessment.
3. Joint and dual degree programmes with foreign universities.
4. Establishment of offshore and onshore campuses.
5. Mutual recognition of degrees, credits, and qualifications.
6. Participation in global rankings, accreditation, and benchmarking systems.

Indian Examples of Internationalisation in Practice

1. IIT Madras campus in Zanzibar (Tanzania).
2. IIT Delhi in Abu Dhabi.
3. IIM Ahmedabad in Dubai.
4. University of Southampton campus in Gurugram.

NEP 2020 Perspective

National Education Policy 2020 stresses that internationalisation must

1. Enhance global exposure without excluding the 97% of students studying in India
2. Improve domestic institutional quality to global standards
3. Avoid elitism and excessive outward dependence

Why India Needs Internationalisation of Higher Education

1. Severe Imbalance in Student Mobility – Over 13 lakh Indian students studied abroad in 2024

1. Preferred destinations – Canada, USA, UK, Australia
 2. India hosts only ~50,000 international students (2021–22). Nearly 30% from Nepal, indicating limited global diversity
 3. This reflects India's weak pull factor as an education destination
- Strategic implication – India is a net exporter of students, capital, and talent

2. Talent Retention and Workforce Quality – Only 3% of Indian students study abroad. The remaining 97% will constitute –

1. India's future workforce
2. Civil services, academia, industry, healthcare, and governance systems

Internationalisation helps by

1. Upgrading curriculum to global relevance
2. Introducing comparative perspectives and global case studies
3. Improving pedagogical methods and assessment standards
4. Enhancing employability in global value chains

3. Global Competitiveness in Research and Innovation

International research collaboration leads to –

1. Higher citation impact
2. Better research funding access
3. Technology transfer and innovation spillovers

India lags behind in –

1. Joint PhDs
2. Shared laboratories
3. Cross-border patents

For India's knowledge-economy ambition – Deeper collaboration is essential in –

1. Artificial Intelligence
2. Climate science
3. Biotechnology
4. Space and quantum technologies

4. Economic and Soft Power Gains

Education is a major export sector for

1. USA
2. UK
3. Australia

International students contribute through

1. Tuition fees
2. Living expenses
3. Long-term diplomatic goodwill

For India

Becoming an education hub -

1. Enhances soft power
2. Strengthens ties with the Global South
3. Reinforces India's civilisational and cultural influence

5. Leveraging India's Demographic Advantage

India has the world's largest youth population. Global shortages exist in -

1. Healthcare professionals
2. Climate scientists
3. AI and data specialists
4. Engineers and technicians

If trained to global standards - Indian graduates can meet international skill demands. India can become a net supplier of global human capital

Challenges in Internationalisation of Higher Education

1. Extreme Mobility Imbalance and Brain Drain - Current inbound-outbound ratio - 1 - 28

As of 2022 - India hosted ~47,000 international students. With reforms, projections suggest - 7.89 lakh to 11 lakh international students by 2047

Policy concern - Persistent brain drain weakens domestic innovation and leadership

2. High Economic Cost of Overseas Education - Indian students' overseas education expenses projected at - ₹6.2 lakh crore by 2025. Equivalent to nearly 2% of GDP. Outward remittances have increased by - 2,000% over the past decade.

Implication - Massive capital outflow with limited domestic returns

3. Risk of Inequality within India - International collaborations tend to - Concentrate in elite institutions
Rural, state, and tier-2 universities risk marginalisation.

Outcome - Widening quality gap within the Indian higher education system

4. Cultural Homogenisation - Excessive adoption of Western academic models may -

1. Undermine indigenous epistemologies
2. Marginalise Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS)

NEP 2020 response - Emphasises "Indianisation alongside internationalisation"

5. Regulatory and Institutional Complexities

Multiple regulators

1. UGC
2. AICTE
3. NAAC

Issues include

1. Overlapping jurisdiction
2. Compliance uncertainty
3. Delays in approvals for foreign collaborations

Result – Reduced attractiveness for foreign universities

6. Infrastructure and Institutional Readiness Gaps

Many Indian HEIs lack

1. International-grade hostels
2. Student support services
3. Competitive faculty-student ratios
4. Research infrastructure

Affects –

1. Student experience
2. Institutional reputation

NITI Aayog – Key Policy Recommendations (Expanded)

1. National Strategy for Internationalisation – Establish an inter-ministerial task force led by Ministry of Education.

Involve –

1. MEA
2. MHA
3. Commerce
4. Skill Development

Develop real-time dashboards tracking –

1. Student mobility
2. Research collaborations
3. Institutional partnerships

2. Global Higher Education Hubs – Develop regional hubs on the GIFT City model. Integrate with –

1. Digital India
2. Startup India
3. Make in India

Focus on

1. Research universities
2. Innovation ecosystems
3. Industry-academia linkages

3. Ease of Regulation and Mobility

Simplify –

1. Student and faculty visas
2. FRRO registration

Establish a National Foreign Degree Equivalence Portal

Introduce predictable, transparent regulatory timelines

4. Foreign University Campuses in India

Permit top foreign universities to establish campuses with – Single-window clearances. Introduce “Campus within a Campus” model –

1. Operate within Indian universities
2. 10-year sunset clause to evaluate outcomes

5. Financing and Research Push

Create Bharat Vidya Kosh

1. USD 10 billion research impact fund
2. Co-funded by government and Indian diaspora

Promote

1. Joint research chairs
2. Visiting professorships
3. International fellowships

6. Scholarships and Talent Attraction

Launch Vishwa Bandhu Fellowship –

1. Attract global faculty and researchers
2. Encourage long-term academic engagement

7. Branding and Global Outreach – Revamp Study in India as a one-stop global portal. Create Alumni Ambassador Network (Bharat ki AAN) – Leverage Indian diaspora as education diplomats

8. Curriculum and Cultural Integration

Promote – Interdisciplinary and globally benchmarked curricula

Integrate – Indian Knowledge Systems, Local contexts with global perspectives

Encourage bilingual and multilingual instruction

Source – <https://www.thehindu.com/education/in-niti-aayogs-road-map-for-internationalisation-of-higher-education-plans-for-scholarships-erasmus-like-programmes-and-a-10-billion-research-fund/article70426703.ece>

