
IN LIGHT OF NEP-2020, INDIA'S HIGHER EDUCATION WILL BE INTERNATIONALIZED

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ABSTRACT

The National Education Policy 2020 (henceforth NEP 2020) is discussed after a historical summary of some of the renowned ancient Indian higher education institutions with a reputation for academic quality around the world. With a variety of strategies and tools, including IBCs, Alumni Connect, Credit Recognition under Twinning, Joint and Dual Degree Programs, Internationalization at Home, Global Citizenship Approach, and many more, the NEP-2020 provided a strong policy statement for the internationalization of higher education. Over the years, there has been a significant shift in the global higher education environment. Global awareness and interconnection, which are fostered by internationalizing higher education, are crucial in forming the next generation of students in a world that is always changing. India committed to revamping and reinvigorating the higher education system through the new National Education Policy (NEP 2020), for taking its rightful place among the best higher education systems in the world. The NEP 2020 extensively focuses on attaining the highest global standards in the quality of higher education. Further, it reinforces the need to attract a greater number of international students and achieve the goal of "Internationalization at home". This policy appreciates the critical need to promote India as a "global study destination providing premium education at affordable costs thereby helping to restore its role as Vishwa Guru". The paper discussed the aforementioned ways and means for the Internationalization of Higher Education.

KEYWORDS: NEP-2020, Higher education, Internationalization, Nalanda, Takshashila and Vikramashila

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF ANCIENT INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

India has a long holistic and multidisciplinary learning record as a global destination for higher education, institutions like Nalanda, Takshashila and Vikramashila served as the melting pot of scholars from across the world connected through 'Uttarapath or Sadak-e-Azam'.

NALANDA UNIVERSITY

Nalanda University in the Pataliputra region (now in Bihar) is well known for its academic prowess, according to a number of ancient records. According to historical accounts, the University had a lengthy and distinguished existence that spanned 800 years, from the fifth to the twelfth century CE, nearly continuously. The university was entirely residential, housing ten thousand students in dorms and housing two thousand instructors. A significant number of professors and students from China, Mongolia, Tibet, Greece, Persia, Korea, Turkey, and other South East Asian countries were drawn to the university because of its international reputation and academic brilliance. The quality of instruction was quite great. Chinese monk Hiuen Tsang (602–664 C.E) notes that the intellectual flow of knowledge flourished in Nalanda after the 3rd or 4th centuries AD. There were 10,000 monks and 1510 teachers on campus when he was a student. Modern-day Indologists and archaeologists predict that the number ranged from 1000 to 4000.¹ This University has been considered by many historians as the first global university of the world. It was a multi-disciplinary university of higher learning devoted to Buddhist studies, fine arts, medicines, mathematics, astronomy, politics and art of war. It had a nine storied library with 9 million manuscripts at the beginning of the 12th century. This library was destroyed by fire which was raging for nearly three months to destroy it. It can be termed as the epitome of culture, a soul of ancient academia. One of the most important curriculums that were taught at Nalanda was Chikitsa Vidya meaning medical education. In his scholarly work entitled 'Ancient India', R.C. Majumdar stated that India emerged as a truly global destination of higher learning from almost 40 countries across Asia and Europe at that time.² Takshashila

Takshashila³ was an ancient capital city of the Buddhist kingdom of Gandhara and a center of learning. It is one of the most known ancient universities in India. Taxila was an early centre of learning to date back to the 5th century BC. It became a noted centre of learning at least several centuries before Christ, and continued to attract students by Hindus and Buddhists and was the seat of Vedic learning. Greek historians accompanying the Macedonian

conqueror described Taxila as “wealthy, prosperous, and well-governed.” Taxila was situated at the pivotal junction of South Asia and Central Asia. Its origin as a city goes back to c. 1000 BC. Some ruins at Taxila date to the time of the Achaemenid Empire in the 6th century BC followed successively by Mauryan, Indo-Greek, Indo-Scythian, and Kushan periods. The archaeologist Alexander Cunningham rediscovered the ruins of Taxila in the mid-19th century. Numerous references show that students in hundreds used to flock to this city from distant places like Banaras, Rajagrh, Mithila, Ujjain, Koiala, Madhya Desa and from the Kuru Kingdoms in the north. Takshasila was thus the intellectual capital of India, a Central University that exercised suzerainty over the world of letters in India. All the other centres of learning in deferent parts of the country were affiliated to it. A study of various references shows that the following crafts were taught in this university: Law, Mathematics, Accountancy, Agriculture, Commerce Cattle breeding, Smithy, Carpentry, Medicine and Surgery, Archery and allied Military arts, Astrology, Divination, Magic, Snake charming, Art of finding hidden treasures, Music, Dancing ' and Painting⁶.

VIKRAMASHILA

In contrast to other historic educational institutions, the Vikramashila site, which is now Antichak hamlet in the Bhagalpur district of Bihar⁷, only allowed entry to those who wanted to become Buddhist monks. These monks traveled to distant places to propagate Buddhism after completing their study. According to reports, there were six distinct colleges on the Vikramashila campus, each offering a unique specialism. Topics including Buddhism, Tantra, Ritualism, Logic, Philosophy, and Sanskrit language were popular.

Tibetan pilgrim monks have reported that the tradition of conferring degrees and accolades originated in Vikramashila. Those who finished their studies were given the titles of Mahapandit and Pandit based on their merit. The university's walls were painted with portraits of these exceptional alumni. In 1203 AD, Vikramashila suffered the same fate as Nalanda. The destiny of both colleges was intertwined in many respects. Both were outstanding universities, had amazing libraries, were heavily patronized by the monarchy in their day, and were destroyed by fire and looting by Bakhtiyar Khilji, the same Turkic invader.

Like Nalanda and Takshasila, Vikramashila also attracted students from all over the world. Other ancient universities included Odantipuri in Bihar, Somapura now in Bangladesh, and Pushpagiri in Odisha served the

educational needs, and India was indeed a global destination for higher education. A recent research on ancient Indian higher education institutions by C. Ramanujan has highlighted few common features, most of these great institutions used to practice such as globally relevant curricula, innovation through research and collaboration, best of the class faculties, resource supports and international recognition and respect for their education.⁸ These features have (the first education policy of the 21st century) aims to address the many growing developmental imperatives of India like economic growth, social justice and equality, scientific advancement, national integration, cultural preservation and promote India as Vishwa Guru and global study destination. It is the revision and revamping of all aspects of the education structure, including its regulation and governance, to create a new system that is aligned with the aspirational goals of 21st century education, including SDG4¹⁰ and laid emphasis on the development of the creative potential and both the ‘foundational capacities’ of literacy and numeracy and ‘higher-order’ cognitive capacities, such as critical thinking and problem solving – but also social, ethical, and emotional capacities and dispositions of each individual.

Towards the attainment of the above-mentioned aims and objectives with the holistic and multidisciplinary educational approach, NEP 2020 is to revamp and reinvigorate the educational scenario in general and higher education in particular with the flexible and innovative curricula of all HEIs shall include credit-based courses and projects in the areas of community engagement and service¹¹, environmental education¹², and value-based education. As the world is becoming increasingly interconnected, Global Citizenship Education (GCED)¹³, a response to contemporary global challenges, will be provided to empower learners to become aware of and understand global issues and to become active promoters of more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure, and sustainable societies.¹⁴ NEP 2020 formulated the policy in line with the international market demands and opportunities.

To promote India as a global study destination and Internationalization of Higher Education, NEP 2020 stipulates various measures, which inter alia include facilitating research/teaching collaborations and faculty /student

exchange with high-quality foreign HEI and signing of relevant mutually beneficial MOUs with foreign countries; encouraging high performing Indian universities to set up campuses in other countries; selected universities e.g., those from among the top 500 universities in the world will be facilitated to operate in India and a legislative framework facilitating such entry will be put in place and such universities will be given special dispensation regarding regulatory, governance and content norms on par with other autonomous institutions of India; setting up of International Student Office at each HEI for welcoming and supporting students arriving from abroad; counting credits acquired in foreign universities, wherever appropriate as per requirement for each HEI; and courses and programs in subjects, such as Indology, Indian Languages, Ayush systems.

STRATEGIC PROGRAMME AND INITIATIVES

In order to achieve these objectives and synergizing national policy and institutional strategy a thrust is given to internationalization of higher education, significant initiatives are formulated at both at institution and regulatory/government level. Accordingly, these guidelines cover various strategic programmes/initiatives for internationalization of higher education.

INTERNATIONALIZATION AT HOME:

The most important of all strategies related to internationalization is “Internationalization at Home”¹⁸, which means integrating the dimensions of international learning environment within our higher education institutions. HEIs are encouraged to put necessary effort towards ‘internationalization at home’ such as:

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- Capacity building in internationalization initiatives
 - Collaborative communication between Indian and international faculty
 - International dimension to curricula in the sciences, social sciences, and beyond to spark a deeper reflection about course content and effective pedagogy to promote better learning outcomes for all students.
 - Other areas of strength in India such as Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), computer science, gaming should be tied up with internship and apprenticeship to make them attractive for foreign students.
 - Quality residential facilities to students from abroad to ensure effective
 - living conditions and learning environment to international students
 - On-campus support to students from abroad to provide continuous and inclusive support to international students, designed to facilitate students’ social and academic success and focusing particularly on the transition processes.
 - Integrating incoming international students with local communities including assigning facultymentors, host families and student buddies.
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- Friendly environment for incoming students to have a safe, positive, and holistic experience
 - Offering local language courses and other bridge courses as needed
 - Foster connections among domestic and international students and value the inputs of international students on campus
 - Courses and programme in subjects such as knowledge of India and its languages, arts, history, culture, and global context; global literacy
 - Incorporate internationalization objectives into the institution’s broader quality assurance processes for teaching and learning, community engagement and student satisfaction.

TWINNING, JOINT DEGREE AND DUAL DEGREE PROGRAMME:

The University Grants Commission (UGC) approved regulations where Indian and foreign higher education institutions can now offer joint or dual degrees and twinning programme. Announcing the regulation, formally called UGC (Academic Collaboration between Indian and Foreign Higher Educational Institutions to offer Twinning, Joint Degree and Dual Degree Programme) Regulations, 2022, Chairman M Jagadesh Kumar said that this would be of “great interest to the student community as well as higher educational institutions”. The idea behind twinning programme is holistic development of the learners with the help of cultural exchanges and social cohesion.¹⁹ Mobility under Twinning programme will equip the learners with best practices, approaches and methods of teaching and learning in international institutions. However, the degree under twinning arrangement

shall be given solely by the Indian Higher Education Institution.²⁰ This will aid in capacity building of institutions and help students in career planning and opportunities. Indian Higher Education Institutions are encouraged to offer degree programme under twinning arrangement.

- As NEP 2020 suggested, this twinning arrangement will give effect to Credit Recognition
- Credit Recognition and Transfer means 'Credit' conferred by a Foreign Higher Education Institution to be recognised, quantified and included towards the credit requirements for a programme delivered by an Indian Higher Education Institution under a mutual twinning arrangement
- The collaborating Indian Higher Education Institution may enter into Agreement/MoUs with Foreign Higher Education Institution for recognition of credits under twinning arrangements
- In case of an institution affiliated to the University, NOC to be obtained from the affiliating University. The institution concerned, affiliating University and the Foreign Higher Education Institution shall enter into tripartite agreement/MoU for the purpose
- In this, the existing curricula may be supplemented by the additional curricula of the collaborating universities. The joint course structure can be worked out on the basis of need assessment and to complement the course structure of the corresponding semester
- The degree offered under such Twinning programme shall be awarded by the Indian Higher Education Institution only
- The credits obtained at the Foreign Higher Education Institution shall be reflected in the transcript
- 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.

GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP APPROACH

Global awareness and interconnectedness are increasingly sought after in today's global knowledge society. International dimension to curriculum, international offering in educational activities, international competencies in faculty and students etc. will prosper the institutions towards internationalization of higher education. Internationalization is not an end in itself but a driver of qualitative change in higher education. One of the foremost qualitative changes is fostering global ethos within universities and making learners 'Global Citizen'. 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. 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"

- Empowering students with understanding of how the world works economically, politically, socially, culturally, technologically and ecologically.
- HEIs may endeavor to inculcate essential values such as diversity, interdependence, empathy and perspective in students.
- Engaging with community services with special focus in and around the higher education institution will contribute at a range of level from local to global
- Credit based projects and courses in the areas of community engagement, environmental education and value-based education
- 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
- Inculcate skill in students, such as
 - Critical thinking
 - Communication
 - Technology skills
 - Cross-cultural awareness
 - Adaptability
- Global citizens harness this knowledge, values, skills and are uniquely positioned to contribute in multiple contexts – locally, nationally and internationally. They will be extremely critical for building a more sustainable, resilient and compassionate world in the 21st century

ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH COLLABORATION:

Academics and research in Higher Education Institutions around the world faces a number of wide ranging and interlinked global challenges such as food security, energy security, infectious disease etc. Collaboration among the top universities is essential to identify causes, addressing concerns and dealing with the impacts. This will also accelerate the progress of institutions and enhance the quality of education. Higher Education Institutions are encouraged to enter into collaborating activities, complying the relevant norms and Regulations. The activities may include:

- Student exchange programme for short-duration visits to reputed Universities abroad Semester- abroad programme under Twinning programme scheme.
- Faculty members are encouraged to get exposure to foreign universities in exchange programme, short-term projects etc.
- Expanding strategic research partnership with international Higher Education Institutions
- Organizing academic and research workshops, seminar and conferences in partnership with international universities
- Collaborating with alumni (both students and faculty) at various foreign Universities for academic and research activities
- Formation of knowledge partnership i.e., a network of individual researchers who contribute knowledge, experience, resources and participate in two-way communications
- Establishment of Chairs abroad in the name of eminent Indian scientists/ scholars and philosophers

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 – financial and non- financial. Connecting with Alumni will enable the institutions to utilize the services of the alumni as brand ambassadors to showcase the strengths of Indian Higher Education system. Alumni of foreign origin as well as Indian alumni living abroad can play a crucial role in brand building of the Indian Higher Education Institutions abroad and making India a global

- Establish an alumni cell and maintain a detailed database of the alumni living abroad (both Indian and foreign)
- Sharing with the alumni regarding the latest initiatives of the institution
- Virtually connecting with the alumni and inviting them for participation in conferences/webinars
- Networking get-togethers among the alumni including through video conferencing
- Providing brochure, pamphlets and other advertising materials about the institution, programme, courses for its dissemination abroad
- Engage in community service activity with help of Alumni
- Honouring distinguished alumni for supporting in brand building exercise as well as overall development of the institution

MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT:

Periodic review of the progress of different components of internationalization of higher education in India, in accordance with the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will be conducted. Remedial measures and contingency strategy will be made upon interim assessment. The monitoring will be done on the following framework:

- Operationalization of portal on various indicators of internationalization
- Key performance indicators based on these Guidelines will be framed ,yearly progress reports on KPIs
- Assessment of the desired results in terms of quantitative as well as qualitative output
- Remedial measures and transparent continuous feedback mechanisms with student feedback fed into future plans and modifications in strategies
- Evaluation studies to support the planning and management of interventions to promote internationalization.
- Assessment of internationalization to be made part of ranking and accreditation to incentivize the Higher Education Institutions and gradual synchronization of National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) and National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) assessment parameters with international ranking like QS²² and THE.²³

CONCLUSION

With its huge growing population and 40 million Indians are pursuing higher education, India cannot be lag behind and slow in reacting to the wave of Internationalization. There are both opportunities and challenges in internationalizing higher education. The opportunities include enhanced capacity, greater access for students, development of joint curriculum, greater diversity of programs, exposure to a variety of teaching and learning methods, growing comparability of qualifications, exposure to established systems of education administration and management, less brain drain of gifted and bright students to foreign institutions, the fusion of cultures, exchange of research ideas and enhancement of research capacity, the establishment of the multinational and cross-disciplinary team and generation of new academic environments. The challenges and risks concern the quality of provision, high fees leading to an elitist provision, and inequality of access leading to a two-tier system which is inconsistent with the equity and access philosophy of both the institution and the national government. By the NEP 2020, India will be promoted as a global study destination providing premium education at affordable costs thereby helping to restore its role as a Vishwa Guru. There lies the opportunity for Indian higher education institutions and policymakers in addressing issues related to curriculum delivery, quality of teaching, the relevance of course content, learning and teaching strategies used, and offering programs that are both globally and locally relevant. Under NEP 2020, the top 500 foreign universities will be

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