

Challenges and Opportunities in Internationalizing Indian Higher Education

***Surendra Mani Tripathi and **Dr. Anjali Bajpai**

*Research Scholar, Faculty of Education, BHU, Varanasi-221010.

Email: tripathism11@gmail.com

**Professor, Faculty of Education, BHU, Varanasi-221010.

Abstract-

The contemporary era is of skilled human resources, knowledge economy, and professional expertise. It has become necessary to develop an international and intercultural perspective and understanding among academicians, researchers and students to enhance global academic trends and quality in higher education. The 21st century has witnessed acceleration in globalization activities which redefines the complexities of society, educational institutions and increase people's accessibility to each and every corner of the world. Internationalization of higher education has been developed as an important strategic priority among most of the higher education institutions as well as academicians across the world. Higher Education is basically sharing of learning experiences amongst the students in order to impart knowledge, values, competencies, skills, attitudes, belief and habits with the ultimate aim of making them productive members of the world. Stakeholders, policy makers and researchers working in field of higher education consider internationalization as one of the key forces for transforming it. The aim of this article is to identify the challenges and opportunities existing in Indian higher education system and to suggest the initiatives required for internationalizing it.

Key Words- Higher education, Internationalization, Challenges and Opportunities

Introduction-

Higher education is the tool that architects our society and nation in desired way. Higher education is that essential part of our education system which provides a way to transform human beings into human resources. It is very important instrument for bringing positive changes, developing desired skills and necessary competences. The expansion of globalization, liberalization and annulment of national boundaries has increased the inculcation of competitive spirit in higher

education. The Indian educational institutions should be global, diverse, productive and democratic for achieving excellence and establishing global norms and standards in teaching learning and research activities. India stands at advantages in this area by being the world's largest democracy and highly potential nation which will have biggest workforce of young people by 2020, around 100 million young people will join the workforce. International Labour Organization (ILO) predicted that India will be youngest country with average age of 29 years by 2020 as against 40 years in USA, 46 years in Japan and 47 years in Europe. The government has estimated to achieve 30 per cent gross enrolment ratio in higher education by 2020, which is 19.4% at present (RUSA Report 2013-14 p. XIII, XIV).

One of the key challenges in India is the low gross enrolment ratio (GER) in higher education in comparison to USA 95%, Russia 76%, China 25% and Brazil 26% (RUSA, Report 2013-14, p.12). It is very important for India to increase GER in higher education and create a pool of learned, skilled and competent human resource who can work globally with full spirit.

Internationalization of Higher Education in India

Internationalization of higher education has become a major academic trend during last few decades for strengthening and enhancing the international character of faculties, students, curriculum and institutions. Internationalization is very broad concept & includes multiple aspects and dimensions in itself as Hans De Wit in his book 'An Introduction to Higher Education Internationalization (ed.)' states that '*Internationalization is process to introduce intercultural, international and global dimension in higher education to improve the goals, functions and delivery of higher education and with that to improve the quality of education and research*' (De Wit, 2013 p.32).

India is one of the biggest networks of higher education in the world which has more than 37000 higher education institutions. India is unable to develop global standards in higher education at ground level and attracts very few international students in comparison to China and others. Philip Altbach states that 'India is a world class country without world class universities.' Why he had said so? It is the quality in higher education that decides the quality of human resource of a nation. It is very important to analyse the entire scenario of Indian higher education regarding vision, mission, and initiatives taken by Government. It is also inevitable to think that what should be our strategy to

transform the higher education according to the global academic trends. In the report of RUSA 2013 it has been highlighted that '*A move towards internationalization in higher education is imperative for its enrichment*' (p.07). Ashok Thakur, secretary, department of higher education, MHRD said in a meeting of 'National Policy Dialogue' that 'we cannot hide behind the excuse, we must play the same game, the rest world is playing. We need not to shy about it'. India has both opportunities and challenges for internationalizing the higher education. It is necessary to overcome the challenges facing the Indian higher education system to develop an international perspective and recognition. Internationalization in field of higher education may be one of the solutions to enhance our low quality higher education. In each and every aspect of higher education, there is a need to adopt the internationalization strategy both at national and institutional level.

UGC, one of the India's major educational agencies has realized internationalization of higher education as a thrust area and proposed a vision to enhance the Indian higher education abroad during the tenth five years plan (Sharma, K.A. 2014 p.50). Although many other agencies like NIEPA and AIU are also working continuously in positive direction since last few years but the actual goal of quality higher education is still out of reach. Only a small number of Indian institutes are globally ranked and have alliance with foreign institutions for high level academic affairs such as research & development. A major question arises here is that what can be done in this sector to make our presence felt in every day changing competitive world. In 21st century higher education has become more international that's why Government and other agencies have started emphasizing on enhancement of the international aspect of higher education. Many eminent scholars have identified internationalization as a way to transform higher education into qualitative and globally accepted form. Jane Knight explained the beneficial role of internationalization and identified some grounds why to assimilate it into higher education. These grounds are 'human resource development, strategic alliance, commercial trade, nation building, socio-cultural development, cultural identity, citizenship development, national security, technical assistance, peace and mutual understanding, economic growth and competitiveness' (Knight, 1999 pp9-10).

Challenges before India:

Prime Minister, Narendra Modi's address to the nation on Independence Day, 2014 posed a few questions that 'why cannot India be an exporter of education?' why India cannot be hub of talent? This question forced us to analyse our preparation for becoming global leader. Indian higher

education system is comparatively weak in matching with the global quality of standards. India is unable to attract overseas students because of its weak strategies and policies for foreign students. This important consideration of prime minister motivated all the stakeholder of higher education to think that how India can be manifested prominently on global map on the basis of academic excellence with international perspective? Over four million foreign students are studying abroad, but India is able to attract less than 1% of the total international students while China is successful in attracting around 10% of total foreign students.

Table No-01 Rank, source and number of overseas inbound students from top five countries:

Rank	Country	No of Students
1	Nepal	5481
2	Bhutan	2274
3	Iran	2131
4	Malaysia	1726
5	Afghanistan	1599

Source: CII & AIU Report 2014 page no.33 (Jane Knight)

Table No. 01 reveals that most of the students coming to India are basically from the developing and underdeveloped nations as reported in 'Trends in Internationalization of Higher Education in India' by CII & AIU. This is worth considering that how we will be able to develop international perspective, academic excellence and global recognition in field of higher education to internationalize the education system and attract overseas students? There are so many challenges in the way of developing an excellent and global system of higher education in India. The challenges are as follows:

- Absence of favourable culture of research and entrepreneurship- Most of the Indian institutes do not have academic & entrepreneurial culture and these institutes have become only exam conductivity and degree providing bodies.

- Low employability of pass out students- National Employability Report, through a study based on 15000 engineering students who graduated in 2015. From over 650 students, 80% are unemployable. (Times of India Tech, Jan 24, 2016)
- Internationalization is limited to the mobility of students only- Internationalization of higher education is not only limited to cross-border mobility, it is a huge activity which includes each and every aspect of higher education such as cross border mobility, faculties mobility, programme mobility and others. Most of the policies in India are focused on increasing the inbound international students only. It should be rectified according to the global parameters.
- Poor international outlook- The poor global image of Indian Higher education distracts the international students coming to India for their higher studies. Minority institutions of higher education are globally ranked in India due to poor academic performance and teaching learning activities while globally ranked and reputed institution easily attracts the international students.
- Poor implementation of policies and strategies- Government has launched various programmes and policies for promotion of higher education but due to poor monitoring and implementation of the policies the set goal could not be achieved.
- Lack of awareness of global academic trends- The globalization has reshaped the education system and quality has become main issue in higher education but most of the colleges are unaware about global norms and standards essential for Internationalization of higher education.
- Regionalism and provincialism- Regionalism is the major impediment in the way of internationalizing the Indian higher education. Students who are coming in India for higher studies are mostly from the developing countries of Asia and Africa which show regional image of Indian higher education.
- Dissatisfying enrolment of foreign students- International students mobility is not a new experience for India and existed from ancient time. India stands at second position in sending students abroad but less than one percent international students come in India for higher studies.
- Lack of appropriate infrastructures- Appropriate infrastructure are crucial for sound educational development but India substantially lags behind other emerging nations in providing proper infrastructure in promotion of higher education.
- Loose public private partnership (PPP) and investment in promoting higher education- Education of a nation cannot stride significantly without co-operation of both Private and public sector. In India

there is lack of proper co-ordination between private and public sector while majority of the institutions of higher education belongs to private sector.

India has emerged as fastest growing economy and major potential nation in the world. India will have to fulfil the above mentioned gaps for sustaining Indian higher education at global level with international outlook in the contemporary global and competitive world. It is recognised as one of the major developing hubs and destinations of higher education during last few years.

Required initiatives for emerging opportunities:

The Government of India's 'Make in India' programme is really a good initiative for development of the nation and it should be encouraged and promoted in higher education also for projecting India as an international centre and destination of higher education for both natives and foreign nationals. Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) summit report 2014 identified some initiatives which should be assimilated in higher education system for enhancement of research and promoting internationalization of higher education as follows:

- Creation of research centre of excellence
- Government and Institutional collaboration
- Incorporation of research methodologies and interdisciplinary subjects in curriculum
- Hiring research focused faculty and providing rewards for quality research output.
- Funding support from Government and private source for research and entrepreneurship
- Offering entrepreneurship programme
- Setting up incubation centres
- Industry tie ups for mentoring start ups
- Hiring faculty with entrepreneurial experience

Source: (FICCI summit report 2014, pp.60)

Today, the world is experiencing a multidimensional change in field of quality higher education. 21st century started with an important discourse of internationalizing higher education in favour of upgrading the excellence in field of higher education. Higher education in India is undergoing with

considerable changes and facing numerous challenges which are impediment in way of developing favourable culture of research and academics. The following initiatives can be taken by Government and other stakeholders for converting challenges into opportunities.

- **Develop a culture of research and entrepreneurship:**

Most of the higher education institutes in India lag behinds in research and their progress is very slow due to absence of a favourable research culture. Research is a strong pillar of the architecture of higher education system. Only inculcation of research culture can empower and internationalize the higher education system. It is essential for India to develop strong policy for research because most of the weightage for institution's global rankings depend upon the quality of research, citation and international outlook. The recharging of Indian higher education can be possible only by internationalization of research activity and entrepreneurship. Expenses on research activities in India are less than one percent which is not sufficient in comparison to developed countries which should be increased.

- **Assimilation of Internationalization in higher education in its actual sense:**

In most of the cases Internationalization of higher education is treated as mobility of overseas students only but in reality it is a comprehensive concept which includes various aspects of higher education. Jane Knight points out that there are 'two pillars of internationalization, one is 'Internationalization at home' second is 'Cross border education' which means Internationalization is not limited to cross border mobility, but it is comprehensive process of developing global dimensions in perspectives which enhance competitive spirit, excellence and global outlook at each and every level of higher education. India needs to have a targeted approach and appropriate policies and global image for proper inculcation of internationalization in higher education. Merey and Alkan (2015) interpreted the important role of international education that 'International Education helps in developing students' worldview, global identity, intercultural sensitivity (being flexible and tolerant with values and modes of behaviour, open minded, and willing to try new things, especially food) and communicative competence (foreign language proficiency, communication style)' (Merey & Alkan, pp.02).

- **Proper Monitoring Mechanism and Accreditation System:**

The 21st century has started with an explosion in the number of higher education institutes and students in India. Institutes are mushrooming geometrically while quality and excellence is arithmetically that is why there is no proper accreditation and academic audit of the curriculum in many institutes. Quality has become one of the major issue in India where more than 37000 higher education institutes are running, it is not so easy to accredit all these institutions without proper mechanism and willpower. UGC the major governing body of Indian higher education constituted NAAC in 1994, as an autonomous body to evaluate and accredit the institutes for quality assurance and to examine its strengths, weakness and opportunities on the basis of established parameters. Many other specific accreditation bodies such as NCTE, AICTE, RCI, and MCI are also functioning for quality assurance, parameter building and research but the goal of qualitative higher education with an international outlook could not be achieved till now. It is also considerable that NAAC has to conform the parameters and standards of higher education within the nation according to international norms and standards. In some countries ISO certification has also started for accrediting higher education institutions for enhancement of institutions image with a global norms and standards. In India some private universities are accredited with ISO certificates as Manipal University is certified with ISO 14001:2004. As per report of RUSA, 2013 accreditation is necessary for quality enhancement and attracting excellent students in a institute but unfortunately as of August 2013 less than one third (179 out of 574) of all universities and 13% (5156 out of 35539) of eligible institutions have been accredited so far. (RUSA Report 2013 pp.39)

- **Encourage the PPP model:**

The private-public partnership is playing eminent role in development of a nation. The important role of private sector in Indian higher education has increased dominantly during last few decades and majority of higher education institutions in India are driven under private sector. The contemporary challenges cannot be overcome because dichotomy exists between public and private sector of institutions in India. Private higher education institutions have grown up in number but they are not able to attract the international students in India. Some of the private research universities like MIT & Harvard and Buckingham are playing significant role in sustaining research & higher

education and established a world class academic reputation in around the world. Some newly emerged private Indian universities like Manipal, Symbiosis, Amity universities and Lovely Professional University are very active in promoting internationalization and working significantly in India. Manipal University stands first with an enrolment of 2752 international students in 2012-13 among all the private and government institutes. Lovely Professional University transmitted its fame within four years and extended the number of foreign national students from 24 to 1092 with the incensement percentage of 3800%. (CII & AIU Trend Report, 2012-13 pp.18)

Manipal and Amity Universities are successfully operating overseas branch campuses and earning name & fame globally. This is responsibility of the Government to ensure the participation of private sector in higher education because during last decade private sector played eminent role in field of higher education in India abroad. In Japan private universities are playing notable role in internationalizing higher education. For instance one of the private Japanese universities 'Asia and Pacific university of Japan' which established earlier in 2002 has half of its students from abroad. AISHE report 2011-12 revels that 73% colleges are running under private sector in India so cooperation of private sector cannot be ignored. India is highly potential nation and higher education is the powerful tool for transforming a nation so we should be committed to develop a hub of higher education with the cooperation of all the stakeholders of the society so that knowledge, skill and talent can be circulated around the world.

- **Role of political willpower, policies and strategies:**

Higher education and Global development of a nation concurrently go ahead. It is responsibilities of the Government and its policy makers to concentrate upon promoting world class higher education? This is noteworthy that India is able to attract less than 1% of total overseas students which is 31,000 while students going abroad from India for higher education is 1,90000. China, U.S.A. Germany, Russia and many other countries have encouraged their overseas student's inflow policy to get much more abroad student's enrolment. China has set up a vision of attracting 5 lacks abroad students per year by 2020 (AIU & CII Report 2014-15 p.06). India must have a strong vision and policy for attracting international students. Some countries have prepared strong vision for internationalizing their higher education system which India can learn from them. The strategy of Indian Government and other stakeholders should be to create world class institutions and research

centres to develop the capability and efficiency in faculties and students so that they can work out with international and intercultural perspective. Higher education sector may be an effective and congenial way for creating bilateral & multilateral political relationship with global image so government must project a vision for promoting internationalization of higher education. It is a good initiative that Prime Minister Modi is visiting many countries to promote India as an economic and academic superpower and attracting people to invest in various sectors through Making India program.

- **Digitalization of higher education:**

21st century has witnessed that technology has converted the whole world into global village. It is difficult to think any corner of our life without technology. It is really a power to empower the human being. Quality higher education system can be developed and achieved only with the adoption of digital resources of teaching-learning. During the last 20 years many new dimensions emerged in field of higher education across the world which changed the traditional image of education. India is progressively accepting these changes but it is like a drop in the ocean. Some of the eminent institutions like IITs, IIMs and Central Universities have got better opportunities to digitalize their education system but most of the institutes in India are working with 'Chalk and Talk' technology. The low expenditure of GDP on higher education is one of the major impediments in way digitalisation of higher education so it is necessary to increase economic resources to promote it. Internationalization of higher education has promoted and necessitated the use of digital mechanism such as Wikipedia, Twitter, YouTube, academic sites, Google, power point lectures and blended techniques for enhancing the capabilities of research and innovation.

- **Strengthen the infrastructure and facilities:**

India has world's largest number of higher education institutions. Most of them don't have proper facilities and infrastructure to provide quality and world class education. We are incapable to attract international students from developed countries due to absence of proper facilities and arrangements for them. Few institutions having proper infrastructure cannot change the fate of the country. It is important to develop proper infrastructures in terms of e-library, skilled faculties,

hostels and modern knowledge sharing activities in all of the institutions. Expert and knowledgeable faculties are the base on which the entire education system is standing. *Dr. Abdul Kalam* (Late president of India) once said that ‘human civilization can be enriched by the learned faculties because they are expected to be an inspiring force and igniting minds.’ Where there are no of proper faculties there is no production of excellent students. In India migration of intellectual capital is also a major problem. Environment for the development of academic excellence can be possible only by the development of faculties.

- **Encouraging MOUs and global partnerships for Exchange of Faculties and Students:**

Overseas mobility of the students is most evident form of internationalization of higher education. India, one of the major developing countries is growing rapidly as a hub of talent. It should necessarily start marketing also to promote itself globally with the excellence. The Indian higher education institutes must be promoted and encouraged to collaborate with foreign universities. Only few Indian higher education institutions have signed MoUs with eminent universities of the world. The Indian government has started a programme named GIAN (Global Initiatives for Academic Networking) for increasing global collaboration. Contemporary era is an era of competitive excellence which has demands expertise, cooperation and resources. In 12th plan it is mentioned that a ‘move towards Internationalization of higher education is imperative and there should be creation of alliance, networks, clusters, and consortia of academic institutions amongst themselves and with the research institutions and industry should be facilitated in order to create a self governing system’ (RUSA Report 2013-14 pp7). The Government of India is taking initiatives to foster the Indian universities and colleges to enter into partnership with reputed foreign universities for benefitting knowledge, skills, experiences, joint degree programme, faculties-students exchange and exploring many other opportunities.

- **Increasing awareness of global academic trends:**

Students as well as faculties don't have proper mechanism to attain and share information about international trends of higher education in most of the Indian institutions of higher education. The faculties and students basically belonging to the remote areas use traditional way to

communicate knowledge and hardly use innovative techniques for teaching-learning. Awareness programmes, national/international seminars, workshops and other awakening academic programs should be organised at each possible level. Professors should encourage their students to develop the scientific temperament, critical attitude, habit of questioning and thirst for innovations. The report of RUSA also mentioned that 'the globalized era has necessitated the inculcation of competitive spirit at all levels. This can be achieved only by bringing quality of highest standards to every sphere of work' (RUSA, Report 2013-14, p. 02). European countries have established the 'European Higher Education Area' through the Bologna Accord for making knowledge based society. 49 European countries have signed 'Bologna Process' for enhancing excellence, ensuring standards and promoting quality in higher education across the Europe. Bologna process is a significant endeavour of European countries which reveals their thrust for quality higher education. India is geographically large country and there are more than 39000 higher education institutions which can be chained in an area like European higher education area for better outcome.

Conclusion:

Skilled human resources are exigent to any nation's socio-economic growth. The contemporary era is of knowledge economy, professional expertise and skilled workforce. Quality higher education facilitates and decides the progress and future of the nation. Science, technology and research can play an immense role in transforming Indian higher education if the proper budget allocation can be ensured by the authorities without political distinctions and interferences. The emergence of rapidly growing economy and globally competitive ambiances has produced so many competitions and opportunities for internationalizing the Indian higher education. Indian higher education institutions need to become more professional, entrepreneurial and knowledge oriented if they are to play overarching role in contemporary global society. Indian higher education institutions have adopted internationalization of higher education but minority of institutions have embraced it whole heartily. India would have to set strategies and make policies on higher education including overseas higher education policy with quality assurance if it has to meet the challenges in the area of internationalization of higher education.

References and Bibliography:

- Altbach, P.G., Knight, J. (2007). The Internationalization of Higher Education: Motivations and Realities. *Journal of Studies in International Education* .11, 3/4, Fall/Winter, 290-305.
- Altbach, P.G., Knight, J. (2012). Retrieved from: <http://www.business-tandard.com/article/economy-policy/india-is-a-world-class-country-without-world-class-universities>.
- De wit, H. (2011), *Trends, issues and challenges in Internationalization of Higher Education* (Ed.). Milan: centre for Higher Education Internationalization.
- Dorairaj, A.J. (2015). Internationalization of Higher Education in India. *University News*, 53, 36, 25-26.
- FCCI Higher Education Submit Report 2014: Higher education in India: Moving toward global relevance and competitiveness, New Delhi.
- AIU, (2014).International Association of Universities Global Survey, <http://www.iauuiu.net/content/iau-global-surveys>.
- India. (2012). India Survey on Higher Education, Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of Higher Education, New Delhi. 2011-12. Retrieved from: <http://aishe.nic.in/aishe/>. On Oct, 25 2017.pp.iv.
- India. (2014), All India Survey on Higher Education, Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of Higher Education, New Delhi 2014. Retrieved from: <http://aishe.nic.in/aishe/home> on Sep, 15 2015.
- Knight, Jane. (2012). *Internationalization: Three Generation of Cross-Border Higher Education*. New Delhi: India International Centre, India
- Knight, Jane. (2003). updated definition of Internationalization. Internationalization of Higher Education. The Boston College centre for International Higher Education. Nov, Fall <http://www.bc.edu/cihe/> Retrieved on 24/11/2015.
- Merey, G. & Alkan, R.M. (2015). An overview of International Education in Higher Education from a macro perspective. *The Online Journal of New Horizon in Education* 5, 2.
- Mergner, Julia. (2011). Internationalization Strategies in South Korean Higher Education. PhD thesis. Retrieved from <http://essay.utwente.nl/62822/1/masterthesis.Mergner.pdf>

- Ministry of Human Resource Development (2013). Rastriya Uchchatar Siksha Abhiyan (RUSA). MHRD in association with TISS. Government of India. Retrieved on 22/11/2015 from http://mhrd.gov.in/site/upload_file MHRD/files/RUSA_final.
- Powar, K.B. (2014). International Students Mobility: The Global Scenario and Indian Mobility Trends. *Trends in Internationalization of Higher Education in India*. AIU Occasional Paper 2014/ 1, AIU, New Delhi.
- Powar, K.B. & Bhalla, V. (2014). International Students in Indian Universities: Source countries, Gender ratio, Levels of Education and Choice of Discipline. *Trends in Internationalization of Higher Education in India*. AIU Occasional Paper 2014/ 1, AIU, New Delhi.
- Powar, K.B. (2015). Changing Landscape of International Higher Education. An Indian Perspective, Pune: DPU Publication.
- Qamar, F. (2015). Internationalising the Indian Higher Education. *University News*, 53,36, 8-12.
- Sharma, K.A. (2013). Sixty years of University Grant Commission: Establishment, Growth and Evaluation. University Grant Commission. New Delhi.
- Sharma, K.A. (2014). Internationalization of Higher Education: An aspect of India's Foreign Relations. *Trends in Internationalization of Higher Education in India*. AIU Occasional Paper 2014/ 1, AIU, New Delhi.
- Sinha, B. (2014). The Feasibility of Internationalization of Higher Education in India. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education, Art and Sciences*, 1, 3, 7-11 Retrieved from: www.apjeas.apjmr.com.
- Thakur, A. (2013). Retrieved from: <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/news/india-embrace>.
- University Grant Commission. (2009). Action plan on Internationalization of Indian Higher Education. Report of UGC Expert committee, UGC, New Delhi.
- UNESCO. (2004). Higher Education in a Globalized Society. UNESCCO position Paper, Available at <http://unesco.org/image/0013/001362/136247e.pdf>.