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Internationalization of Higher Education In India: Today and Tomorrow

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Abstract: The physical boundaries are shrinking and the world is becoming and education is no exception to this. International higher education exist in almost every country and India is again no exception to this. The international higher education can be inbound or outbound wherein the students from overseas countries come and study in host county while when the student from home country go to overseas country, it is refereed as outbound. History of outbound international mobility is as old as 150 year where scholars like Sir Dorabji Tata, Srinivasan Ramanujan, Mr. Jawahar Lal Nehru etc. studied at University of Cambridge.

The researchers have focussed on the inbound internationals students who are coming from foreign country to study in India. The researcher has analysed as to from which countries these students are coming for higher education in India. It has also been studied the various reasons as to why the universities and institutions are welcoming and attracting these foreign students. Further the researchers have also given the details of the enablers of foreign education in India. Finally the researchers have focussed on the challenges, which India as a country is facing in attracting the foreign students.

Key words: Foreign Students, Higher Education, Enablers for Foreign Students, Internationalization of Higher Education.

1. INTERNATIONALIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

The definition of internationalization of higher education, as per Knight (1993, p. 21) states: “[I]nternationalisation is the process of integrating an international or intercultural dimension into the teaching, research, and service functions of an institution of higher learning”. The international activities

of universities dramatically expanded in volume, scope, and complexity during the past two decades. (Altbach and Knight, 2007). In case of India, this was the result of LPG (Liberalisation, Globalization and Privatization) policy of government of India of 1991. The activities which were embraced included the traditional study-abroad programme, foreign languages in the curriculum either as compulsory or elective. This also included providing higher education in those countries where the local colleges/ universities were not able to do so as well as opening gates for foreign students in the domestic country viz. India. Other modes of internationalization could be offering a joint degree

International higher education initiatives exist in almost every country (Altbach and Knight, 2007). Internationalisation accommodates a significant degree of autonomy and initiative (Knight 1997; Scott 1998; De Wit 2002). The globalization has existed since ages and the Nalanda University had the students from the nook and corner of the entire world. To say, that the internationalization of higher education has emerged in the 21st century, would be wrong. The internationalization does not only embrace as to Universities going across borders but also the students crossing borders and the faculty coming from different parts of the world.

The shift of the internationalisation has been from the eastern part of the world to the western part where the countries like United States, Canada and UK has been on the supply side along with Australia and Newzeland, while the demand is from the countries in Asia, Middle East and South African counties. Trans-national education opens newer academic and research vistas that might not be available in home countries. The role of higher education in stimulating national economic growth and the value of international students to national economies exacerbates the need to ensure quality within higher education (Becket and Brookes, 2008).

Internationalisation has affected the higher education in two ways; first that the sector has become more competitive and secondly the institutes have been required to devise the policies at organisational level (Middlehurst & Woodfield (2007). This has made the world as a global market place for the international students coming and going across boundaries. This is not only limited to education but is also extended to research and exchange of students as well as faculty. All these facets necessitate he corresponding changes in the policies and procedures of the organisation and institutions. Internationalization of higher education is not a goal in itself but a means to enhance the quality within and beyond the institution and for that reasons, it should not focus solely on economic rationales (Yeravdekar & Tiwari, 2016).

Internationalization of higher education has been on the agenda of the University Grants commission (UGC) and as per 11th plan period, there have been new initiatives taken for internationalization of higher education in India.

The foreign students studying in any country not only become the skilled workers and contribute to the economy, directly and indirectly. These foreign students also bring a varied cultural and societal values along with them which help others to develop a holistic approach. This also makes all the students realize how the global economies have different culture and social life. The benefits of this are hard to measure in monetary terms but have importance in creating a diverse student community. The developed world has also recognized the economic and other benefits of international student mobility. (Powar, 2014).

The number of students migrating for foreign education has increased where the proportion of the total number of enrolled in OECD countries rose during the period of 1995 to 1998 at an average rate of

5%. The student's migration will help the countries to reduce the stress on the labour market especially if those countries are facing the shortage of skilled workforce. Foreign students contribute to the demand of the host country in which they are studying in the form of food, travel, accommodation and leisure etc. (Tremblay, 2002).

The factors which motivates the students to choose a host country for the getting foreign education have been classified as a "Push-pull" model. The push factors are the economic and social factors which are prevalent in the home country, are the contributing towards the students for going abroad for the education. The pull factors the factors which will be instrumental in selecting the host country for the education. (Mazzarol *et. al*, 2002).

Students from going from India to USA for higher education may surpass the Chinese students who go to USA approximately by double as it is predicted that the students from China to USA would be 1.1 lakhs while from the India to USA the number would be 2.8 lakhs by the year 2015. (Kumar, 2008).

Approximately 45% of the total foreign students are going to USA, UK and Australia as per the data of the last decade and these countries have retained their dominance because of the fact these are English speaking, having large number of students from India and China (two major sourcing countries) along with aggressive marketing strategies along with offering financial incentives. (Verbik *et al*, 2007).

Demand which is high on one side and there is a fear of substantial unemployment on the other hand, this raises the concern on the quality of the engineering graduates originating from China and India. The quality of the engineering graduates should be of importance rather than the quantity as the former will lead to the research, innovation and entrepreneurship rather than the later. (Gereffi *et al*, 2008). The Indian higher education system has grown more than two times in the new millennium in terms of number of universities as well as number of student's enrolment however the number of international students have not seen such a growth. (Bhalla and Power, 2015). The understanding that internationalization of higher education adds competitive advantage drives institutions to incorporate the international element (Yeravdekar & Tiwari, 2014)

2. RESEARCH DESIGN

2.1. Research Gap

Based on the literature survey the researchers came across the extensive research which has been done in the field of as to why the student go abroad for higher education with focuses on countries like US, UK, Australia, Canada etc. There has been much research also as to from which countries the students go to these countries for higher education and the India and China have been researched a lot as demand creators for these countries.

The researchers found the gap where there are not many research done as to what is the composition of the foreign students studying in India and which are the countries from where these students are coming to India. Further, as to what are the motive for the Indian Universities and institution to allow and accept these foreign students for their various programmes. There is very little research available on the enablers for foreign students to come and study in India and what are the challenges which are being faced by these universities, institution in attracting the foreign students.

2.2. Research Question

1. Which are the countries from where India sources its foreign students
2. What are the motives of universities and institution for attracting foreign students
3. What are the enablers of foreign students in India
4. What are the challenges which are being faced by Indian institutions in attracting the foreign students

2.3. Data Source

The data has been primarily collected from the All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE), Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, reports of British council, 12th five year plan, etc.

3. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

India's higher education system is the second largest in the world in terms of enrolment and largest in terms of number of institutions with 29.6 million students enrolled in over 48,500 institutions as per report of British council. Many institutions and universities are trying to have association with foreign universities and institutions to bring the internationalization @ home or what they call it, while studying in India.

As per the report of Institute of Statistics of UNESCO, the total number of foreign students have increased across the globe. The figure was 1.7 million in the year 1995 which increased to 4 million in the year 2012, reporting a 135% increase. The report also stated that the China has been the largest country to host foreign students since 1995 while India stood at number two in attracting foreign students.

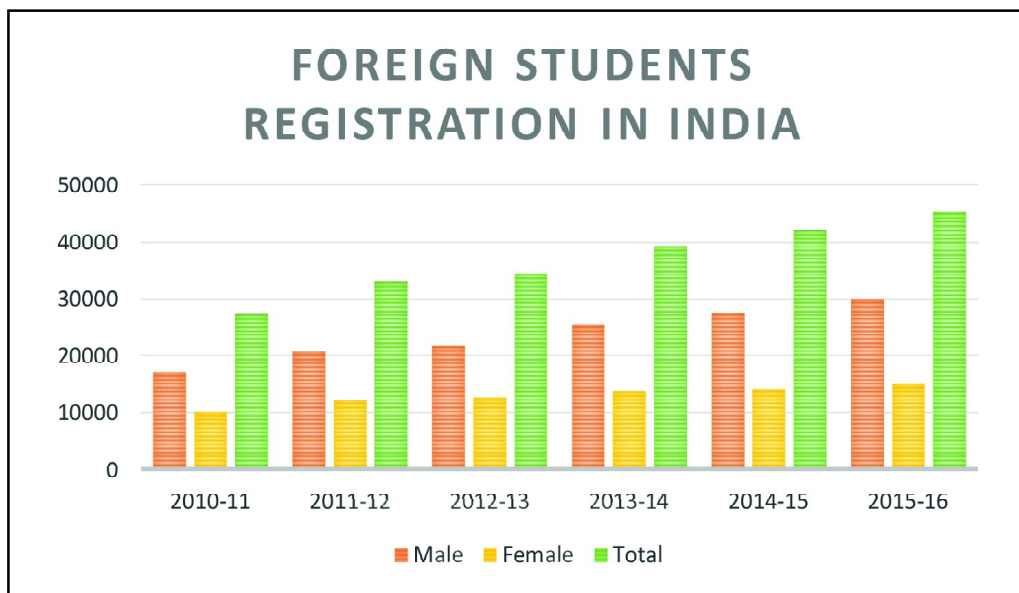


Figure 1: Registration of foreign students in India in last 6 years

Source: AISHE reports

The total number of foreign student’s registration was 27,531 in the year 2010-11 which rose to 45,424 in the year 2015-16, where the CAGR was 11%. The highest increase was in the year 2011-12 where the number increased by 20% in comparison to the year 2010-11. The absolute number of students registering were 27,531 and 33,151 in the year 2010-11 and 2011-12 respectively. The growth in the number was very less, 5% in the year 2012-13 while it was 14% in the year 2013-14. The year 2014-15 and 2015-16 have reported a growth of 7% in the number of foreign student’s registering in India.

The above figure shows the break-up of male and female foreign students studying in India in last 6 years. The growth in the total number was 20% from 2010-11 to 2011-12 and the growth in male students was 20.20% while in female students was 20.77% during the same period. There has been increase in the male foreign students during the period of study which increase from 17,328 in 2010-11 to 30,151 in 2015-16, reporting a CAGR of 11.71%. In the case of female students the growth has not been so good. The number stood as 10,203 in the year 2010-11 while the total number of female students was 15,273 in the year 2015-16, reporting a CAGR of 8.40%.

The percentage of male students was 62.94% and the female was 37.06% in the year 2010-11. The percentage of female students has dropped to 33.62% while the male percentage has increase to 66.38% in the year 2015-16.

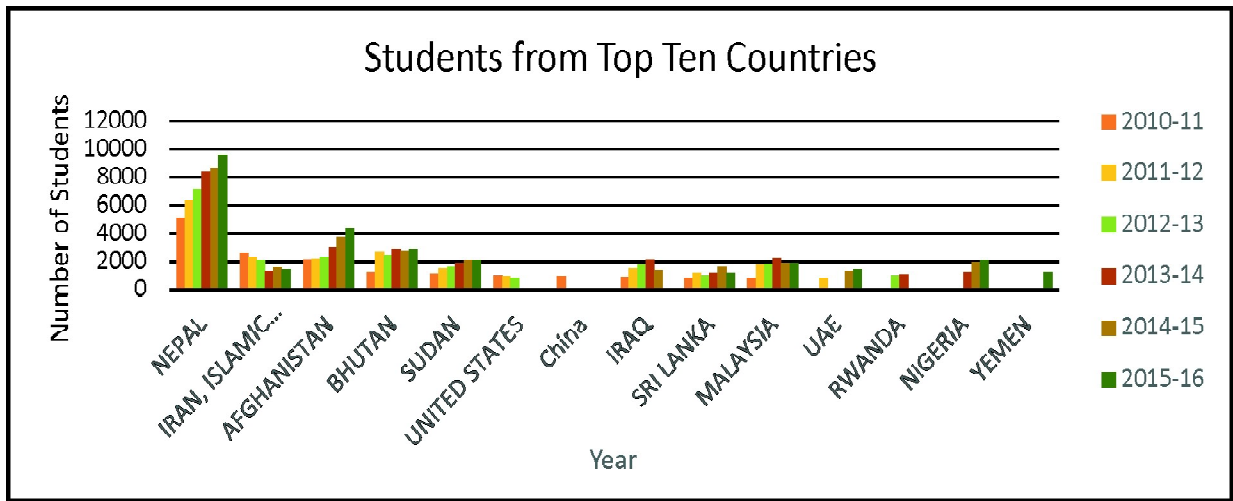


Figure 2: Foreign Students from Top ten countries

Source: AISHE report and author’s calculation

The above figure shows that majority of the students are coming from few countries namely Nepal, Iran and Afghanistan etc. In the year 2010-11, there were 951 students from china while in the later years the number was very small from this country and it was no more part of the 10 top countries. The number of foreign students coming from USA has also declined which was 1,015 in the year 2010-11 and 852 in the year 2012-13. In the remaining years, the number was much lesser. As a country wise, Nepal has shown an increasing trend where the number increased from 5,044 to 9,574 during 2010-11 to 2015-16 while during the same period Iran reported a declining trend where the number went down to 1,459 from 2,589.

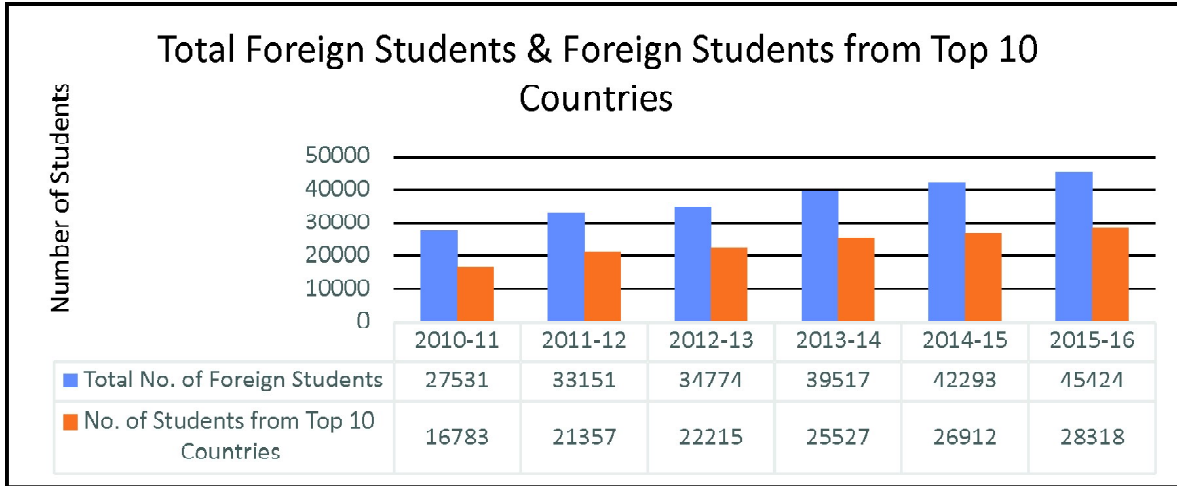


Figure 3: Total Foreign students and foreign students from top ten countries

Source: AISHE report and author's calculation

The top countries have contributed to the 60.96% in the year 2010-11 while the percentage was 62.34% in the year 2015-16. This shows the dominance of the few countries from which the foreign students come and study in India and these countries are namely Nepal, Bhutan, and Afghanistan etc. The Nepal contributed 18.32% in 2010-11 while this contribution rose to 21.08% in the year 2015.16.

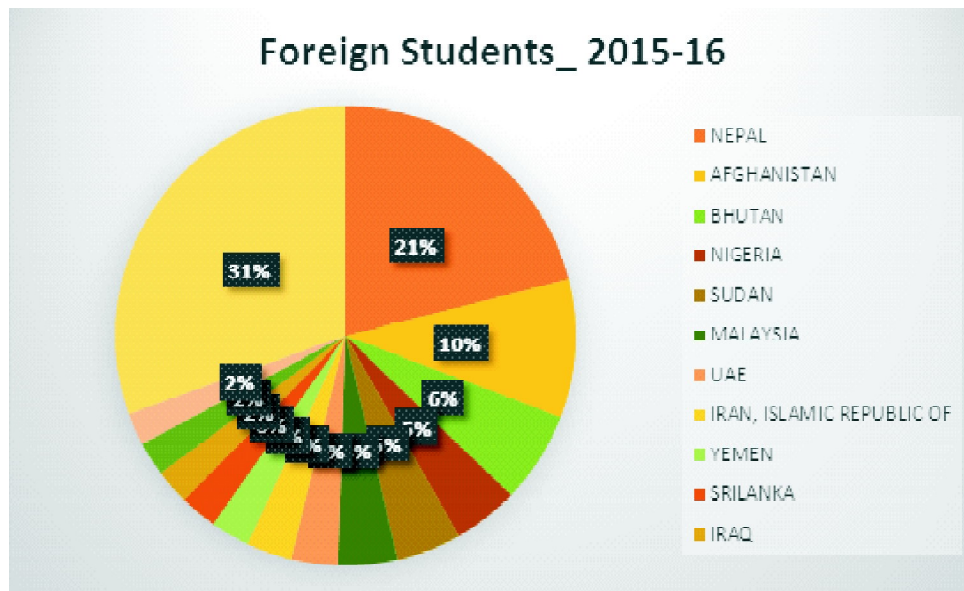


Figure 4: Break up of foreign students, country wise

Source: AISHE report and author's calculation

The above figure shows the details for the year 2015-16 where 21% of the foreign students in India are coming from Nepal followed by 10% from Afghanistan and 6% from Bhutan. 69% of the foreign students who are coming to India are from these 13 countries while 31% of the students come from other

countries. During the period of study, Nepal has been at the top in terms of having around 20% to 23% of students coming to India. The countries like Iran, Afghanistan, Bhutan, Sudan have been the major contributor in terms of sending students to India however their rank vary each year.

3.1. Motives for universities and institutions for attracting foreign students

India as a country remains the most sought choice among the Asian countries for reasons such as cost, geographical location, food, travel etc. There are various other reasons as to why the universities and institution are actively involved in collaboration and getting the foreign students to the host country. Some of the important factors are listed below:-

3.1.1. Profit

Earning money is a key motive for all internationalization projects in the for profit sector and for some traditional non-profit universities with financial problems. (Altbach and Knight, 2007). Though the profit remains the primary reason for spreading the wings for the universities and institutes but some of the traditional non-profit universities have also forayed in the international market in order to enhance the research and knowledge capacity and to increase cultural understanding. (Knight, 2006). Universities from Countries like United States, Canada, United Kingdom and Australia employ the international students by charging higher fees.

To answer a question whether universities should develop a sustainable funding model that are not so dependent on international students, Sir Keith Burnett, Vice Chancellor of the University of Sheffield said, that he would love to be able to let the international students come for free as the potential benefits are much larger than the financial benefits which a student brings to a university. Many US universities have fund which gives them leverage to operate and allow the foreign students to study without paying any fees. This calls for huge amount of funds and money which many institutions cannot afford to have and thus the profit remains the motive for many universities across the globe. These foreign students are considered to be a boon for cash strapped universities and institutions.

3.1.2. Increase in Demand

The number of students enrolling for higher education has increased worldwide off late and countries like India, china and Africa are contributors to this. The continuous demand for higher education has also been a reason for the universities to offer programmes/ degree for the international students. The push factors at home have contributed to this phenomenon where the lure and quality of good institutions is the reason for students going abroad.

3.1.3. Cultural diversity:

More than 40% of the fortune 500 companies were founded by the immigrants and the children of immigrants in US. This talks about the importance and benefits of the foreign students in any country. The foreign students not only study in India but also bring along with them a culture and social values. If these are nurtured in a proper way, this will help to create an eco-system which will promote multicultural organisations.

3.1.4. Augmenting Country Image

If the foreign students come to India and if they have good experience, this will enhance the image of the country among the parents, relatives, and everybody else. India is not considered to be a very safe, student friendly destination for the students as of now but with the government's initiative this image is likely to be changed and will help the country to boost its image and get more foreign students.

3.2. Enablers for foreign students in India

The private universities like Manipal and symbiosis have international students on their campus. Manipal University offers their engineering degree in such a way that a student can choose to first 2 years in India and remaining two years can be from any one of the more than 100 institutions across globe.

3.2.1. IT and Internet

The Indian IT education has been recognised across the globe and every a sizable number of IT graduate join the workforce nationally as well as internationally. This has established the Indian supremacy in IT education across the globe and many students come to study IT in India. Another facet of IT which helps in the international education is that with the help of available IT infrastructure the communication is much faster and enables the education to be executed. The recent initiatives of government of India, Digital India, which is aimed at increasing the digital power of India, will also be the contributing factor.

3.2.2. English

English is most widely studied foreign language in the world and also the most widely used second language. English as a language dominates the academic field including journals, research, mode, books etc. English as the language is not spoken much but understood widely by the Indians, which makes it comfortable for the foreigners coming and seeking education in India.

3.2.3. Cost of Living

The average living expenses (food and other) in India are about 100-150 USD a month. It is not only the living expenses are less but the tuition fee is also much less compared to other countries. The tuition fee ranges from 1,000 USD in public universities to 1,300 USD in private universities, which is very much affordable as well as competitive.

3.2.4. International connections and social links

India as a country well connected to the rest of the world and has good social links. India has business tie-up with various countries which help the bi-lateral trade and exchange to take place. These connections will help the foreign students to come and study in India.

3.3. Challenges

The inbound international student's mobility requires efforts at micro and macro level as there should be a complete harmony in the various processes and the systems which will enable the students to come to a

country. There are several issues which India as host country has to confront while wanting the foreign students to come and study in India. The major challenges being faced are as below

3.3.1. Employability

There are big questions which are being raised about the employability of the graduates of India. Only 17.91% Engineering graduates were found to be employable in the software services sector, 3.67% in the software products and 40.57% in Business process Outsourcing, as per the report of the aspiring minds, 2016. The situation improved in comparison to the previous year but still remains one of the major area of concern. To add to this, the best of the college of India have employability as 56% for IT service companies.

3.3.2. Procedural complexity

The bureaucracy is one of the major reason which affects the total number of students coming to India. This is one of the main discouragement along with other procedural complexities. The student visa, once granted is for 5 years but there is lot of complexity involved in getting the student visa. All these procedural delay not only result in losing the foreign students to competitors like China, Malaysia but also tarnish the image of the country India

3.3.3. Quality of teaching and learning

In terms of quality of education, China is considered to be ahead of India which also is a factor for having less number of foreign students in India. As per a recent report of British Council, India suffers from poor quality teaching, outdated and rigid curriculum and pedagogy, which are the challenges to which institutions, the desirous of getting foreign students, should pay attention and work towards improving the quality. Most of the state and central universities have shortage of faculty. The learning is also of the as most of the assessment are based on the input leaving less room for the students to explore and have the experiential learning.

3.3.4. Constraints on research capacity and innovation and entrepreneurship

There is a complete lack of the culture and eco-system for research. There is need to create and incubate new ideas and business which will foster the economic growth and will help in creation of job. This is majorly missing in the academic sphere. The citation impact of India is 1.367 which is measured as citation per research paper, while the citation impact of Germany is 3.07, followed by US as 3.013. The quality of research among research scholars has to improve a lot, to take this figure at a higher level. The number of PhD scholars are also very less in India, in comparison to its peers and competitors which in turn fails to inculcate the culture of research in the coming generations.

3.3.5. Lack of investment in proper resources

There are many institutions which invest in many activities ranging from advertisement to websites to promotion instead of investing in the right resources. The institutions should invest in the faculty development, research, innovation and other core capabilities which are instrumental for the development and sustenance of these institutions. These institutions have short-term vision and lack the ability to develop for the benefit of the institution for long-term

3.3.6. The supply-demand gap

The enrolment of students in the higher education stands at 18% while it is 26% in china. This is a very low rate of enrolment. The government of India aims to reach 25.2% gross enrolment rate (GER) by 2017-18 and 30% gross enrolment rate by the year 2020 which typically means an increase of 40 million university places. To state a number 1 out of 150 applicant gets admission into the premier B-School of India, IIM. This clearly shows that there is a dearth of good colleges and institutions across India while the demand is very high.

3.3.7. Lack of financial support

The private universities have to sustain their academic and research and innovation on their own. There is very little cash grant which is being given to these private universities, and institutions. The grants of UGC as skewed toward the central universities amounting to 76.8% in the year 2011-12 (as per the report of EY) while state universities get 17.6% and only 2.4% is being given to the deemed universities. This shows that the deemed universities and private institutions have to work on the mechanism which is self-sustainable which leave very little room for the research and innovation.

4. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

There are more than 33,000 institutions which are operating in India and there are only 6 which are ranked in the QS world university ranking as per 2014-15. This figure gives a clear indication on the quality of the institutions which are there in India. China has 2,484 institutions and 18 are ranked in the QS rankings. This has resulted in the number of international students flowing to these countries.

The government of India is mulling over launching “Study in India” programme which will be aimed towards attracting foreign students towards coming and studying in Indian institutions. The three pillars of education as per the 12th plan of government of India are:-

1. **Equity** which aims to increase budgetary support for targeted equity schemes
2. **Excellence** which aims to focus on teaching research synergy, learner centric approach, faculty development and internationalization
3. **Expansion** which aims to expand the capacity of the existing institution, institutional differentiation, widespread use of ICT.

Given the focus of the government of India to increase the GER and increasing the financing for public and private sector funding, the scene of higher education in India should improve. These changes coupled with other strategic development such as easing the process of visa, improving the image of country, increasing the quality of research and improving the student faculty ratio, the India is poised to become a destination for the higher education among the foreign students.

Cost would be one of the major factor for attracting foreign student to India. Other factors which contribute to the foreign students coming to India are the cultural diversity, lack of education in their home country etc.

The dependence of India is on Asian and South African countries in terms of getting the foreign students which is evident from the data presented. The universities and institutions are increasing their

programmes to match to the requirement and focussing on the research and innovation so as to improve the quality. There are many challenges which India is facing as to become a “Destination for higher education”. The government of India has included various policy level measures to address these challenges and if these are implemented in a proper way, should help India to achieve the desired growth.

5. SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The further research can be carried out to understand as to why only some countries are sending their students to India. There could be another angle to the research as to which are the major programmes for which the students are coming to India. There could be another area of research which can focus on the comparisons of Asian countries in terms of their attractiveness as the foreign education hub.

6. RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

The present research is very innovative and unique as there is very little research available on the motives on the part of the universities and institutions behind attracting foreign students. This will also help the policy makers to overcome the hurdles which are being faced by the foreign students at macro-level.

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