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Globalisation and its Impact on Higher Education in India

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Abstract

Globalization has significantly reshaped higher education, introducing new dynamics such as the rapid evolution of transnational education and the rise of new education providers driven by information technologies. Increased mobility of staff and students, along with the globalization of study programs, has created a more interconnected academic landscape where knowledge dissemination and qualifications transcend national borders.

In India, the impact of globalization on higher education is profound. The sector is transforming to align with global standards, evidenced by the entry of foreign universities through partnerships and information centres. While this promises enhanced educational quality and global exposure for Indian students, it also challenges the traditional public education system.

Public institutions in India face stiff competition from private and foreign universities that offer superior infrastructure, cutting-edge research facilities, and globally oriented curricula. This competition pressures public universities to innovate and improve, though disparities in resources often result in a quality gap favouring private institutions.

The rise of transnational education and academic mobility necessitates robust regulatory frameworks to maintain high education standards and ensure global recognition of degrees. Additionally, the brain drain of top graduates seeking opportunities abroad poses a significant challenge, highlighting the need to retain talent within the country.

The future of higher education in India hinges on its ability to adapt to global trends while addressing these challenges. Government initiatives, like the National Knowledge Commission's recommendation to establish 1,500 new universities, underscore the commitment to expanding and enhancing the sector. Achieving this vision requires substantial investment, strategic planning, and efforts to bridge the quality gap, ultimately positioning India as a competitive player in the global higher education landscape.

Introduction

Globalization, a multifaceted and context-dependent concept, profoundly influences various sectors, including higher education. Knight and de Wit (1997) provide a relevant definition,

describing “globalization as the flow of technology, economy, knowledge, people, values, and ideas across borders, affecting each country uniquely based on its history, traditions, culture, and priorities. To navigate the challenges posed by globalization, higher education systems must reorient their structures and functions, expanding their provisions to meet these demands. This reorientation process is termed internationalization. Thus, globalization and internationalization are distinct but interconnected concepts in higher education, with globalization being the cause and internationalization the response”.

Globalization in education accelerates the mobility of knowledge workers and seekers on an unprecedented scale. If a country fails to produce graduates with skills that employers need, particularly in fields like information technology, employers may seek talent globally. This need not always mean an influx of trained workers into a country; employment in knowledge-based industries often moves to where skilled workers are available. Whether employers relocate or employees migrate, mobility hinges on the quality and standards of qualifications offered by educational institutions. Ensuring these standards is the first step towards the internationalization of higher education.

The Globalization of Higher Education - Theoretical Concepts

Globalization has profoundly impacted higher education. Levin (2001) notes that with the emphasis on international competitiveness, economic globalization drives postsecondary institutions toward a business-like orientation, focusing on efficiency and productivity. Higher education institutions are closely linked to the marketplace, particularly in techno-science. Neo-liberal policies have led these institutions to play critical roles not only in maintaining and transforming national systems but also in contributing to national marketplaces (Marginson, 1997).

In response to global economic structural changes, higher education has required structural adjustments and reforms. One notable shift is the emergence of entrepreneurial universities. Scholars argue that to enhance international competitiveness and adapt to new knowledge production modes, universities must adopt entrepreneurial structures, strategies, and cultures (Levin, 2001; Marginson, 1997; Marginson & Considine, 2000; Rhoades & Smart, 1996; Slaughter & Leslie, 1997).

Education is a vital investment in building human capital, which drives technological innovation and economic growth. Improving a society's educational status ensures multifaceted development. In the post-industrial world, advanced countries derive significant national income from the service sector, making education crucial for skill development and gainful employment. However, resource allocation controversies arise, leading to the misguided policy of downsizing higher education and advocating privatization, risking the system becoming a commercial enterprise.

India's educational challenges are stark. According to the UNDP's Human Development Report, India has the world's largest illiterate population. Despite historical efforts, such as Gokhale's advocacy for free and compulsory primary education 104 years ago and Article 45 of the Indian Constitution, progress has been slow. The Kothari Commission (1964-66) laid the foundation for

India's post-independence National Education Policy, recommending that 6% of the national income be allocated to education, compared to the existing 3%.

Despite these challenges, India's software development and electronic communications industries have flourished. The widespread use of English in multinational corporations (MNCs) has widened the rural-urban educational divide. However, this skill reservoir presents an opportunity to spread quality education through technology. F.C. Kohli of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) recommended using technology to share curriculums and faculties nationwide. Private educational entrepreneurs, or “edupreneurs,” have established internationally recognized institutions, such as the S.P. Jain Institute of Management in Mumbai and the Indian School of Business in Hyderabad. Some Indian edupreneurs are even expanding overseas, reflecting recent trends that challenge the social obligations of governments to ensure equitable education access.

Globalization and Its Impact on Higher Education

Globalization is a major trend in higher education, manifesting in various forms. One prominent aspect is the rapid development of transnational education, driven by new education providers leveraging information technologies. Additionally, there is increased mobility of staff, students, and study programs. These developments lead to a more global approach to knowledge delivery and qualification awarding.

Foreign universities are increasingly establishing their presence in India through information centres and partnerships with private organizations, creating a significant demand for their programs. This trend poses a considerable challenge to existing public education institutions, particularly regarding quality. Customer satisfaction is crucial for improving quality and increasing market share.

The term “globalization” is prevalent in both domestic and international discussions across various fields. It has implications for economic growth, political and social development, and the role of education in nation-state development. Consequently, policymakers and scholars worldwide are addressing the needs and consequences of globalization, especially in technology transfer and information technology.

To create an information and technology-based society, educational systems must shift from traditional local teaching methods to international and global approaches. This transition is essential to produce human resources equipped to meet new world challenges. The globalized economy demands education that enhances learners' abilities to access, assess, adopt, and apply knowledge. It should foster rapid independent thinking, collaboration, and other universal skills vital for economic advancement.

In essence, modern educational systems must produce not only scholars and intellectuals but also risk-takers, competitive individuals, and technology-savvy citizens. These qualities are essential for thriving in a globalized world and contributing to economic growth and societal development.

Higher Education as a Business

Globalization is transforming universities into businesses, but many are poorly managed. The American higher education system, often considered a model, exemplifies this inefficiency. Despite its strengths, it suffers from high administrative costs, insufficient accountability, and a lack of transparency. Costs are not treated as opportunity costs, and demand is often overlooked. There is also a lack of focus on the “product” of education, leading to waste and unclear priorities. Programs resist assessment, students navigate bureaucratic obstacles, and professors who excel in teaching may not receive tenure.

*Despite these considerations, India's budget allocation for higher education remains insufficient, averaging around ₹1,12,899 crores annually, which is only 2.9 per cent of the national budget. This starkly contrasts with countries like the UK, where significant investments have been made to elevate universities to world-class status. For example, Tony Blair, in his 2005 speech, emphasized increased funding for universities to maintain their global competitiveness. As of 2023 4,65, 791 Indian students are studying in USA and 55,465 students in UK, in total 13,24,954 Indian students are studying in in different countries, illustrating the substantial business opportunity in international education. BBC news mentions as on 06/10/2006 two million foreign students are studying in USA. It is a big business that the arms business. In UK itself they have 8000 students studying from China (USA, Britian, Australia, China, Taiwan it is 9 %.)

The need for a business-like approach in higher education does not mean compromising its educational mission. Instead, universities must balance efficiency with their core educational values. Addressing these inefficiencies involves adopting transparent, accountable practices and prioritizing educational outcomes. Universities should streamline administrative costs, align programs with demand, and clearly define their educational objectives. By doing so, they can better serve students and society while maintaining financial health in an increasingly competitive global landscape.

Global Competition and the Status of Indian Universities

Globalization has not removed personal and regional income disparities. The gap between the rich and the poor is widening. We need a new global vision that ensures the gains from globalization are more widely shared.

Nearly two-thirds of the population of developing countries lives in rural areas. In the developed world this falls to less than ten per cent. Prosperity is not divisible. Neither is global peace possible without the eradication of poverty. As Jawaharlal Nehru said in his address to the Canadian Parliament in 1949. *“There can be security or real peace, if vast numbers of people in various parts of the world live in poverty and misery. Nor, can there be a balanced economy for the world as a whole if the underdeveloped parts continue to upset that balance can drag down even the more prosperous nations”*.

India is *leading* towards economic success and modernization. The impact of *globalization* is clearly visible in higher education. The high-tech industries, such as software and biotechnology

boosted the nation's economy and to some extent solved the problem of unemployment. The systematic *disinvestment* in higher education in recent years has yielded neither world class research nor very many highly trained scholars, scientists or managers to sustain high tech development.

Steve Ballmer, Microsoft Corporation CEO, while delivering the fifth in the series of “The Madhavrao Scindia Memorial Lecture” on 8th November 2006, Steve mentions that “The WORLD is counting on India for its exceptional talent pool to lead the next wave of innovation and global leaders like Microsoft are banking on their access to this knowledge workforce”.

He further says that “We recognize that nearly 30 per cent of the world's graduates come out of India and we look forward to harnessing this resource that is being tutored and developed by the Indian educational system”. He expected that in the next wave of innovation, “software will redefine the way we use computers by recognizing not just the users' voice but all the intent”. He said: “India will have a role to play in it. With the US government making it more difficult for people to enter US, we will have to increasingly bank on scaling our operations in India to ride the next wave of innovation. So outsourcing is there to stay, “he added”.

India, amidst its economic success and modernization, faces significant challenges in its higher education sector. While high-tech industries like software and biotechnology have bolstered the economy and partially addressed unemployment, the systemic disinvestment in higher education has hindered world-class research and the production of highly trained professionals necessary for sustained high-tech development.

Steve Ballmer, former CEO of Microsoft Corporation, highlighted India's pivotal role in global innovation due to its exceptional talent pool. He emphasized that nearly 30% of the world's graduates come from India, making the country a critical resource for global leaders like Microsoft. Despite this potential, India's higher education system needs significant reforms to compete internationally.

India's main competitors in higher education are China, Singapore, Taiwan, and South Korea, which have made substantial investments in their universities. According to the London Times Higher Education Supplement's ranking of the top 200 universities in the world, China has three, Hong Kong three, South Korea three, Taiwan one, and India just one (Indian Institute of Science, ranked 41st. These countries are positioning themselves for leadership in the knowledge-based economies of the future, while India lags behind.

Region	Top 20	Top 50	Top 100	Top 200
China	1	2	2	6
Hong Kong	0	2	3	4
India	0	0	2	3
Japan	1	2	3	11
Other Asia	1	1	3	9
Sub-total	3	7	13	33
Australia	1	6	7	13

Canada	0	3	3	7
New Zealand	0	1	2	2
U.K.	4	8	16	30
U.S.	11	22	33	55

Source: The Times Higher Education Supplement

The rise of private higher educational institutions in India, recognized as “deemed universities” by the UGC, indicates a significant shift. From around 15 in 1999, the number of deemed universities has grown to over 105 by 2006. These institutions are often progressive, flexible, and willing to adopt new educational methods. However, they primarily focus on fields like management and IT and lack the capacity for comprehensive research.

In a presentation to Prime Minister, Prof. C. N. R. Rao, Chairman and Scientific Advisory Council on 21st July 2006 has asked for a separate salary mechanism for scientists. The present pay structure, he says, is such that *no young technical person worth his salt would want to work for the Government or public sector*. He further adds *you need’nt give scientist’s private sector salaries, but you could make their lives better, by say giving them a free house*.

The crisis gripping Indian science seems to be hydra-headed. None of our institutes of higher learning are comparable with Harvard or Berkley. The IIT’s need to improve their performance: a faculty of 350 from IIT’s produces only about 50 PhD scholars in a year. The smaller Central Universities performance is better than the IIT’s, IIM’s. The smaller Central University producing one Ph.D. 3-4 faculty members i.e. one PhD per 5-6 faculty members. The small Central Universities performances are far better than IIT’s and IIM’s.

To compete in the 21st-century knowledge economy, India needs universities that not only produce bright graduates but also support sophisticated research across various fields. Public universities are crucial in this endeavour, requiring sustained funding and competitive salaries to attract and retain top scientists and scholars. An academic culture based on merit and competition is essential to foster excellence.

A significant challenge is maintaining international competitiveness. Despite India's economic success, its universities are falling behind in the global marketplace of ideas, particularly in the arts and social sciences. This decline is evident in global university rankings, where Indian institutions are underrepresented. India must focus on enhancing its higher education system to ensure it produces highly trained professionals and supports cutting-edge research, thereby improving its standing in the global academic community.

Discussion: The Status and Challenges of Higher Education in India

The landscape of higher education in India faces significant challenges and opportunities in the context of globalization. A substantial number of Indian students pursue higher education abroad due to the limited availability of quality seats in domestic universities and institutes. Each year, a growing number of students choose to study in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia, collectively spending approximately \$5 billion (₹10,000 crores) on tuition and living

expenses. This significant outflow of funds highlights the unmet demand for high-quality higher education within India.

The Indian government has considered allowing Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the education sector to address this gap. If implemented, this policy could lead to the establishment of branches of renowned institutions such as Oxford, Stanford, Harvard, Yale, MIT, and the London School of Economics in India. Currently, this proposal is under review by the Ministry of Human Resource Development.

India's contribution to global science has declined, currently standing at less than 3%, compared to China's 12%. This is a dramatic drop from the 1960s and 70s when India contributed around 17.5%. China's strategic efforts to elevate its elite institutions to world-class status have been successful, with Beijing University ranked 14th and Tsinghua University 28th globally. In contrast, the highest-ranked Indian institutions are the IITs at 27th and the IIMs at 68th. Other Asian universities outside of China, Hong Kong, and Japan perform better, with nine institutions in the top 200 compared to India's three. The Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) barely makes the list at 183rd, whereas the Australian National University ranks 16th and the University of Otago in New Zealand ranks 79th, demonstrating India's lag in higher education quality.

India is among the top ten countries globally for opportunities such as employment and economic expansion, but it falls behind in higher education, research, and development. To achieve long-term development, India must invest equally across all sectors, including education.

The national target of a 15% enrolment ratio in higher education by 2015 remains a distant goal. The National Knowledge Commission (NKC) proposed establishing 1,500 new universities by 2012, including 50 national universities. Achieving this would require massive financial resources. To harness the potential of its young population, India must prioritize high investment in education. The NKC's recommendations should serve as a wakeup call for adequate resource allocation towards education, fulfilling a national commitment made decades ago.

India has the potential to develop internationally recognized research-oriented universities, but this cannot happen overnight. The country must leverage its existing strengths and build on them. Creating a dozen or more universities that can compete globally is essential for India to fully engage in the new world economy. Without such institutions, India risks remaining a peripheral player in global science and technology.

Current Initiatives and Future Prospects

India has begun taking steps towards improving its higher education system. Initiatives such as the Institutes of Eminence (IoE) scheme aim to enhance the quality of higher education institutions by providing them with greater autonomy and funding. Additionally, the New Education Policy (NEP) 2020 envisions transforming the education system, emphasizing multidisciplinary institutions, research, and internationalization.

Top 10 Government Universities and Institutes in India

1. **Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore:** Renowned for research in science and engineering, IISc is a premier institute offering advanced education and conducting cutting-edge research.
2. **Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs):** Including IIT Bombay, IIT Delhi, IIT Madras, IIT Kanpur, and IIT Kharagpur, these institutes are globally recognized for their engineering and technology programs.
3. **Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi:** Known for its strong emphasis on social sciences, humanities, and international studies, JNU is a hub for advanced research and academic discourse.
4. **University of Delhi (DU):** One of India's largest and most prestigious universities, DU offers a wide range of undergraduate and postgraduate programs across various disciplines.
5. **Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs):** Including IIM Ahmedabad, IIM Bangalore, and IIM Calcutta, these institutes are leaders in management education, producing top business leaders and entrepreneurs.
6. **Banaras Hindu University (BHU), Varanasi:** A prominent institution offering diverse programs in arts, science, engineering, and medical sciences.
7. **All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi:** Premier medical institute offering top-notch education and research in medical and health sciences.
8. **Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR), Mumbai:** Renowned for research in fundamental sciences, TIFR offers advanced postgraduate programs.
9. **University of Hyderabad:** Known for its research-intensive programs and strong emphasis on postgraduate education.
10. **Indian Statistical Institute (ISI), Kolkata:** Esteemed for its programs in statistics, mathematics, and computer science, ISI is a leading research institution.

These institutions collectively represent the pinnacle of higher education in India, offering quality education, research opportunities, and contributing significantly to academic and technological advancements.

In 2006, India witnessed the emergence of several notable private universities, each contributing significantly to the higher education landscape with their unique credentials. Some of the top private universities during this period include:

Top 10 Private Universities and Institutes in India

1. **Ashoka University:** Known for its interdisciplinary approach and focus on liberal arts education, Ashoka University emphasizes critical thinking and research.
2. **O.P. Jindal Global University:** Renowned for its emphasis on global perspectives and collaborations, JGU offers a range of programs in law, business, international affairs, and more.
3. **Shiv Nadar University:** With a strong emphasis on research and innovation, Shiv Nadar University is known for its cutting-edge programs in engineering, humanities, and social sciences.

4. **Amity University:** A leading private institution offering a wide array of programs across disciplines, Amity University is recognized for its infrastructure and industry connections.
5. **SRM University:** Known for its focus on engineering, medical, and health sciences, SRM University has established itself as a center for excellence in technical education.
6. **Manipal Academy of Higher Education:** Renowned for its medical and engineering programs, Manipal Academy of Higher Education is a pioneer in private higher education in India.
7. **Symbiosis International University:** With a focus on fostering international collaborations and offering diverse programs, Symbiosis International University has gained recognition for its quality education.
8. **BITS Pilani:** A premier private institution known for its engineering and technology programs, BITS Pilani is highly regarded for its research and industry partnerships.
9. **VIT University:** Renowned for its engineering and management programs, VIT University is known for its state-of-the-art infrastructure and industry-oriented curriculum.
10. **Birla Institute of Technology & Science, Pilani:** A prestigious institution offering programs in engineering, sciences, management, and humanities, BITS Pilani is known for its rigorous academic standards and innovative teaching methods.

These private universities have played a crucial role in expanding access to quality higher education in India and have contributed significantly to the country's intellectual and academic landscape.

The Role of Technology and International Collaboration

In the contemporary era, technology has become an indispensable tool in transforming education and bridging geographical barriers. With the advent of digital platforms and online learning management systems, education has transcended traditional boundaries, offering learners access to high-quality resources and interactive learning experiences. The COVID-19 pandemic further accelerated the adoption of technology in education, prompting institutions worldwide to shift to remote learning modalities to ensure continuity of education.

In India, the role of technology in education has witnessed significant growth, with increased investments in digital infrastructure and online learning platforms. Institutions have embraced e-learning solutions, virtual classrooms, and educational apps to deliver engaging and interactive learning experiences to students across diverse demographics. This shift towards digital education has not only enhanced accessibility but also improved the quality of learning outcomes by providing personalized learning experiences and real-time feedback mechanisms.

Moreover, international collaboration has emerged as a cornerstone in enriching the educational landscape in India. Dual degree programs, research partnerships, and faculty exchanges with renowned international universities have facilitated knowledge exchange, cultural diversity, and cross-disciplinary collaboration. These collaborations offer students exposure to global perspectives, cutting-edge research opportunities, and access to world-class faculty, thereby enhancing the overall quality and relevance of education in India. As India continues to prioritize technological innovation and internationalization in education, the synergy between technology

and international collaboration will play a pivotal role in shaping the future of higher education in the country.

Conclusion

Due to non-availability of seats in higher education in good Universities/Institutes Indian students are going to USA, Britain and Australia in every year. The strength of the students going for higher education is increasing in every year. They are paying for fees and hostel expenditure on an average \$ 5 billion (Rs. 10,000 crores). In view of this, the present Government (Commerce Ministry) brought a proposal in education sector, foreign investor investment (FDI) for acceptance. If it is accepted the branches of Oxford, Stanford, Harvard, Yale, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, London School of Economics will be opened in India.

India must continue to reform and invest in its higher education system to compete globally. This involves increasing funding, fostering a culture of research and innovation, and leveraging technology. By doing so, India can create a robust higher education sector that not only retains its talent but also attracts students and scholars from around the world. This transformation is essential for India's sustained economic growth and its emergence as a global leader in knowledge and innovation.

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