



## IMPACT OF GLOBALIZATION ON HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA: ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND ALTERNATIVES

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### Abstract

Globalization is an umbrella term that refers to increasing global connectivity, integration and interdependence in the economic, social, technological, cultural, political, and ecological spheres. It is a unitary process inclusive of many such sub-processes, perhaps as best understood as enhanced economic interdependence, increased cultural influence, rapid advances of information technology, and novel governance and geopolitical challenges. Higher education includes certain collegiate level institutions, such as vocational schools, trade schools, and career colleges that award degrees, diplomas and certificates. Globalization of higher education has brought remarkable changes in cross-border education. Attracting a good number of international students has been fairly a strong base of educational trade that is growing rapidly around the world. India has one of the largest and most complex higher educational systems in the world. Prior to a few decades ago, due to multifarious reasons, India was unable to attract a good number of foreign students in its universities.

**Keywords:** Higher Education, Globalization, Academic Excellence.

### Introduction

The phenomenon of globalization, which transformed world trade, communications and economic relations in the latter part of the 20th Century, is having a similarly profound effect on education at the start of the 21st. Student options for higher education, in particular, are no longer constrained by national boundaries. For the first time in history, large segments of the world's student population truly have access to a "global marketplace" of higher education. Globalization is a process, which has affected many areas of human life, one of those being education. In the twentieth century, many developing countries have experienced growth in the educational facilities available to them due to the entry of institutions from the west. Some believe that this process is an invaluable opportunity for the people of the developing countries to raise their skills and standards of education. Others fear that it is merely a modern version of cultural imperialism that will lead to the creation of a universal, ultimately western society. No human activity has remained unaffected by globalization and education is no exception. It brings education to the front lines. In the prevailing discourse, education is expected to be the major tool for incorporation into the 'knowledge society' and the technological economy.

### International Influences in Indian Higher Education

If one scans the horizon of Indian higher education institutions today, the legacy of prior waves of international, if not global, influence can be seen in virtually every field. India hosts a wide variety of pre-Independence missionary institutions – colleges founded in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries by foreign missionaries of different faiths. St. Joseph's College Trichy, St. Xavier's Chennai, Christian Medical College Vellore, St. John College Agra, Isabella Thoburn College Lucknow, etc. In the post-Independence era, the Indian Institutes of Technology, consciously patterned after the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the U.S., received substantial overseas help right from the outset. With support from four donor nations, the five IITs benefited from guest faculty from outside of India, the ability to send Indian faculty for training abroad, and contributions of modern laboratory equipment and facilities. Similar international links were established by the Indian Institutes of Management: IIM-Ahmadabad, for example, still maintains strong connections with the Harvard Business School.

### Impact of Globalization on Higher Education

The challenge of higher education is to make full use of the opportunities that globalization has provided. First and foremost, the marvels of technology must be fully and profitably deployed. In India, Internet connectivity for university students is still inadequate. But the massive increase in cell phones, which are becoming more and more versatile, may be the answer to India's connectivity crisis. Once full connectivity is accomplished, the students can be liberated from the classrooms and allowed to find and create knowledge. The Universities will simply have to devise a means by which it can be established that the knowledge attained is genuine and accurate and that it is relevant to the needs of the countries concerned. Different students in the same class may diversify themselves and enrich different branches of knowledge. The impact of globalization on higher education may be summarized in the following ways:

1. Increasing interest of parents to get their children admitted to foreign educational institutions will cost us precious foreign exchange.
2. Sometimes there is also the possibility of sub-standard courses being offered to the students, which may lead to cheating of innocent citizens of India.



3. It will lead to the creation of three different classes of graduates – those educations in foreign universities, those from costly private domestic institutions, and those from economically weaker sections studying in government funded institutions. This will only lead to social tensions.

As the private sector's contribution in higher education in India is gaining in strength, India cannot take recourse to article 1.3 of the GATS that allows exemption for services provided by the government. In order to cope with the western countries, the measures required include the adoption of a credit based semester system with continuous internal evaluation. A cafeteria type option to the students for the course to be offered and facilitates of credit transfer. A majority of conventional universities in India are far behind, at least in non-professional courses. As the UGC, AICTE (All India Council of Technical Education) and other controlling agencies are not in a position to intervenes effectively and control the foreign educational institutions, the government of India has set up a committee under the NAAC, under its chairman Ram Takwale, to monitor the applying foreign universities. At present 150 foreign universities (50 from UK, 45 from Australia).

### **Looking Ahead: Pathways to a Global Future**

Even an extreme optimist cannot help but be disheartened by the many problems confronting the Indian higher education system – a vast and unwieldy system comprised of some 300 universities and deemed universities, more than 10,000 colleges and some 6.5 million students. The situation is further complicated by the rigidities of India's centralized higher education bureaucracy, the political pressures on higher education institutions and the growing problem of corruption in various aspects of university life (e.g., admissions, examinations, promotions). In such a beleaguered system, how can internationalization efforts possibly be effective? If India has to emerge as preferred location for higher education in the globalizing world it will have to develop a national policy to address the challenges of sub-standard quality, ineffective systems of monitoring and control, red-tapism in growth and development and political interference.

The need of the hour is not to fight the onset of globalization, but to turn the challenges into opportunities. The best revenge against the forces that cannot be stopped is turning them to our advantage. Education is one area where it can be done effectively. Some of the measures suggested by experts to accomplish this are:

1. Liberalize and deregulate the education system.
2. De-license higher education, confer institutional autonomy and decentralize syllabus design.
3. Change the role of Governments into facilitation and supervision through adequate regulatory measures.
4. Upgrade teacher training, infrastructure and syllabus.

### **Conclusion**

There is now increasing global competition for the best and brightest students, as more and more countries recognize the economic potential of higher education as a service export sector and India is not an exception. The major concern of globalization has been "how to fulfill the national objective of equality?" Interaction is expected to improve the quality of education and performance evaluation at all levels of education which is giving more avenues to the private education and in turn affecting the equity consideration. Changes in Indian education system that pervasive the core appears to remain the same only the notion of change and the rate at which it takes place varies virtually and spatially and in field operations. Globalization of higher education may help India to take advantage of opportunities in the new global environment.

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