Inbound International Student Mobility in India:
Path to Achievable Success

Vidya Rajiv Yeravdekar

FIDC
FORUM FOR
INDIAN DEVELOPMENT
COOPERATION
भारतीय विकास सहयोग मंच

Inbound International Student Mobility in India: Path to Achievable Success

Vidya Rajiv Yeravdekar

Symbiosis International University, Pune

FIDC
FORUM FOR
INDIAN DEVELOPMENT
COOPERATION
भारतीय विकास सहयोग मंच

Inbound International Student Mobility in India: Path to Achievable Success

Vidya Rajiv Yeravdekar[*]

*Abstract:*International student mobility has been a prominent marker of cross border higher education, and this has continued in the recent times in spite of it sharing space with many developments in internationalization of higher education, such as an unprecedented increase in the modes of mobility as well as the types of providers. It is inferred that student mobility affords some distinct advantages, which cannot be readily replicated through other modes.

This phenomenon is quite relevant to the discussion on internationalization of higher education in India. It is somewhat of a paradox that the higher education system in India, which is the key contributor to India's emergence as a knowledge economy and an important nodal point in the global knowledge and innovation network, has not made corresponding strides in internationalization. A trend analysis of cross border mobility in India demonstrates that mobility is heavily skewed in favor of outbound movement. Although there has been some improvement with respect to inbound movement in the country, this development does not seem impressive in the relative context, particularly when stacked up against the BRICK nations.

The paper makes an appeal for improving inbound mobility in India, in the specific context of the presenting institutional challenges and developmental constraints. The author, a renowned educationist, policy maker, and researcher in the field of internationalization of higher education, outlines the presentation of inbound mobility in India, and delineates concrete ways to improve it, while emphasising the operability aspect.

Keywords: Inboud international student mobility in India, international student, globalisation, new education policy, internationalisation of education, Indian higher education institutions

A Case for International Student Mobility

The concept of inbound international student[1] mobility in India as anywhere else, can only be understood within the theoretical framework of cross border higher education.[2]

---

[*] Principal Director, Symbiosis and Executive Director, Centre for International Education, Symbiosis International University. Email: dr_vidya@symbiosis.ac.in

Although, in the past, the provision of higher education across political boundaries came about almost entirely through the physical movement of students, such is not the case now. There are many modes through which higher education crosses border. For instance, through movement of educational programmes, higher education institutions and new commercial providers across national borders. Yet, student mobility continues to be the most prominent marker of internationalisation of higher education. The presence of international students goes a long way in affirming internationalisation of higher education at the "host" institution or in the "host" country.

Why should that be the case?

The significance of the physical movement of students across borders has continued, even though student mobility, now, shares space with other modes of internationalisation of higher education. This is so because there is much to be said for the comparative advantages that accrue as a result of international student mobility. Indeed, this is an area that has been extensively studied and documented by researchers and practising educationists in the field of higher education studies. The benefits that follow exclusively on account of student mobility are multi-dimensional.

The student widens his knowledge horizons, adds cross-cultural proficiency and global competencies to his personal and professional portfolio, and expands his intellectual and cognitive frames of reference to refine composite skills such as problem-solving and engagement in critical debate. The benefits to the institution are obvious. The institution is able to usher in genuine and meaningful "international" ethos in education, improve recognition and brand stature, revitalise connections within the international knowledge and professional networks, and achieve sustainable institutional growth.

The gains that accumulate at the national level on account of international student mobility are considerable as well. These, too, have been confirmed and reported extensively.

International student mobility is an important generator of revenue for national economies.[3] A differentiated tuition fee structure (differentiated along two categories— domestic and international student) accounts for the largest share of the voluminous revenues that go to governments in "host" countries.

International student mobility is a significant promoter of what is commonly referred to as "soft power" in the lexicon of international relations and diplomacy. The term "soft power" refers to country's capacity to influence another country's collective attitude and behaviour as a result of non-coercive and non-threatening factors (Nye, 2004).

A number of factors that could be described as being related to higher education point to a country's "soft power" resources—amongst these, the number of inbound international students features on the very top of the list.

Of all the many ways in which inbound international student mobility influences "soft power," the consequent contribution to capacity-building in neighbouring countries is possibly the most important in the case of India.

The importance of this contribution lies in the fact that offering of opportunities in higher education to expand the human resource base of the "sending" countries sets into motion a range of developmental cycles that are inexhaustible and self-generative. This explains why capacity-building through higher education is encouraged and is considered as superior (in comparison with financial aid, the traditional mode of assistance) by the United Nations and amongst countries of the "South".

International Student Mobility to India

A bird's eye view of the global landscape of international student mobility would reveal India to be at the heart of the whirlwinds of change. The discussions on the subject feature the Indian case most prominently, perhaps right alongside the Chinese, which is considered something of

a phenomenon in itself. More importantly, the direction of the change is metaphorically referred to as the movement from "the periphery to the centre"—an expression borrowed by higher education studies from development studies. India, along with many other developing countries, is said to be moving towards patterns in higher education that are increasingly less similar to the ones typically observed in the developing countries of the South. The changes reflect a higher education system transmuting itself into those shapes and forms that are characteristic of systems in the developed countries of the North (differentiation, massification, and tertiarisation).

Inbound Student Mobility: Patterns and Trends

Definition of "International Student" and the Issue of Data

The data on the profile of international students in India can be traced as far back as the decade of the 1980s. The consistency and validity of the data have been flagged as questionable due to significant variation in the official figures.

Of all the regulatory bodies in the realm of higher education, the Association of Indian Universities (AIU) is entrusted with the responsibility of management of information on inbound international student mobility and the coordination and facilitation of working groups on internationalisation. This would seem to fit in well with its organisational structure and other responsibilities.

The AIU has been collecting and disseminating data on international students since 1990. Although there have been some steady improvements in its operations related to collection and dissemination of data on international students, there remains much more to be done. To be fair, it must be pointed out that a significant impediment in the completion of these tasks is that many higher education institutions do not cooperate well in providing data to AIU, which affects the statistical outcome of the surveys.

It is recommended that, in its efforts to improve mobility, the AIU join hands with the University Grants Commission (UGC) and the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE). The operations of the three agencies are spread across many levels, frequently overlapping and intersecting through many processes; therefore, collaborative workings of the three bodies is certain to optimise the outcomes of projects and policies related to mobility. While on the subject, I might also add that, in a more opportune scenario, we would have the Ministry of External Affairs, the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, the Ministry of Commerce, and the Ministry of Human Resource Development brought together into the orbit of initiatives on mobility.

It is welcome that the UGC has recently begun looking into the data on inflow of international students, but this activity has not been planned in definitive terms. A more enhanced contribution from the UGC will serve mobility well. As the regulatory framework goes, it must be the UGC, with the governing authority and the financial possessions that it wields, which must be at the helm in managing the data on international student mobility in India. The Foreigners Division, Ministry of Home Affairs, records information related to student visas, which are made available to international students. The figures of international students, in this case, are far higher than those supplied by the AIU. The reason for this variation is that in the former case, students on short term courses and programmes are included in the total figures, and in the latter case, only those students who are enrolled in a degree programme in an Indian higher education institution, are counted up.

At the broadest level, the inconsistency is tied to the question "Who is an international student?" The qualifying criteria are potentially many: Enrolment in which programmes qualifies a student to be "international"—programmes that result in the award of degree only or also those programmes that result in award of diploma or certificate? Is the minimum duration of programme a factor as well?

In the interest of expanding the discussion on mobility, the author has advocated that the definition of international student be enlarged to include as wide a base of criteria as is reasonably accurate. It is recommended that this definition be made more inclusive to bring in all those students who hold a foreign passport, the "Person of Indian Origin" (PIO) card, or the "Overseas Citizen of India" card, and are enrolled in higher education programmes (or courses) of any duration in India. The most important issue here is that, irrespective of the duration of the programme of enrolment, these students are part of the Indian higher education system—they contribute to it and benefit from it, as much as do domestic students. The enrolment could run as long as many years, as in the case of doctoral students, or a few months, as in the case of short-term exchange programmes. This definition would be congruent with the one that is used by the Institute of International Education (IIE), which is more in step with the contemporary trends in global student mobility.

There is much variation at the supranational level, making it difficult to settle on one set of criteria. UNESCO Institute of Statistics considers international students to be "those who have crossed a national or territorial border for the purpose of education and are now enrolled outside their country of origin" (UNESCO 2011). "The definition [UNESCO's] excludes students who are in a programme for less than a year. The Institute of International Education (IIE) in its Open Doors Reports (IIE, n.d.) does not have the one- year time restriction" (CII-AIU, 2014).

In India, a recurring dilemma pertains to whether students enrolled in distance education mode qualify as international students or not. This assumes an important dimension given that the Indira Gandhi National Open University is a big draw for international students. Further compounding the issue is the element of student visa: "The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) regards all persons coming under a student visa to be international students, irrespective of whether they come for post- secondary education programmes or otherwise. The

Association of Indian Universities (AIU) follows the Unesco *[sic]* definition while the University Grants Commission (UGC) follows the IIE one" (CII-AIU, 2014: 7).

Thus, the Association of Indian Universities (AIU), in congruence with the UNESCO definition, considers only those foreign students "international students" who are enrolled in ". . a university and colleges, for post- higher [sic] secondary programmes, of at least one academic year duration . . . Consequently, students coming for short- term certificate / diploma [sic] courses in subjects like English language and computer-literacy are not being covered, nor are students coming for 'study India' programmes. Likewise, students registered with Indian open universities, but residing abroad are excluded from the latest survey" (CII-AIU, 2014: 19).

The University Grants Commission (UGC), in accordance with the definition of international students stated by the Institute of International Education (IIE), "does includes in its data-base the categories excluded by AIU, i.e., students on short-term programmes, including 'study India' and those registered with open universities but non- resident in India" (p. 19).

The earlier figures included students enrolled in IGNOU, but the more recent figures exclude this set. Perhaps the definition of international students as recently issued by UIS, which excludes students enrolled in the distance mode and those that are enrolled in programmes and courses that are less than a year, is responsible for the change in the criteria that is utilised to determine the status of international student. To further complicate the matter, the newer statistics does not specify if students enrolled in short duration courses and programmes, such as those that are semester based, are included or not. An integrated definition of "international student" requires that proviso clauses leave no room for misinterpretation and ambiguity to which the definition might be liable. In a country such as India, the room for obscurity is large. Consider the point raised by CII-AIU (2014, p.19) and the extent to

which it clouds the MHRD's definition of international student, which is grounded in acquisition of student visa:

> ...the large number of 'Tibetan students' listed as international students by many universities. India accepts the fact that Tibet is a part of China and, therefore, these will have to be classified as being students from China. At the same time, it is a fact that most of them are children of political refugees, born and bred in India. None of them has visited Tibet. Logically, all of them should be classified as Indian or 'stateless'.

It is hoped that as data collection becomes more scientifically defined and rigorously managed, the records on international students will be more accurately representative of the actual presentation.

Demographic Profiles

The data on international students in India reveals some salient demographic and other features. Inbound international students have been grouped into many categories on the basis of their academic motivations and financial backgrounds.

Choudaha *et al.* (2013) have identified four categories of international students, based on financial resources and academic preparedness.

- Explorers: Students with high financial resources and low academic preparedness.
- Highfliers: Students with high financial resources and high academic preparedness.
- Strivers: Students with low financial resources and high academic preparedness.
- Strugglers: Students with low financial resources and low academic preparedness (CII- AIU, 2014: 9).

Powar (2013: 162-163) has categorised international students in India on the basis of sponsorship:

- Students sponsored by the Government of India

- Self-sponsored students

- Students sponsored by foreign governments or international agencies such as the World Bank, United Nations Development Programme, and Asian Development Bank

- Students sponsored by inter-university and other bilateral agreements

- Students sponsored by Non Resident Indians and Indian expatriates

In ascending order of the total number of international students based on sponsorship, the smallest share is that of students from developed countries; they are ordinarily self- sponsored, or sponsored by foreign governments, inter-university, bilateral, and multilateral agreements. They are often enrolled in shorter programmes in liberal and performing arts.

The above group is followed by students sponsored by Non Resident Indians and Indian expatriates primarily from developed countries (mostly, US, UK, Canada, and Australia), and secondarily from developing countries (mostly, countries in Asia and Africa). This group is quite large and is enrolled in "demand absorbing" programmes, mostly in engineering and medicine in private institutions. Last, the students who come from developing countries form the largest segment and account for 95 per cent of the total figure.

Categorisations of international students based on their nationality and residence, although quite complicated, are important and have been overlooked thus far. The author suggests the following categories within which to place international students in India:

An international student is one who holds at least one of the following statuses: Foreign passport; Dual citizenship; Non-resident Indian who has given his last qualifying exam (intermediate, post-secondary, or graduation) outside India and wishes to complete his higher studies in India; and Persons of Indian Origin (PIO) and Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI).

The author suggests another categorisation on the basis of the type of programme of enrolment, including the following categories:

- International students enrolled in degree programmes, both under-graduate and post- graduate
- International students coming for short-term programmes, such as twinning arrangements, semester abroad, and Study India Programme
- International students coming for research-based programmes, such as doctoral programmes
- International students coming to India for internships in Indian companies. (It is relatable that the number of such students has increased significantly over the last few years. These students come for a duration of six months to one year. These internships are academic in their focus, but also offer opportunity to learn about the Indian corporate culture.)

It must be pointed out that the Indian Diaspora, which adds up to over 25 million in 130 countries, is a very prominent group and an unexploited resource in the context of inbound mobility.

The policy framework enables and encourages institutions to admit international students up to 15 per cent of the sanctioned intake. Going by this figure, India could have recorded 4.85 million international students. Instead, in the academic year 2013-14, there were only 31,126 international students—at a meager 0.61 per cent, the share of international students is discouraging indeed. However, it must be noted that these figures mark a significant increase from 7,791 in 2000 (AIU, 2016).

It is demonstrated that international students in India are drawn to certain cities and institutions; in this sense, international student presence is far from homogenous. In descending order, the cities of Pune (29.30 per cent), Delhi (20.48 per cent), and Manipal (12.78 per cent) have continued to lead the way (Powar, 2013, p. 38).

Between 2001 and 2002, the total number of international students in Pune was 2057, who were enrolled in six universities. This number grew to 3000 in 2005-06. In the year 2011, the number doubled to 6000. The puts the state of Maharashtra at the top, so that the state accounted for 32.50 per cent of international students, followed by Karnataka (22.37 per cent), and New Delhi (20.48 per cent) (Powar, 2012: 247-249).

At the behest of the author, a data-set was provided by a Government of India source in 2015, which recorded the population of international students in Indian states and union territories. The international students were categorised on the basis of student visas issued by the Foreigners Division, the Ministry of Home Affairs, between the year 2010 and 2013. The high figures are explained on account of application of this criterion in determining the population of international students.

The distribution of inbound international students across Indian states and union territories between the years 2010 and 2013 is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: International Students in Top Ten States and Union Territories for years 2010 to 2013

States and Union Territories	No. of Students			
	2010	2011	2012	2013
Karnataka	20087	16035	20302	19715
Delhi	13052	13521	18918	19222
Tamil Nadu	8396	9723	10125	16162
Maharashtra	6731	6679	7313	14169
Andhra Pradesh	6467	3473	6368	12095
Uttar Pradesh	2536	3096	3764	3370
West Bengal	1359	1656	1735	2129
Kerala	1191	1189	1408	1652
Gujarat	860	773	1018	1379
Himachal Pradesh	721	642	782	1210

The data reveals that in the years 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2013, five states stayed at the top in respect of hosting international students, even if the states changed ranks from one year to the next: Karnataka, Maharashtra, Delhi, Andhra Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu.

In the year 2010, Karnataka led by a huge margin, and was followed by Delhi, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, and Andhra Pradesh. Between the first three states, there emerges a significant drop from one to the next.

In the year 2011, Delhi ranked first, and was followed by Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, and Andhra Pradesh. Similar to the previous year, a significant drop was noted in the figures for the top three states.

In the year 2012, Karnataka scored the highest figure, and was followed by Delhi, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Maharashtra. It is notable that between Delhi and Tamil Nadu, there was a drop of 8793 students.

In the year 2013, Delhi stood first, and was followed by Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Tamil Nadu.

The highest figure for all the three years hovered in the range of 20302 and 19715, except for the year 2011, when it was 16035—a significant decline.

The top positioning of the Peninsular Indian states is not surprising since Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh have reigned since as far back as documented records would go. This is to be explained on account of several factors.

A survey by AIU (2016) revealed the following information on the regional distribution of international students in India for the year 2013-14. Institutions in 24 states/Union Territories were reported to host international students. Maharashtra stood the first (24.90 per cent), followed by Delhi (23.42 per cent), Karnataka (15.67 per cent), Uttar Pradesh (11.40 per cent), Punjab (6.31 per cent), and Telangana (5.45 per cent) (Table 2).

Table 2: State Wise Distribution of International Students in India 2013-14

States/UTs	No. of International Students	Percentage Share
Maharashtra	7750	24.90
Delhi	7290	23.42
Karnataka	4878	15.67
Uttar Pradesh	3548	11.40
Punjab	1963	6.31

Source: AIU (2016).

Biennial Pattern of International Students Coming to India

The records from the UGC and AIU show that, as early as 1988-89, Indian higher education institutions hosted students from 90 countries and that since then the number of countries sending students to India has increased (Snehi, 2012: 32). The data reveals quite a lot of ups and downs that are significant enough to warrant an inquiry into why the numbers should vary so much: compare the highest figure at 21,778 in 2008-09 with the lowest at 5,323 in 1998-99. The numbers have also fluctuated significantly in consecutive readings, and this one will serve as an example. In the year 2002-03, the number stood at 7,756, and it spiked to a little short of doubling at 13,267 in 2004-05. As has been stated earlier, the figures are inclusive of student population at IGNOU; this is an important rider as international student enrolment with IGNOU is quite substantial—it was 5,861 in 2008-09 (Powar, 2012: 246).

In the years between 1990 and 1995, the numbers continued to fall, although the decline was not alarming. In a sudden downturn, the next reading for the year 1996-97 recorded a halving of the international student population at 5,841. It fell some more the next year at 5,323, but things picked up the year after and the number rose to 6,896 in 2000-01. It is welcome that the upward trend has continued thereafter. The next reading was slightly higher at 7,756, and it increased by 5,511 to stand at 13,267. The consecutive figures show that the upturn has continued steadily: 18,391 and 21,778 (Table 3).

Table 3: Inflow of International Students in India

Year	1990-91	1992-93	1994-95	1996-97	1998-99	2000-01	2002-03	2004-05	2006-07	2008-09
Students	12,899	12,767	11,888	5,841	5,323	6,896	7,756	13,267	18,391	21,778

Source: Powar (2012).

The All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) reports that in the year 2012-13, the total number of "foreign students" in the higher education system in India was 35,178; of these, 21,915 were males and 13,263 were females (MHRD, 2014). AISHE (n.d.) report titled Higher Education Statistics at a Glance notes that in the year 2013-14, there were 39, 517 "foreign students," of these 25,565 were male students.

Quinquennial Pattern of Inflow of International Students on the Basis of Regions

The most prominent incidence is that the vast majority of students come from the continents of Asia and Africa. The interplay between the numbers from the two continents is quite interesting. At the beginning, in 1990-91, Africa was slightly ahead (5,741 and 6,318). Five years on, and the numbers were practically alike (4,831 and 4,081). Ever since then, Asia has continued to lead, and the disparity in the two sets of figures kept on growing. At present, the difference is striking indeed (16,004 and 4,193).

The continent of Asia has been an abiding patron of the Indian higher education system. Between 1990 and 2001, there was a continuous decline in the number of international student. The record for 2005-06 shows a remarkable leap of more than doubling (3,866 and 10,493). The upward trend continued and the next reading was steadily higher at 16,004 in 2008-09.

The numbers from Africa have been a cause for concern. The highest record, 6,318, was for the first reading in 1990-91, at that point,

the African students counted up to almost half of the total international student population. The numbers continued to fall steadily up until the last reading in 2008-09, which is 4,193, and amounts to almost 19 per cent of the total international student population.

The setting up of the African Union, which has taken on a number of initiatives with the aim of enhancing higher education with in the Union, has succeeded in improving the quality of higher education in the region. This obviates the need for students to seek higher education abroad as the exclusive source of quality learning (Powar, 2013, pp. 194-199).

In terms of enrolment, other parts of the world are not nearly as prominent as countries in Asia and Africa. But, that must serve to impel us in our efforts in improving international enrolment. Between 1990 and 2001, the students from North and South America ranged in upper 200s and 300s. But, this figure jumped to double in the 600s in the following decade.

The student enrolment from Europe hovered in between 100 and 200 between 1990 and 2001. The numbers doubled to be in the range of 600 and 700 between 2005 and 2009 (Table 4).

Table 4: Inflow of International Students on the Basis of Regions

Region	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
Asia	9849	10493	13400	15437	16004
Africa	2005	2403	3316	3796	4193
N S America	593	654	776	629	614
Europe	178	206	238	309	304
Australasia	55	71	69	81	66
Miscellaneous	587	629	592	957	597
Total	13267	14456	18391	21206	21778

Source: Powar (2012).

The AIU (2016) reported additional figures of the total number of international students for the years 2011 (33151), 2012-13 (20176), 2013-14 (31126) (Table 5 and Figure 1).

Table 5: International Students in India from Different Continents (2011-2014)

Year	Africa	Americas	Asia	Europe	Oceania	Others	Total
2011	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	33151
2012/13	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	20176
2013/14	5799	686	23350	293	124	864	31126

Source: AIU (2016).

A survey conducted by AIU (2016) for the year 2013-14 revealed the following data for international students on the basis of the continent that they came from (Table 6).

Table 6: Continent-wise Number of Male and Female International Students in India (2013-14)

Continents	Male	Female	Total
Africa	4105	1694	5799
Americas	317	369	686
Asia	15690	7660	23350
Europe	136	157	293
Oceania	83	51	134
Unidentified+NRI+PIO	552	288	840
Others			24
Total	20883	10219	31126

Source: AIU (2016).

According to AIU (2016), the findings of the survey for the year 2013-14 revealed that there were 5799 international students from Africa, drawn from more than 50 countries. Of these, only 29 per cent were women. Of all the regions in Africa, the largest proportion (55 per cent) of students came from the East, followed by Western and Northern Africa from where 19 per cent and 15 per cent of the total African students respectively were sourced. Central and Southern Africa accounted for 8 per cent and 4 per cent of the total African students studying in India (Table 7).

Figure 1: International Students in India on the Basis of Source Continents (1995-2013)
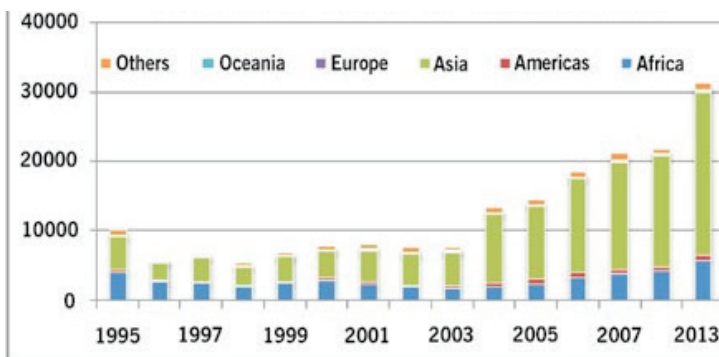
Table 7: Region-wise Number of International Students in India from Africa (2013-14)

Regions	Male	Female	Total
Northern Africa	765	79	844
Western Africa	823	284	1107
Eastern Africa	2068	1108	3176
Middle Africa	349	107	456
Southern Africa	100	116	216
Total	4105	1694	5799

The survey also reported that, during the year 2013-14, India received only 686 international students from Americas, of which 369 were women. The majority of students (633) came from Northern America whereas the numbers of students from Central America, Caribbean and South America were less than 20 (Table 8).

Table 8: Region-wise Distribution of International Students from Americas (2013-14)

Regions	Male	Female	Total
Northern America	290	343	633
Central America	6	12	18
Caribbean	8	9	17
South America	13	5	18
Total	317	369	686

Source: AIU (2016).

The survey revealed that India received nearly 75 per cent of its international students from Asia. Within Asia, the largest contingent (13375) came from South Asia followed by Western Asia from where the country received 7490 students during the year 2013-14. The least number of students (236) were reported to be from Central Asia (Table 9).

The top 5 countries in West Asia included Iraq (1225), Iran (1143), United Arab Emirates (1127), Saudi Arabia (993), Yemen (848), and Oman (755). These are followed by Kuwait (492), Bahrain (386), and Qatar (358). From Central Asia, during 2013-14, India received only 236 students, of which 143 were from Turkmenistan followed by Uzbekistan (55).

Amongst the South Asian countries, which constituted 57 per cent of the international student population from Asia, Nepal topped the list (6009), followed by Afghanistan (3855), Bhutan (1201) and Iran (1143), Sri Lanka (565) and Bangladesh (405).

During the year 2013-14, international students from Southeast Asia numbered 2087, of which 1206 came from Malaysia, followed by Thailand (380), Singapore (133) and Vietnam (109).

As many as 1305 international students from East Asia (Table 9) were reported to be studying in India during the year 2013-14 with Tibet (508), China (358) and South Korea (307) being the top sending countries .

Table 9: Region Wise Distribution of International Students from Asia (2013-14)

Regions	Male	Female	Total
Western Asia	4774	2716	7490
Central Asia	132	104	236
South Asia	9074	3258	12232
Southeast Asia	995	1092	2087
East Asia	715	590	1305
Total	15690	7660	23350

Source: AIU (2016).

During the year 2013-14, India received 293 students from Europe. Of these 135 students came from Northern Europe followed by Western Europe with 91 students. The number of students coming from Eastern and Southern Europe were 38 and 29, respectively (Table 10). Amongst the Northern European countries, from where 135 students from 8 countries were reported to be in India, the United Kingdom (UK) topped the list with 108 students. The numbers of students from the remaining countries were reported to be in single digits. Only 91 students from Western Europe were reported to be in India. Though these students came from 6 different countries, France with 58 students and Germany with 21 students occupied the top two positions. The numbers for the remaining countries were only in single digits. India received a very small number of international students from 6 countries representing Southern Europe. Of the 29 students coming from the region, 12 were reported to be from Italy followed by Spain (7).

During the year 2013-14, India received 134 students from Oceania. Of these, the largest number came from Australia (53), Fiji (44), and New Zealand (15). The other three countries Papua New Guinea, Tonga and Tuvalu sent 6 to 8 students each. In addition, it was reported that 864 international students did not declare their nationalities or indicated that they represented the NRI/PIO categories (Table 11).

Table 10: Region-wise Distribution of International Students from Europe (2013-14)

Regions	Male	Female	Total
Northern Europe	65	70	135
Western Europe	43	48	91
Eastern Europe	17	21	38
Southern Europe	11	18	29
Total	136	157	293

Source: AIU (2016).

**Table 11: Region-wise Distribution of International Students from Oceania and "Others" (2013-14)**

Regions	Male	Female	Total
Oceania	83	51	134
Unidentified/NRI/PIO	552	288	840
Other			24
Total	635	339	998

Source: AIU (2016).

Pattern of Inflow of International Students

As stated earlier, countries from Asia and Africa have proved to be abiding patrons of the Indian higher education system. For this reason, it is important to monitor patterns of inflow from these regions closely. First and foremost, it emerges that there is a great deal of variation between countries that are in the same region, and this leads one to conjecture that political climes and diplomatic relations play important roles in determining student inflow (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: International Students in India (1986 to 2013)
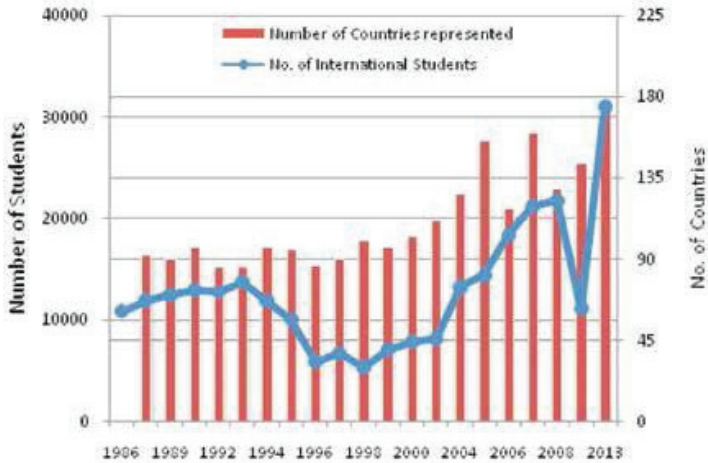
According to AIU (2016), the number of countries from where international students are sourced has gone up from 92 in 1988 to 175 in 2013. The share from Asia, which was about 48 per cent in 1995, has gone up to 75 per cent in 2013. The share of African students, which, in 1995, constituted nearly 40 per cent of the total student population, is now about 19 per cent. Over the period, the numbers of students from Americas have more than doubled but the numbers still remain in hundreds. So also is the case of students from Europe (AIU, 2016).

Iran features high on the list of top "sending" countries. The total number of students from Iran wavered between 100s and 300s in the years from 1990 to 2003. This number rose to 1120 in 2004-05. The upturn continued and it almost doubled to 2175 the next year and grew further to 2961 the year after.

Ethiopia, much like Iran, had stayed still in the range of 200s and 600s from 1990 to 2005. But, in a welcome spin, it jumped to 1041 in 2006-07, and grew to almost double at 1938 in 2008-09.

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) also counts among countries that have recently begun to send an increased number of students to India. The number of students from the UAE was less than a hundred up until 2003, but shot to 1500 in 2004-05, increased the next year, and continued to be in that range the year after.

The increase in student inflow from Nepal has been slow and steady. The numbers stayed in the range of 500 and 1000 up until 2003, but increased to 1352 in 2004-05, and rose some more to 1700s in the next two consecutive readings.

The student inflow from Afghanistan was quiet from 1990 to 2008, the highest recording being close to 100, but it jumped to almost 2,000 in 2008-09. It would be worth to investigate as to what caused the change to occur, and utilise that finding to determine if the Indian Government can take measures to carry on the upward trend. One of the possible reasons could be that during this time, the Indian Government, through Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), made available a large number of scholarships to students from Afghanistan

The numbers from Saudi Arabia were less than a hundred in the years before 2004-05, but rose to 419 in that year, and have continued to increase since then. The student inflow from Sri Lanka and Bhutan has gone up and down, but not radically so. In both cases, the student population has yet to cross the 1000 mark. In the case of Kenya, the student inflow pattern is worrisome. It went from being in the 3000s and 4000s between 1990 and 1994 to being less than 1000 in the years thereafter. The student inflow from Oman effectively began in 1998-99, and rose steadily after 2004-05. Student inflow from Yemen, although small, has been on the rise steadily (Table 12).

Table 12: Inflow of International Students from Different Countries (2004 to 2008)

Countries	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
Iran	1120	1264	2180	2669
Nepal	1352	1411	1728	1821
United Arab Emirate	1500	2034	1878	1560
Ethiopia	226	302	1033	1289
Sri Lanka	582	530	466	997
Afghanistan	35	65	422	976
Saudi Arabia	419	551	771	835
Bahrain	382	481	446	600
Kenya	418	523	621	592
Oman	646	505	608	548
Total	6680	7666	10153	11887

Source: Dongaonkar and Negi (2009).

The AISHE reports that, in the year 2012-13, the top ten "sending countries" were as follows: Nepal (4080), Afghanistan (2066), Iraq (1533), Sudan (1512), Bhutan (1437), Iran (1096), Malaysia (686), Rwanda (652), Sri Lanka (447), and the USA (392) (MHRD, 2014).

The data-set from the Foreigners Division, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, in 2015 recorded numbers of international students that were categorised on the basis of student visas issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs between the year 2010 and 2013. The numbers provided in the data-set are listed in Tables 13 to 18.

The numbers of students from Africa have been increasing steadily, except for the year 2011, when there was a dip. In particular, the increase in the years 2012 and 2013 has been remarkable. Of all the African countries, Sudan not only draws the most students, but also a sizeable segment. Tanzania is next, and also a significant "sender"; it is followed by Uganda, Eritrea, and Libya.

Compared with the number of students from Africa in the dataset provided by AIU for the years 20014-05 to 2008-09, the increase in numbers is notable. The highest figure in the data from AIU is 4193 (2008-09), whereas the highest figure in the data set from the Foreigners Division, Ministry of Home Affairs, is 26816 (2013). The significant increase in numbers between the two data-sets (the one from AIU and the one from the Ministry of Home Affairs) could, partly, be explained on account of the difference in criteria that is applied in the two data-sets. It stands to reason that students categorised on the basis of only visa are likely to outnumber students categorised on the basis of multiple criteria that are more restrictive in nature. Nonetheless, the increase is remarkable.

Table 13: International Students from the Top Five African Countries

Number of Foreigners Registered on Student Visa						
Sl. No.	Top five African Countries	Continent	2010	2011	2012	2013
1	Sudan	Africa	3830	3050	4759	4869
2	Tanzania	Africa	1128	1021	1641	NA
3	Uganda	Africa	579	434	654	753
4	Eritrea	Africa	340	192	316	622
5	Libya	Africa	291	225	299	458
Total Number for All African Students			16139	13247	20888	26816

Note: Data-set categorised on the basis of student visas issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs between the year 2010 and 2013.

Source: GoI source provided data at the request of author.

As with the data-set for years 2004-05 to 2008-09 (provided by AIU), the data-set that lists figures from the Foreigners Division, Ministry of Home Affairs, demonstrates that Asia continues to be the continent to send the most students. According to the data by the Foreigners Division, Ministry of Home Affairs the numbers for each of the four years revealed that Asia sent more than double the number of students as compared to Africa.

Table 14: International Students from the Top Five Asian Countries

Number of Foreigners Registered on Students Visa						
Sl. No.	Top Five Asian Countries	Continent	2010	2011	2012	2013
1	Iran	Asia	5668	4689	5354	7212
2	Afghanistan	Asia	4092	4345	5214	6559
3	Yemen	Asia	3439	2009	3192	5440
4	Malaysia	Asia	3131	3401	4494	4007
5	Sri Lanka	Asia	2616	2121	2547	2551
Total Number for Asian Students			38525	34656	42135	52296

Note: Data-set categorised on the basis of student visas issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs between the year 2010 and 2013.

Source: GoI source provided data at the request of author.

The numbers of international students from Asia have been steadily increasing, except for the year 2011, when it fell. The increase in the following year, 2012, is remarkable—7479 students, as is the one for the next year, 2013—10,161 students! The top five "senders" in descending order are Iran, Afghanistan, Yemen, Malaysia, Sri Lanka.

Table 15: International Students from the Top Five European Countries

Number of Foreigners Registered on Students Visa						
Sl. No.	Top Five European Countries	Continent	2010	2011	2012	2013
1	France	Europe	1442	1455	1576	1753
2	Austria	Europe	145	127	118	125
3	Sweden	Europe	139	145	170	254
4	Finland	Europe	113	69	69	93
5	Belgium	Europe	85	78	66	98
Total Number for European Students			5676	5632	6064	7101

Note: Data-set categorised on the basis of student visas issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs between the year 2010 and 2013.

Source: GoI source provided data at the request of author.

The numbers of international students from Europe have been steadily increasing, except for the year 2011, when it fell. France sends the most students, and also a sizeable segment within Europe; the numbers from France have been increasing as well. The top five "senders" from Europe are: France, Austria, Sweden, Finland, and Belgium. It is to be noted that the majority of students from Europe come for short-term courses; therefore, the AIU data discards this group of students, resulting in significantly lower figures as compared to the figures from the data from the Foreigner Division, Ministry of Home Affairs.

In keeping with the trends for Asia and Africa, the increase in number of students from Europe from the data-set from AIU to the one from the Foreigners Division, Ministry of Home Affairs is remarkable.

Table 16: International Students from the Top Five North American Countries

Number of Foreigners Registered on Students visa						
Sl. No.	Top Five N American Countries	Continent	2010	2011	2012	2013
1	USA	North America	4707	4630	4752	5646
2	Canada	North America	930	770	781	939
3	Mexico	North America	86	82	103	160
4	Cuba	North America	34	5	5	5
5	Trinidad & Tobago	North America	28	34	37	42
Total Number for N American Students			1130	953	988	1237

Note: Data-set categorised on the basis of student visas issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs between the year 2010 and 2013.

Source: GoI source provided data at the request of author.

The numbers of students from North America have been increasing steadily, except for the year 2011, when there was slight dip. It is notable that USA sends the most student from North America.

Canada ranks next, but the numbers amount to almost one-quarter of those from USA. Mexico follows Canada, but there is a significant decrease in the numbers. The numbers from Cuba and Trinidad and Tobago are not significantly high.

Table 17: International Students from the Top Five South American Countries

Number of Foreigners Registered on Students visa						
Sl. No.	Top Five S American Countries	Continent	2010	2011	2012	2013
1	Brazil	South America	146	169	185	227
2	Suriname	South America	55	46	6	5
3	Colombia	South America	50	58	81	90
4	Chile	South America	41	39	35	43
5	Argentina	South America	30	37	44	68
Total Number for S American Students			414	447	282	575

Note: Data-set categorised on the basis of student visas issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs between the year 2010 and 2013.

Source: GoI source provided data at the request of author.

The numbers from South America have been increasing too, except for the year 2012, when they fell substantially, but rose to more than double the next year, 2013! The only country that sends significant numbers from South America is Brazil, and it is encouraging that the numbers of the students from there have been steadily increasing during the next years.

The numbers of international students from Oceania have been increasingly steadily, except for the year 2011, when there was small decrease. Fiji is by far, the largest "sender" among all the Oceania countries.

The number of Students from Australia in 2010 was 275, it peaked in 2011 to 592, and has hovered around 300 for the years 2012 and 2013.

Russia is the only country in Eurasia that sends its students to India. In the year 2010, 527 students came from Russia. The highest figure from Russia was 655 in 2012.

Table 18: International Students from the Top Five Oceania Countries

Number of Foreigners Registered on Students visa						
Sl. No.	Top Five Oceania Countries	Continent	2010	2011	2012	2013
1	Fiji	Oceania	106	105	150	178
2	New Zealand	Oceania	67	65	73	88
3	Papua New Guinea	Oceania	6	1	12	12
4	Samoa (West) Togolese	Oceania	2	2	2	
5	Vanuatu	Oceania	1	2	1	1
Total Number of Students from Oceania			182	176	248	316

Note: Data-set categorised on the basis of student visas issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs between the year 2010 and 2013.

Source: GoI source provided data at the request of author.

It is important to note that one of the reasons that explain why the numbers from developed countries are so low is that these students typically come for short-term courses, and, on this account, they do not qualify towards the figures of international students that are issued by AIU. On the other hand, the numbers from developing countries are high due to the fact of that they are enrolled in degree programmes.

As mentioned previously, AIU (2016) conducted a survey to record figures of international students for the year 2013-14. The survey revealed that the top sending countries are: Nepal (6009), Afghanistan (3855), Iraq (1225), Malaysia (1206), Bhutan (1201), Iran (1143), UAE (1127), Saudi Arabia (993), Nigeria (883), and Ethiopia (871) (Table 19).

Table 19: Country-wise Distribution of International Students 2013-14 (Top 10 Countries)

Sl. No.	Country	Total no. of international students
1	Nepal	6009
2	Afghanistan	3855
3	Iraq	1225
4	Malaysia	1206
5	Bhutan	1201
6	Iran	1143
7	UAE	1127
8	Saudi Arabia	993
9	Nigeria	883
10	Ethiopia	871

Source: AIU (2016).

Distribution of Inbound International Students in India on the Basis of Gross National Income

The AIU (2009) study cited by Snehi (2013: 35-36) notes that of the ten countries that were included, four were in the "high income" category. Amongst them, only Saudi Arabia recorded a consistent increase. The other three, UAE, Bahrain, and Oman did not show significant increase or decrease. The two "lower middle income" countries (Iran and Sri Lanka) and the three "low income" countries (Nepal, Ethiopia, and Afghanistan) have recorded a steady increase.

Snehi (2013) notes that in the year 2007-08, 65 per cent international students came from low and lower middle income group countries. Approximately, a quarter of students came from high income countries, and only six per cent came from upper middle income countries. A total of six—of the top ten sending countries—fall in the low and lower middle income group and the remaining four in the high income group. The six low and lower middle income countries account for 40 per cent of the total international student population. The South Asian Association for

Regional Cooperation (SAARC) member countries Nepal, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Maldives, Myanmar, and Pakistan accounted for one-fourth of the student strength. Approximately 45 per cent students came from one of the UMIOR (University Mobility in the Indian Ocean Region) member countries, viz. Iran, United Arab Emirate, Sri Lanka, Kenya, Oman, Yemen, Thailand, Mauritius, Bangladesh, Tanzania, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, South Africa, Mozambique, Australia, Seychelles, and Madagascar (Table 20).

Table 20: Inflow of International Students in India Distributed on the basis of Gross National Income

Countries	Income Group	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
Iran	Lowe middle	1120	1264	2180	2669
Nepal	Low	1352	1411	1728	1821
United Arab Emirate	High	1500	2034	1878	1560
Ethiopia	Low	226	302	1033	1289
Sri Lanka	Lower middle	582	530	466	997
Afghanistan	Low	35	65	422	976
Saudi Arabia	High	419	551	771	835
Bahrain	High	382	481	446	600
Kenya	Low	418	523	621	592
Oman	High	646	505	608	548
Total		6680	7666	10153	11887
Total no. of international students		13267	14456	18391	21206
Share of Top ten countries		50	53	55	56

Source: Adapted from Snehi (2013).

Distribution of Inbound International Students in India on the basis of Stream and Discipline

A study carried out by the UGC and Information and Statistics Bureau in 2007, which was cited by Snehi (2013: 38-39), demonstrates that the three streams Arts, Science, and Commerce and Management, account for the vast majority of international student enrolment in Indian higher education institutions. Student enrolment in Arts has been steady; it has

increased over the years, but not remarkably so. On the other hand, the numbers in science have substantially decreased. Commerce and Management have continued to waver around 25 per cent. The categories, Engineering and Technology, and Medical Sciences have also continued to draw international students, although the enrolments have stayed quiet in the range of 7 per cent and 13 per cent (Table 21). Other streams and disciplines draw smaller share of international students.

Table 21: Distribution of Inbound International Students in India on the basis of Stream and Discipline

(in %)

Sl. No.	Faculty	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
1	Arts	20.01	20.8	25.47	25.05
2	Science	27.29	20.8	16.32	13.84
3	Comm. & Management	25.78	27.92	25.57	29.24
4	Education	1.60	1.94	3.17	2.80
5	Eng. & Technology	8.91	7.21	10.33	9.53
6	Medical Sciences	9.74	11.4	12.13	12.49
7	Agricultural Sciences	0.83	0.63	1.35	1.21
8	Veterinary Sciences	0.11	0.08	0.20	0.19
9	Law	2.41	2.03	2.31	2.26
10	Others	3.33	3.59	3.15	3.39

Source: Adapted from Snehi (2013).

The previously mentioned source notes that the total share of women in the international student group has shown upward movement. Between 2002 and 2006, it rose from 34.59 per cent to 39.3 per cent. Also it is seen that all disciplines, except veterinary sciences, have recorded an increase in the number of women students. Education has emerged as the most preferred discipline for women. More than 85 per cent of students enrolled in it were women in 2005-06; medical sciences, similarly, recorded high enrolment of women. On the other hand, women

enrolment in engineering and technology has been low. It was found to be around 20 per cent. If we add to this the finding that overall enrolment in engineering and technology is low in itself—close to ten per cent, then the numbers for women in the discipline would be marginal indeed.

The same study also elaborates on the distribution of international students on the basis of the level of degree programme that they were enrolled in. It emerged that undergraduate degree programmes recorded the highest enrolment. Postgraduate programmes lag far behind and recorded only one quarter of the total share of international student enrolment. The MPhil programmes, which are a stepping stone to doctoral programmes, enlisted the least number of students. On a positive note, it is observed that enrolment in MPhil programmes is picking up. Enrolment in doctoral programmes, unsurprisingly, is also low. In the year 2005-06, it was observed that short duration programmes, including certificate and diploma programmes, drew around eight per cent of the total number of students from foreign countries. (It is to be noted that students enrolled in such programmes do not qualify as international students, going by the UIS definition.)

A survey was conducted by AIU (2016) to determine information related to international students for the year 2013-14. The survey revealed that nearly 77 per cent of international students in India pursued undergraduate programmes, followed by postgraduate programmes (16.3 per cent); PG diploma, diploma, certificate, and integrated programmes together account for 4.3 per cent and PhD programmes for 2.4 per cent.

International Students and Indian Institutions

Although the number of Indian institutions that report enrolment of international students has increased over the years, it has never crossed the 175 mark. The number of institutions reporting 300 or more international students has varied in the range of 5 in 2000 and 22 in 2006. The vast majority of institutions report less than 20 international students (AIU, 2016).

A survey by AIU (2016) revealed that, in the year 2013-14, of the total international student enrolment, state universities accounted for 33 per cent, central universities (26 per cent), deemed universities (20 per cent), and private universities (13 per cent) (Table 22).

Table 22: International Students by the Type of Institutions 2013-14

Type of Universities	Central Universities	Deemed Universities	Inst. of National Importance	Private Universities	State Universities	Total
No. of International Students	8166	6272	2429	4011	10248	31126
Percentage Distribution	26.24	20.15	7.8	12.89	32.92	100

Source: AIU (2016).

The same survey revealed that of all the institutions, IGNOU stood first (5665), followed by University of Pune (4450), and Symbiosis International University (2110) (Table 23).

Table 23: Top 20 Institutions in Terms of Enrolment of International Students 2013-14

Sl. No.	Universities	State	Type	Total
1	Indira Gandhi National Open University, N Delhi	Delhi	Central	5665
2	University of Pune, Pune	Maharashtra	State	4450
3	Symbiosis International University, Pune	Maharashtra	Deemed	2110
4	Osmania University, Hyderabad	Telangana	State	1556
5	Manipal University, Manipal	Karnataka	Deemed	1549
6	Lovely Professional University, Jalandhar	Punjab	Private	1351
7	Sharda University, Greater Noida	UP	Private	1316
8	Visvesvaraya Technological University, Belgaum	Karnataka	INI	1126
9	University of Mysore, Mysore	Karnataka	State	1107
10	University of Delhi, Delhi	Delhi	Central	1011

Source: AIU (2016).

The New Education Policy: Commendable Steps Towards Internationalisation

An initiative of the Ministry of Human Resource Development, the New Education Policy merits note in the discussion on international student mobility.

According to the Policy, the key rationales for internationalisation are as follows: First, the presence of international students brings diversity; and, second, the lack of international students contributes to India's non-presence in the global rankings landscape. It was pointed out that the number of "foreign students" in India is only around 28,000 [the official document statement], and that no Indian institution

is close to the "15 per cent ceiling" (of "foreign students"), which is recommended by the regulatory authorities. From the preliminary report on the discussions, it would appear that, to the policy makers, the presence of international students is the most important aspect of internationalisation. The following points were covered as part of the consultative discussions:

- Indian institutions must improve their branding efforts in order to bring in international students. Dissemination of information (related to curriculum, medium of instruction, research etc.) amongst prospective international students is an important step.

- Strengthening and modernisation of infrastructure goes a long way in attracting and retaining international students.

- Matters related to visa, registration and extension at FRO, and "tax regime" must be made more user-friendly.

- Curricula and goals related to learning-outcomes must be enhanced such that they have greater international appeal.

- Indian institutions must target "fast-growing" economies in the SAARC region, Central Asia, and Africa as catchment area.

- Many international students come to India because of the appeal of the Indian culture. Therefore, curriculum must be revised such that it better caters to this supportive factor.

- Centers of excellence must be developed in high-performing institutions to attract international students and faculty members.

- More funds must be allocated to institutions as incentive to attract international talent.

- Many international students find it difficult to cope with the level of rigour that Indian curriculum sometimes requires. Foundation and English language courses can resolve this challenge and improve student success.

- Formalities and protocols related to entry of international faculty members and researchers must be made more conducive. Similarly, the processes related to organisation of international conferences must be made more lenient and streamlined.

- The consultations also raised the point that policy-level interventions are necessary to facilitate "mutual degree recognition". A suggestion was made to the effect that a viable approach in this regard would be one where the accreditation of joint or dual degrees in Indian institutions is recognised. This would benefit students at both the sides.

- The discussions included suggestion that a gradual transition from "years-based" to "credit-based" system would be helpful. It was also suggested that the range and norm of "credit-based" system must be specified in order to bring more uniformity.

- Internationalisation must be encouraged as a two-way process, where both international and Indian institutions cross borders and engage in exchange of information and skills.

- Many Indian institutions are not oriented to the global higher education landscape. A policy intervention must be made for encouraging institutions to consider being part of the competition for global rankings.

- Exchange programmes and research collaborations must be led by faculty members, not the participating institution.

The initial discussions on the New Education Policy bring internationalisation into the heart of the discussions on the higher education system. The above-mentioned points are incisive and comprehensive. It bodes well for the Policy that the finer points related to implementation have not been left to chance.

Recommendations and Conclusion

In India, international students comprise only 0.6 per cent (AIU, 2016) of the total number of students in the Indian higher education system.

The corresponding figure is 1.0 per cent for China, 3.7 per cent for US, 19.0 per cent for UK, and 21.4 for Australia.

In the present-day globalised world, higher education is an article of cross-border trade. This implies that it has as much of a propensity to be influenced by market forces and the vagaries of political establishments as do more tangible tradable commodities. The factors that influence mobility are a combination of variables, which can be altered, even if partially, by adequate policy measures.

Whereas the undertaking of bringing in internationalisation in a higher education system within a limited timeframe and fixed set of resources can be challenging, a pointed objective of increasing inbound mobility can be achieved more readily. Indeed, there are classifiable ways to increase the number of international students in a targeted manner.

Agarwal (2011) cites three broad reasons why inbound mobility is likely to continue to increase in India. First, in most traditionally-leading host countries, international students already constitute a large enrolment share (Australia, 21 per cent; the United Kingdom, 15.8 per cent; and Sweden, 19 per cent). Further growth in these countries might not be sustainable. Second, there has been a steep increase in tuition fees in the traditionally-leading "host" countries: Over the past 25 years, average college tuition fees have been raised by 440 per cent in the United States. As a result, students from low-income backgrounds are likely to look for more affordable alternatives, such as India. Finally, study abroad programmes and other short-duration courses in "non-traditional destinations" are showing evidence of growing popularity for students from developed countries.

It has been pointed out that a tactical failure in respect of the approach to improving inbound mobility has been that Indian educationists have focussed inordinately on degree programmes. This has not served non-degree programmes well. In view of the case that short-term certificate programmes are the mainstay of many sub-groups

of inbound international students in India, these programmes must be brought to benefit from policy considerations. The author suggests that schemes must be devised to preferentially promote programmes in the English language and computer applications; study abroad programmes and Study in India programmes must be encouraged favourably as well.

It is unfortunate that, in the paper on "National Priorities" (submitted to the International Education Summit 2012 by the Government of India), international student mobility was not included as a government priority (Powar, 2015, pp. 207-208). This has proved to be a major disincentive in respect of the efforts to improve inflow of international students into India.

As stated previously, the Ministry of External Affairs, the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, the Ministry of Commerce, and the Ministry of Human Resource Development must be brought to work collaboratively in the domain of internationalisation. Adequate planning and execution of policy on internationalisation necessitates a scenario where these Government bodies work complementarily and not insularly. There are a number of policy matters that cut across the lines that divide ministerial functions; therefore, all of these departments must be brought to bear their share of stake and investment in internationalisation. Similarly, the UGC and the AICTE must be made to participate in the coordination and facilitation of initiatives on internationalisation—the case of collection and dissemination of data related to international students presents as a demonstrative example of the urgent need to achieve shared participation in internationalisation.

The definition of international student in India is due a revision, as stated earlier in the note. A more comprehensive definition will not only serve well the cause of internationalisation, but will also be more accurate and more in line with contemporary trends in global mobility.

The Indian Government must identify institutions at the central and state level that show evidence of the potential to draw in international

students. Through preferential apportionment of financial incentives and policy inducements, these institutions must be prepped and primed to initiate projects to recruit and retain international students. The nature of international student mobility is as yet elitist in nature, not only in India but all across the world. International students typically home in on select institutions, inordinately guided, as they are, by factors related to "reputation" such as alumni track records. It is no easy task to make global mobility a level playing field; therefore, we must work with this limitation and not around it, at least for the time being. The scarcity of funds impels us to be selective and discriminating as we make funding decisions related to internationalisation.

It is important that the institutions that receive preferential encouragement be outfitted with an "international office," headed by a director. This division must not be reduced to an office that only manages admissions for international students, the kind observed in many Indian institutions; rather, it must be an integral participant in all institutional processes, even those that do not have a direct bearing on internationalisation.

Observational evidence demonstrates that accommodation-related challenges significantly diminish the level of student satisfaction amongst international students. The fact of living in a foreign country brings a plethora of problems, and accommodation- related issues further compound them. To remedy this, Indian institutions must work to assist international students with residential services, including hostel facility.

Further, Indian institutions must make available to international students more programmes and courses in vocational, skill-oriented, and "applied" disciplines. It would be very helpful to the students if the selection of these programmes is in keeping with the requirements of the human capital base in the "source" countries. This will ensure that these graduates will prove to be successful "knowledge workers" upon their return.

The Indian Government must plan more (and also increase participation in the existing ones) higher education "fairs" and trade-exhibitions to showcase Indian institutions for the purpose of increasing recruitment of international students.

Another important way to increase international enrolment is to increase the quota of international students in selectively identified institutions to a figure greater that 15 per cent. This, along with increase in scholarships for international students, will certainly prove to be a persuasive invitation.

The Indian Government must "groom" metropolitan regions that show potential for advancement into centers of excellence in international education. Many of these regions such as Pune, Bengaluru, and Hyderabad have evolved in an osmotic fashion, in their own time and through their own natural course. Therefore, it is reasonable to believe that their educational eco-systems will be able to bring reformative action to fruition and sustain long-term growth of internationalisation. The institutions in these cities are part of a positive feedback mechanism, which is composed of knowledge and innovation networks. The cosmopolitan culture of these cities is also an important socio-cultural determinant of the success of initiatives related to internationalisation.

At the level of the Central government, there is a compelling need to streamline the processes related to securing the visa, foreign travel protocols, and registration formalities. For this to materialise, the Indian Government must collaborate with foreign embassies and aim for a close-knitted and more harmonious inter-play between the Ministry of Human Resource Development, the Ministry of External Affairs, the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, the UGC, the AIU, the higher education institutions, and the law and order officials.

It is suggested that the Ministry of Commerce and Industry must be brought into sphere of activities pertaining to internationalisation of higher education. International students contribute to the economy by paying tuition fees and helping to generate ancillary businesses around

their institution. It is relatable that the Indian tourism industry also stands to benefit from international students.

Enhancement with respect to the following miscalleneous issues is also relevant at the institutional level:

- Infrastructural resources
- Student-friendly administrative services
- Centralised on-line admission processes
- Reserved seats for international students[4]
- Waiver of or cut back on tuition fees
- Foundation courses for the English language and computer applications
- Tutorials to familiarise with the teaching-learning processes in Indian institution

International students go a long way in shaping the "brand stature" of a country—its people, economy, and resources. This imprint, in turn, influences the country's "soft power" and the mark the country makes on the global knowledge and innovation networks. The Indian Government must undertake initiatives to improve inbound international mobility to continue on the ascendant path of scaling the global value chains. The Government must ascertain that the policies related to the development of the human resource are "internationalisation-informed" and aligned with the orientation of the institutions and processes that characterise the global higher education landscape.

Endnotes

[1] The UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) defines international students as "students who have crossed a national border to study, or are enrolled in a distance learning programme abroad. These students are not residents or citizens of the country where they study. Internationally mobile students are a sub-group of "foreign students," a category that includes those who have permanent residency in the host country" (UNESCO, n.d.).

2

Cross border higher education is defined as "institutionalisation of the provision of higher education across national boundaries" (Powar, 2012).

3

According to Project Atlas, IIE, in the year 2010-11, the annual revenue generated in the following five countries through international students is as follows: US (20 billion US dollars), Ireland (900 million Euros), Australia (18.5 billion Australian dollars), and Canada (5.5 billion Canadian dollars) (Powar, 2015, p. 51). In the case of India, the figures vary considerably, indicating that there is no one agency in charge of collecting and analysing these numbers. Perhaps, these are merely estimates. Powar (2015, p. 52) cautiously estimates that inbound international students spend approximately US$ 150 million in India [year not specified].

4

As stated previously, as many as 95 per cent of international students in India are from low and lower middle income countries, and not many of them are aided by scholarships.

References

AISHE. 2015. *All India Survey on Higher Education.* Retrieved from http://aishe. nic.in/aishe/reports

AIU. 2016. *Internationalisation of Higher Education in India: Annual Survey of International Students in India 2013-14.* Association of Indian Universities, New Delhi.

CII and AIU. 2014. *Trends in Internationalization of Higher Education in India.* Confederation of Indian Industry and Association of Indian Universities (AIU).

Choudaha, R., L. Chang, and Y. Kono. 2013. *International student mobility trends 2013: Towards responsive recruitment strategies.* New York, NY: World Education Services.Retrieved from http://www.wes.org/RAS

Dongaonkar, D. and U.R. Negi. 2009. *International Students in Indian Universities 2007- 08.* Association of Indian Universities, New Delhi.

MHRD. 2014. *Educational Statistics at a Glance.* Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Government of India, New Delhi. Retrieved from: http:// mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/statistics/EAG2014.pdf

Nye, J. 2004. "Soft Power and Higher Education" in *The Internet and the University: Forum 2004.* A joint publication of the Forum for the Future of Higher Education and EDUCAUSE.

Powar, K.B. 2002. *Indian Higher Education: A Conglomerate of Concepts, Facts and Practices.* New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company

Powar, K.B. 2003. *Internationalisation of Higher Education: Focus on India.* New Delhi: Amity Press.

Powar, K. B. 2012. Expanding domains in Indian higher education. New Delhi, India: Association of Indian Universities Publications.

Powar, K.B. 2013. Understanding Internationalization of Higher Education. D. Y. Patil Vidyapeeth, Pune.

Powar, K. B. 2015. "Changing landscape of International Higher Education: An Indian Perspective." D. Y. Patil Vidyapeeth, Pune, India.

Powar, K.B. (n.d.) Globalization and open door policies.

Snehi, N. 2013. "Student Mobility at Tertiary Level in India: Status, Prospects and Challenges." *NUEPA Occasional Paper 44*. National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA), New Delhi.

UNESCO. 2011. UNESCO Statistics on Education. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Paris. Available at: http://stats.us.unesco.org/unesco/Reports Foldersaspx

Forum for Indian Development Cooperation

The Forum for Indian Development Cooperation (FIDC) is a platform launched to explore various facets of Indian development cooperation policy with its partner countries. The objective is to encourage debate and analytical research on all the broad constituents of India's development partnership spectrum in order to bolster policy making process in this field of critical importance. Thrust of the forum would be to substantially contribute in facilitating an informed debate on policy framework of India and other developing countries.

The FIDC would also try to follow broad trends in South-South cooperation and analyse contributions and impact of Indian policies. The Forum will establish dialogue with the relevant government agencies and academia with a focus on South-South cooperation. The FIDC would also establish linkages and dialogue with international agencies, experts from the partner countries and advanced countries with a view to meet its comprehensive multi-faceted objectives. The FIDC is housed in RIS, New Delhi.

Strengthening Indian development cooperation policy towards promoting greater South-South cooperation

RIS
Research and Information System
for Developing Countries
विकासशील देशों की अनुसंधान एवं सूचना प्रणाली

FIDC
FORUM FOR
INDIAN DEVELOPMENT
COOPERATION
भारतीय विकास सहयोग मंच