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# Global Education : Challenges in India

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## ABSTRACT

*Globalization has a wide ranging potential to influence all sectors of development. Besides its impact on the pace and pattern of economic development, it has also casts its shadow on the system of education. A global education is one that provides knowledge and understanding of culture, language, geography and global perspectives to understand the world through the eyes of others and teaches them how their actions can affect, and be affected by people throughout the world. With over 200 of the 'Fortune 500' companies recruiting from campuses regularly, the government now plans to establish **India** as a brand in the higher education sector and grab the attention of global education community" Under these circumstances, **India** offers a friendly environment, cultural diversity and best value for money option to students from SARRC, Middle East and South East Asia According to statistics while **India** has a potential to afford about 50,000 foreign students in next couple of years, presently only about 10,000 are studying in **India**. Officials say while students from Nepal, Bhutan and Middle East have been regular feature in Indian Universities, efforts are to raise profile of Indian education system in countries like China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Mauritius, Thailand, Ethiopia, Kenya and other African countries . India is planning to increase the number of target countries from last year's eight to 24 this year. Therefore this paper will highlight the **Marketing strategies adopted by India** and Indian Institutes in building the new learning environment that enables all students, both domestic and international, to understand the world through the eyes of others and teaches them how their actions can affect, and be affected by people throughout the world. Thus in a bid to tap the country's potential as a global education destination.*

**Keywords:** *Globalization, education in India, marketing strategies*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Over 80 percent of students said it was very or somewhat important that colleges and universities offer opportunities to interact with students from other countries. Almost three out of four students said that they believe it is important that their college offer courses on international topics. Over 70 percent of respondents said it is important that their college offer study abroad programs. Almost nine in ten students

said they were interested in gaining exposure to another culture. Just over 60 percent said they were interested in international education to acquire career-related experiences.

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Global education, as a distinct construct from globalization, does what higher education has traditionally aimed to do: extend students' awareness of the world in which they live by opening them to the diverse heritage of human thought, action, and creativity. Global education places particular emphasis on the changes in communication and relationships among people throughout the world, highlighting such issues as human conflict, economic systems, human rights and social justice, human commonality and diversity, literatures and cultures, and the impact of the technological revolution. While it continues to depend on the traditional branches of specialist knowledge, global education seeks to weaken the boundaries between disciplines and encourages emphasis on what interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary studies can bring to the understanding and solution of human problems. Global education also implies, and should teach our students, that not everyone around the world in fact views global education with indifference – some may see it as a vehicle for promotion of globalization, which might itself be seen as the West's effort to destabilize fragile balances in world economic and political systems.

At a time, such as this, when we feel increasingly and often indiscriminately awash with information, and when we sense a decentralization of the traditional forms of political and intellectual authority, global education places a premium on the ability to think critically and ethically. The ability to effectively access, interpret, evaluate and apply information is essential for facing a constantly changing work environment, for continuing self-education, and for participation as an ethical and responsible member of a global society. A global education can also be an antidote to the sadly universal human tendency to lose track of the experiences of others as seen through their eyes.

In trying to elucidate the concepts of globalization and global education, what needs to be recognized is that juxtaposing them is, to some extent, misguided. Globalization is an inter-national and intra-national force, while global education is a teaching/learning paradigm. Thus, their areas of focus are in different domains. Yet global education to many around the world merely invokes the notion of globalization with all its potentially American-centric and negative attributions. Thus, one of the biggest challenges in

realizing the distinction is that, unlike with global education, globalization is an inherently anxiety-provoking term. While it frames the world in communal terms, it also, and more explosively, threatens many with a loss of individuality.

Globalization impacts on all conceivable facets of life, including education. Rapid developments in technology and communication are forcing changes within educational systems across the world as ideas, values and knowledge, vital to education, cross nation states and boundaries. There would be a new 'social universe' (phrase used by Postone, 1996) in the days to come.

"Education these days contributes to a great extent to any country's foreign exchange earnings. For instance, in the US, education and training sector ranks fifth in export of services. Given the crossroads at which the Indian education sector stands today, there is an immense potential to bring international student traffic to India", quoted by A K Motwani, Director (Technical), Educational Consultants India Limited (Ed.CIL), a nodal agency for placement of international students in Indian institutions.

Estimates show that almost 1.8 million students are studying outside their home country worldwide and important factors considered by students looking for international education options are cost, proximity and overlap with their cultural values.

"Under these circumstances, India offers a friendly environment, cultural diversity and best value for money option to students from SARRC, Middle East and South East Asia", quoted by Mr. Motwani.

## **2. INDIA - THE PULL FACTOR**

India provides an open culture; it's also a secular country thus making it very easy for foreign students to adjust to the Indian lifestyle and in turn the country. India has perhaps one of the most diverse culture, at the same time maintaining harmony and peace. It becomes very interesting for the foreign students to blend themselves in this mould, and also makes them feel at home. Wide variety of food available in India and Pune caters to the students. Taste buds at affordable prices.

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India is blessed with rich cultural heritage & a number of religions coexist peacefully. Its culture preaches of peace, love, harmony, spiritual progress. India has about 16% of global population and that it is world's largest democratic country. India has glorious history, traditions that are unique. It precedes an ancient civilization gifted with most ancient sources of knowledge, "The Vedic Granths" are now being studied by various western universities opening realms of knowledge, which our learned ancestors have discovered and preserved. It has given the world a number of eminent spiritual leaders such as "Swami Vivekananda", "Swami Ramakrishna Paramhansa" who taught the world the way to lead fruitful life and attain purity of soul. To ascertain the goal of life through a great epic "The Bhagwat Geeta". It boasts of a unique family system where marriages are considered as sacred, where respect for parents is a valued possession and their blessings as Gods greatest gift. A sound family base leads to an equally sound society of values. It has greatest advantages over the western societies. Such an environment provides a supporting surrounding for a peaceful living, opening up the individuals mind to a greater search of knowledge.

## 2.1 Global Recognition

Indian universities and institutes of higher education and research have made significant contribution in research and development in the areas ranging from biotechnology to ocean engineering.

In traditional subjects like arts and humanities, pure sciences, applied physics, chemistry, and mathematics, Indian universities and institutes of higher studies have been playing a leading role.

The country has also been active in the development of space technology, production and launching of indigenous satellites and development of peaceful nuclear energy. Besides, India is also recognized the world over for its information technology talent.

All these developments and initiatives have brought the country to the forefront as a technologically advanced nation. In fact, a large number of developing countries today look at India for training and guidance to further their development initiatives.

The courses as well as professionals trained in Indian educational institutions are recognized the world over - 200 of the Fortune 500 companies regularly participate in campus placements in Indian institutions.

*The real treasure of India is its intellectual capital. The real opportunity is its incredibly skilled work force. Raw talent is here like nowhere else in the world.*

*Jack Welch, Ex-CEO General Electric*

## 2.2 English medium

Medium of instruction is a very crucial factor in determining the quality of curriculum transaction and the level of achievement.

Every Indian university has English as the medium of instruction and most Indian universities consider a good knowledge of English as a pre-requisite to pursuing academic studies.

For the Humanities, Social sciences and Commerce courses, the medium of instruction is both English and regional languages but in case of professional courses, science and technical subjects, English is exclusively used for teaching. Postgraduate education is taught in English in most of the educational institutes.

For international students weak in English, most colleges and universities conduct special English language and communication courses.

India is the 3rd largest English speaking population in the world and hence it is a place where foreign nationals feel at home.

## 2.3 Moderate Fee and Cost of Living

The quality of Indian education is comparable to the best available anywhere in the world, while the costs are less and affordable.

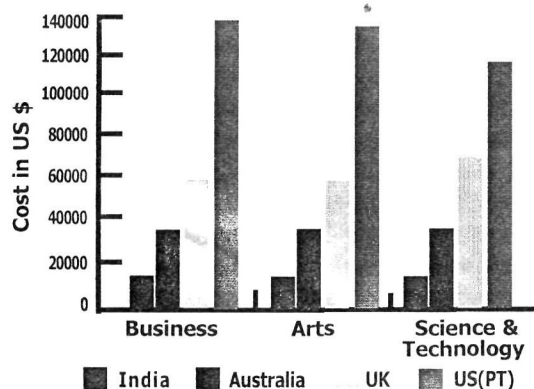
Provided below for your reference is a comparative matrix of education and living costs in India vis-à-vis Australia-US-UK

**Table 1. Comparative cost**

**Average Total Cost (US\$) including tuition fee and living cost for Graduate Students**

Country	Business Management	Arts Technology	Science
India	10,000 (3 years)	10,000 (3 years)	10,000 (3-4 years)
Australia	37,000 (3 years)	37,000 (3 years)	42,000 (3 years)
UK	56,000 (3 years)	57,000 (3 years)	66,000 (3 years)
US public	80,000 (4 years)	80,000 (4 years)	80,000 (4 years)
US private	137,000 (4 years)	137,000 (4 years)	102,000 (3 years)

**Figure 1**



**2.4 Quality**

Quality is the benchmark for development of infrastructure, curriculum, human resources and research and the establishment of centres of excellence, interdisciplinary and inter-institutional centres.

The National Policy on Education was framed by the Government of India in the early 1980s to ensure the formation of standardized guidelines for the enforcement of quality in higher education.

It is mandatory for all the Indian Institutions to be recognized by the appropriate National Level statutory bodies established by the Government of India for compliance to quality standards.

**2.4.1 Some of the statutory bodies which are constituted for recognition are:**

- All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE)
- University Grants Commission (UGC)
- Medical Council of India (MCI)
- Dental Council of India (DCI)
- Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR)

In addition, quality of education is assured through National Board of Accreditation (NBA) for technical education and National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) for higher education.

**2.5 Curriculum**

The Indian education system promotes a 10+2+3 structure of curriculum. The National standards of uniform curriculum are comparable to international standards. To ensure uniformity of curriculum, the National Policy on Education (1986) emphatically stressed on the importance of basic parameters of equity and excellence. Well thought out courses of study, detailed curricular outlines, identification of learning outcomes, variety of instructional materials both audio and visual and improved evaluation tools have been developed to supplement the delivery of the given curricula.

**2.6 Faculty**

National Policy on Education - 1986 has stipulated the role of a teacher, which includes instruction, curriculum development, instructional material development, research and innovation and testing and consultancy services.

A lot of measures have been taken up by the Indian Government to ensure that the teachers are trained aptly to perform their given role adequately.

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As an initiative to bridge the gap between curriculum and syllabus development and education delivery, the policy stipulates the involvement of teachers in developing courseware.

## 2.7 Infrastructure

Optimum infrastructure in terms of research labs, equipments and lecture theatres are very important for effective delivery. The universities and colleges are given adequate grants every year to ensure that they are able to maintain and upgrade their infrastructure. The policy advises on certain minimum standards which every Institute should maintain Association with Industry.

The educational philosophy that has come to prevail both in India and in the developed world is that the interaction of institute with industry at every level is very important. Keeping this in mind, the Indian Government has taken measurable steps to promote the association of industries with institutes.

In line with this AICTE (All India Council for Technical Education) has been set up Board Of Industry-Institute-Interaction (BOII)

The following initiatives have been introduced as a part of Industry-Institute Interaction:

1. Industry-Institute Partnership Cell
2. Mobilization of Industrial Personnel
3. Seminars/Workshops
4. Sponsored PG Courses
5. INAE-AICTE Visiting professorship
6. Entrepreneurship and management development

## 2.8 Workshops and Seminars

To give a more practical perspective to the classroom training, Workshops and seminars have been integrated with the curriculums of a number of professional courses. These workshops ensure that the students get an opportunity to demonstrate their skills practically, and get a hands-on experience. Quality is thus an important criterion in all initiatives. The formulation of policies and strategies is an extensive exercise involving consultations between various expert institutions, non-governmental agencies, industries, teacher unions, students and the community at large,

including the mass media. The modalities include seminars, conferences, informal discussions, research studies and public debate. From time to time, committees comprising a cross-section of educationists are asked to examine and review the prevailing standards strategies is an extensive exercise involving consultations between various expert institutions, non-governmental agencies, industries, teacher unions, students and the community at large, including the mass media. The modalities include seminars, conferences, informal discussions, research studies and public debate. From time to time, committees comprising a cross-section of educationists are asked to examine and review the prevailing standards.

## 3. THE INDIAN EXPERIENCE

Studying and living in India is a special experience. India is a country rich in cultural heritage, having multi religious society. A cosmopolitan environment and easy acceptance of all cultures and religions, makes India a friendly nation.

Students love and enjoy their stay in India. Besides the high standard of education, the students get an ample opportunity to know the cultures and traditions of India, and revel in the scenic beauty of the country.

### 3.1 World Center for Education

India has been a global destination for education for a long time. A large number of students come to India from countries like Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Ethiopia, Fiji, France, Germany, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mauritius, Myanmar, Nepal, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Surinam, Syria, Thailand, UK, US, Vietnam and Zimbabwe etc for their higher studies. They look at the Indian education system with thrust and belief.

India is today recognized as a world centre for education. Indian entrepreneurs are making a through out the world. Their ideas, technical knowledge and entrepreneurship have yielded unprecedented growth in income, employment and wealth. The credit goes to the sound and practical educational foundation they have received in India.

#### 4. INDIA: THE DESTINATION FOR FOREIGN STUDENTS

Sixty years after independence, India boasts of 310 universities and 16,000 colleges offering the widest spectrum of courses. Its centres of higher learning like the Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) and the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) are global brand.names.

Adding to the quality of education is the fact that English is the generally accepted mode of teaching and living standards are economical - attracting thousands of students from at least 100 countries.

A large number of students come to India from countries like Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Ethiopia, Fiji, Iran, Iraq, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Ghana, Lebanon, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mauritius, Myanmar, Nepal, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Syria and even the US.

India, which has become a coveted destination amongst global managers for a professional stint, is regaining its long-lost status as a seat of learning. The country is drawing students from across the world who wants to be part of the India story.

The number of foreign students enrolled in various Indian institutions has seen over three-fold rise, up from 6,988 in 2000 to 25,947 in 2006, according to figures available with Association of Indian Universities (AIU).

Interestingly, the biggest jump in their number has come from the students from the country that boasts to be the Mecca of modern education - US. There's been a whopping 53% increase in the number of students from the US in 2006 itself, according to a report by Institute of International Educations, Open Doors.

India is now the 20th leading destination for American students, up 53 per cent this year alone to 1,767, the largest increase after Argentina.

The United Kingdom tops the list with more than 32,000 American admissions, followed by Italy, Spain, France, Australia, Mexico and Germany. China is at 7th place with 6,389 admissions, up 35 per cent

over 2005.

Allan Goodman, President and CEO of the Institute of International Education, which produces the Open Doors report, notes that US students are increasingly studying in countries such as China and India believing it will provide "useful language and cultural skills for their future careers."

Now, with young US professionals seeking economic and job opportunities in India along with increasing academic interest from American students, India might be seeing and hearing more of American youth. Several business schools have been putting India on its agenda in recent months.

**Table 2**

Year	#of Students from India in US	% of total Foreign student in US	# of US study Abroad student going to India
2003/04	79,736	13.9%	n/a
2002/03	74,603	12.7%	703 (up12.1%)
2001/02	66,836	11.5%	627
2000/01	54,664	9.9%	750
1999/00	42,337	8.2%	811
1998/99	37,482	7.6%	707
1997/98	33,818	7.0%	684
1996/97	30,641	6.7%	601
1995/96	31,743	7.0%	470
1994/95	33,537	7.4%	409
1993/94	34,796	7.7%	382

Source : Data selected on Nov. 10 2004, open door: Report on International education exchange.

Note: Study abroad figures in the Open Doors report reflect credit given by U.S. campuses in the survey year to their students who studied abroad in the academic year just completed, including the summer term, and therefore the report shows study abroad activity for the prior academic year.

Unlike a few years back, these students are not just opting for traditionally popular courses on language and culture, but are increasingly weering towards technology, management, life sciences to name a few.

After all, India's knowledge economy has abundant to offer in those subjects. The biggest draw for the foreign students is the growing attention India is getting in the world economy. And high

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standards in undergraduate courses, especially in information technology.

Nevertheless, we do have students at the post graduate level from the foreign countries and the number is likely to rise further." The institute had 29 foreign students studying in the institution in 2000 which has now gone up to 35.

The story is pretty much the same for degree courses too, especially at those universities that are globally recognized. "We have many students coming for studies in Delhi University. Apart from language courses, they are also evincing interest in IT, management, law and others," says Tanuja Agarwala, deputy dean-foreign students, at DU. "There has been an influx of Korean and Chinese students to take up commerce and political science and economics in the recent years. Besides, a tag of Delhi University also helps a lot when they want to take up jobs in their home countries."

IIMs are seeing increasing applications for post-graduate and executive programmes. Institutes report an approximate rise of close to 80% in application for such courses, up from around 250 last year to 422 this year. "Besides the brand name, there is an absolute cost advantage in opting for such courses here," says Arvind Sahay, professor, IIM-Ahmedabad. "Not only do you get quality professional education, but at a much lower fee compared to other developed countries."

Though the UGC does not have proper statistics on how many students come to study in India, the number is estimated to be around 20,000 at present.

The number is estimated to increase to 50,000 students in the next two years. Pune and Bangalore are said to be favorite destinations for international students.

"We can say that inflow of foreign students in India has almost doubled in the last five years. Pune itself has 10,000 international students studying here. Also, five years ago, Symbiosis International University, Pune had students from around 30 countries. We now have students from 63 different destinations." adds Yeravdekar.

India attracts students in big numbers from the SAARC, West Asia, African and South East Asian countries.

Most of these students come to India to pursue higher studies in business management and humanities. Engineering and bio-technology also remains a hot favorite with them. However, with this initiative, the UGC plans to attract students from Europe and the US too, which incidentally, does not send many students to India.

Bangalore is attracting a large number of foreign students. After New Delhi and Pune, Bangalore has the highest number of foreign students — 1,786 — studying graduate and postgraduate courses in colleges affiliated to Bangalore University this academic year. Fifty-eight students were admitted to postgraduate courses in the university, as quoted by Vice-Chancellor, M.S. Thimmappa.

Several factors are responsible for the rise in the number of foreign students coming to the city. Meritorious students get admission to graduate and postgraduate courses under different scholarships. Every year scholarships are offered to international students according to the terms and conditions of the cultural exchange programme signed between India and other countries for studying, training and research in various fields.

India has cultural exchange programmes with nearly 70 Asian, African, and Latin American countries in the field of higher education. Scholarships are awarded many schemes, according to officials at the ICCR office here.

A large number of foreign students are self-financed while some get scholarships. The number of scholarship students coming to the city increased from 40 in 1998 to 150 in 2001. As many as 135 students were admitted to graduate and postgraduate courses in 2003 under scholarship. As many as 80,180 foreign students came to Bangalore between 1999 and 2002.

A majority of the foreign students come here to study MBA, MCA and biotechnology courses. The Government gives a monthly scholarship of Rs. 5,500 for students studying graduate and postgraduate courses (including Rs. 2,500 rent) and Rs. 6,500 for

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PhD scholars. The annual contingency grant is Rs. 3,000, Rs. 4,500, and Rs. 7,000 for graduate, postgraduate and PhD, students, respectively. The ICCR pays tuition fees charged by the universities and colleges. The letters of scholarship are sent to the respective governments through Indian diplomatic missions abroad.

Earlier, only students from SAARC countries came to India. With the increase in number of scholarships, now students from Fiji, Senegal, Sudan, South Africa, Sweden, Morocco and Thailand have joined courses here.

All international students wanting to come to India for their higher education need to obtain a valid students visa. For this, they must visit the Indian Mission in their respective countries.

"By having a qualified educational attaché at the Indian Mission, we can ensure that the students are guided with the right information and are sure about the university and course they are choosing. Also, the Indian mission would be able to sift out the genuine students from those who want an easy access to India under the guise of education. Though Indian Missions in the US and the UK already have a first secretary/education counselor who handles the portfolio of education, we need to provide this person with the necessary inputs and information (from the Indian Universities) to offer appropriate counselling," quoted by Mr. Yeravdekar

What is to be noted is that the interest generated is not the result of any concerted effort by individual institutions. Most Indian institutes haven't done much by way of brand promotion, to draw the crowd unlike what most reputed institutes in the West do.

So, it's a natural outcome of the recent development in India and its increasing clout in the world economy. Analysts believe the numbers of foreign student registrations can go up manifold if Indian educational institutions become proactive, both in terms of improving their infrastructure and market themselves well.

##### 5. PROMOTING INDIAN EDUCATION ABROAD : THE MARKETING STRATEGIES.

According to statistics while India has a potential to afford about 50,000 foreign students in next couple of years, presently only about 10,000 are studying in India.

With over 200 of the 'Fortune 500' companies recruiting from campuses regularly, the government now plans to establish India as a brand in the higher education sector and grab the attention of global education community.

The education sector over the years has become sizable and is a growing business across the globe. Thus in a bid to tap the country's potential as a global education destination, a series of initiatives have been launched by the government to attract more and more international students to Indian public and private institutions.

Officials say while students from Nepal, Bhutan and Middle East have been regular feature in Indian Universities, efforts are to raise profile of Indian education system in countries like China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Mauritius, Thailand, Ethiopia, Kenya and other African countries. India is planning to increase the number of target countries from last year's eight to 24 this year.

IF Britain, Ireland, Australia and the US are coming in India to woo students to their educational institutions overseas, India is also doing the same in other countries.

Educational Consultants India Ltd (Ed.CIL), a Government of India enterprise, is targeting revenue of \$5 million in 2004-05 by promoting Indian education overseas.

Ed. CIC has been visiting countries - China, Malaysia, the UAE, Oman, Bahrain and Kuwait - and has brought in 330 students from these countries. In May and June this year, company officials will be visiting Mauritius, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Thailand and Yemen to fulfill their target for the year.

The SAARC countries and African nations are also part of the areas identified as potential sources student.



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Ed. CIL, which has worked largely in the area of education-related project reports and education research, is upbeat about its aggressive marketing of the India brand in higher education this year.

The institutions that fall under the CIL recruitment ambit are primarily those that come under the Government-created Direct Admission of Students Abroad (DASA) scheme. Direct Admission of Students Abroad (DASA) scheme has been launched wherein 15 per cent of seats have been Reserved in premier technical institutions such as NITs (formerly Regional Engineering colleges) and other centrally funded institutions for foreign national / People of India Origin / Non-Resident Indians.

Included in these are the centrally funded universities and premier technical institutions such as the National Institutes of Technology (formerly Regional Engineering Colleges).

As quoted by Mr. Ajit Kumar Motwani, Director (Technical), Ed.CIL. Last year, only 57 DASA seats were filled, this year we have already filled 330. Ed. CIL is investing close to Rs 2 crore on promoting Indian education this year.

A main concern among foreign students is the standard of the courses that are being offered in our country. For this, National Board of Accreditation (NBA) has been established to assure world class education.

Also an Rs 1500 crore Technical Education Quality Improvement Programme (TEQIP) has been started to bring up about 150 well performing engineering colleges in the country to world Class standards.

While there is need to raise the profile of Indian education abroad and attract more students to India, there is also need for more quality educational institutions in India to sign MoUs to participate in the process

As quoted by Mr. Motwani "To make the campaign effective an aggressive marketing and promotional plan has been chalked out. Not just advertisements but news insertions and PR activities would also be undertaken in these countries and also

taking up the issue of recognition of Indian degrees in countries like Malaysia.

## **5.2 UGC-initiated marketing programme, aimed at wooing more foreign students to the country.**

The committee, while deciding upon affiliated colleges willing to attract foreign students, will identify potential courses and submit it to the international centre. ....will publish a detailed information brochure containing all details of individual colleges for ready reference to the interested students from abroad.

It is decided to translate the information on the university web-page into Arabic and Persian languages and "publicize the rules and regulations regarding admissions for foreign students" and circulate it to all the colleges.

The advisory committee, which will meet once every quarter, has also been entrusted with the responsibility to chalk out a detailed programme to reach out to more number of foreign students.

With Indian students occupying pride of place among the student populations in US, UK, Australia, and even Canada, India has finally come round to the view that it is time to return the compliment.

Stung by media reports that India, the new knowledge power and open society actually keeps out international researchers and students, the government has taken significant steps to liberalize the visa regime for international students.

Foreign minister Pranab Mukherjee told Parliament that the government had set in place a new visa regime that would encourage students from other countries to pursue their studies in India.

The most important provision for students is that henceforth they will not need that piece of paper — a "No Objection Certificate" — from the HRD ministry here.

The new provision will significantly help international students. However, approval from the home ministry will still be required.

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Nevertheless there would be no restriction on the number of courses that an international student can study in India.

### **5.3 Indian embassies abroad will soon start promoting India as an education hub.**

\* The University Grants Commission's PIHEAD (Promotion of Indian Higher Education Abroad) committee is in talks with the Ministry of External Affairs and Home Affairs to provide Indian embassies with professionals called 'Education Attachés'

All said and done, while it may still take some time for returns to come, officials hope to leverage on high quality education at affordable cost proposition to further accelerate the process of creation of world class and modern infrastructure in the tertiary education sector in the country. The Mysore University, for instance, offers an MBA degree for Rs.150, 000 (approx \$3,750) as against \$12,000 to \$15,000 in Europe, Australia or in the US.

\* Educational Attachés will be designated personnel at the Indian High Commissions who will give information about Indian universities and courses to foreign students who wish to pursue higher studies in India.

\* "Most foreign nations have a dedicated agency and website for the purpose of promoting education offered in their country. India would greatly benefit by devising a specific strategy on how to promote Indian education abroad. This would mean improving the standards of education imparted, quality of the students' experience, marketing efforts, post graduation employment opportunities, information centres/ knowledge resources in the students' home countries etc as quoted by Dr Vidya Yeravdekar, head, PIHEAD committee and Joint Director, Symbiosis International University.

About the response of international students towards India, officials say that engineering and other technical courses like bio-technology and bio-informatics have been the most popular field among foreign students. However, during personalized visits to different countries prospective students have also expressed keen interest in courses related to ayurveda, yoga and even fine arts.

Vice president for international initiatives at the American Council on Education calls India "the next frontier" for American institutions, many of which have already set up base in China. "The pull factor is the interest of India and the opportunity that India now presents," she said. "The push is from American institutions saying, 'There's a world out there and we need to discover it. It'll make our grads more competitive.' It's part of their push to internationalize."

\* At the moment, however, instead of setting up satellite campuses as was done in China, Singapore or Qatar, most American institutions are opting to join hands with existing Indian institutions. Columbia Business School, for instance, started a student exchange program earlier this year with the Indian Institute of Management at Ahmedabad. The institutions teamed up to write case materials devised to teach American students about doing business in India

## **6. CONCLUSION**

India, one of the world's largest economies, has made enormous strides in its economic and social development during the past two decades. But India can do much more to leverage its strengths in today's knowledge-based global economy.

According to the National Knowledge Commission (NKC) 2006, "The country needs a massive expansion of opportunities for higher education, with 1500 universities nationwide, that would enable India to attain a gross enrolment ratio of at least 15 per cent by 2015. The proportion of our population, in the age group 18-24, that enters the world of higher education is around 7 per cent, which is only one-half the average for Asia. The opportunities for higher education, in terms of the number of places in universities, are simply not enough in relation to our needs.

What is more, the quality of higher education in most of our universities requires substantial improvement."

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India has about 350 universities. This number is simply not enough with reference to our needs in higher education, or in comparison with China which has authorized the creation of 1250 new universities in the last three years. Yet, some of our universities are much too large, for ensuring academic standards and providing good governance. We need to create more appropriately scaled and more nimble universities. The greatest challenge perhaps is arriving at an appropriate model that will be able to simultaneously address the questions of quality on one hand and provide access on the other. The NKC recommends that we need a much larger number of universities, say 1500 nationwide by 2015, and also smaller universities which are responsive to change and easier to manage.

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