

## Editorial



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The Internationalization of higher education is one of the significant development trends and is continuously increasing with growing globalization. It is no longer considered a goal in itself but as a means to enhance education quality. Internationalization is fast becoming a crucial agent of change in higher education, in the developed as well as in developing societies. Various efforts have been made to define Internationalization in higher education. Though there exist a diversity of views but a widely known definition of Internationalization is “the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education” (Knight, 2008)

The last decade has seen the institutions of higher education, giving prime importance to the Internationalization and putting in serious efforts in this area. The Internationalization of higher education has become one of the most important agendas in the last few years in the majority of institutions in higher education across the world. There have been few compelling factors, which significantly affected the higher education systems worldwide such as growth of a global knowledge economy, the immense broadening in the accessibility to higher education, regular reductions in government’s budget for higher education, the advancement in digital technologies, and various ways through which the world is connecting with each other. These factors have significantly affected the traditional roles of higher education institutions at local, national, and international levels. Functioning at an international higher education background brings a critical impact on the missions and plans for developing and implementing higher education institutions in the globalized society (Guri-Rosenblit, 2015). The employability readiness, skills, and competencies are top levers which propel to scale the value chain and optimize the capacity building of their human resource. (Yeravdekar, V. R., & Tiwari, G., 2014).

According to UNESCO’s position paper, Internationalization is interpreted as “one of the ways in which higher education is responding to the opportunities and challenges of globalization” (King, 2003).

There are several ways to attain competitiveness and performance in the institutions of higher education. The transfer and acquisition of knowledge, mobilization of talent

for global academic and research pursuits, curriculum enrichment of international standards are some of the benefits of the Internationalization of higher education (Jibeen, 2015). The international collaborations among institutions of higher education have expanded considerably during the last few years (Cohen, 2014, Wildavsky, 2012, Aacsb, 2011).

The Internationalization in higher education majorly understood and manifested as

- i. Knowledge transfer across the borders through books, journals or digital media
- ii. Mobility of students, faculty and administrative staff
- iii. International cooperation, academic collaboration and communication between the Universities and individual scholars.
- iv. Research collaborations and imparting international education (working on research projects involving scholars from different countries, teaching/ learning of international languages, philosophies, intercultural learning etc.)
- v. Internationalization at home (Creating opportunities for intentional learning through formal and informal experiences by introducing practices to promote Intercultural, International, and Global learning)
- vi. Developing Intercultural competence by organizing workshops, faculty development programs, International conferences, skill development programs etc.
- vii. Create opportunities and provide financial support to the faculty and students to participate in International events abroad

The majority of the Universities in India have international dimensions in their academics and research, academics, which are more ad hoc, fragmented, and implicit than explicit and comprehensive (De Wit, 2020). In the fast few years, Joint academic programs, student and faculty mobility, branding, Global and national rankings have been some of the major indicators of the Internationalization in universities and the institutions of higher education (Teichler, 2017).

While the transfer of knowledge across borders, traditionally the core element of internationality of higher education, it is student mobility, which has become the most referred indicator for Internationalization in higher education.

#### International student mobility

International mobilization of the students is one of the most important trend that higher education institutions are witnessing in the twenty-first century. More than three million students are presently mobile, crossed geographic, cultural, digital, and educational borders in the pursuit of higher education abroad. It has compelled the educationists to look at their mission, strategies and operational practices.

“International mobility of students not only contributes to the internationalization of education institutions but also impacts on the outlooks and subsequent careers and lifestyles of the students themselves” a study group reported (Li, 2007).

There are various factors, which affect the decision of the students to select the University abroad for his/her higher education. Some of the factors which affect student mobility are; lack of institutions of higher education imparting quality education, limited seats and choices of courses, persisting economic, political problems, social and health-related issues in the home country, ineligibility to get enrolled in State/national level institutions, lesser job prospects in the home country.

The most pressing concern of the students enrolling for higher education is employment and job prospects when it comes to exploring the options for higher education. There is a strong need to design programs, which prepare students future job market and equip them with 21st-century skills.

The mobility of the students also promotes entrepreneurship. Through the exchange of ideas and knowledge transfer solutions to common problems in the society can be derived and there can be business relations established to provide solutions to various issues.

## Some suggestions to improve Internationalization at home

### Student Mobility

- Employability is a significant factor in the selection of higher education options abroad. The inclusion of Skill development courses, the curriculum which is more in industry demand, updating of the curriculum as per industry needs, inclusion of courses like International Business, Communication skills, foreign language, Computer languages, Critical thinking will undoubtedly add value to the existing programs.
- Organizing Industry-specific programs, industry-sponsored programs, internships, training, workshops for the students, teaching by industry experts, the participation of industry experts in designing curriculum and organizing technical events, competitions
- As the educational objectives of International students are different from Indian students, and exclusively designed curriculum which includes the core engineering courses as well as courses on Vedic Maths, Yoga, Indian classical music, Indian philosophy, Indian cuisines, Ayurvedic medicine, Indian languages will definitely attract the international students
- Students can be offered the opportunity to earn Micro degrees on specifically designed programs during short mobility.
- With growing digitization in education, subscription-based learning across countries seems to be an idea worth promoting and implementing.
- International collaborations not only promote Internationalization in education through research and academics but also solves various global problems. The pressing issues that the world is facing today, such as global warming, water pollution, energy crisis, etc. require higher education, industries, and government organizations to come forward and initiate working towards seeking solutions.
- Establishing offshore campuses of the university and offers courses specifically addressing to the local needs to produce employment-ready graduates will not only promote mobility but also improve the standard of education leading to healthy competition to impart quality education.
- Students need to be provided with the experience of international education through online co-teaching.
- Effective use of information technology and tools to make the teaching-learning process interesting the attention span of the students.
- Collaborative research, sharing of new methodologies, data leads to the validation of new methods across the globe in research and avoids bias for new methods.
- Organizing educational tours, industry visits for the international students and Indian students giving them opportunities to learn more about Indian work ethics and culture.
- Identifying niche technical areas and developing short-long duration programs for international students such as Data Science, Machine Learning, Vedic mathematics, Nanotechnology etc.
- Freedom to select courses across all the programs offered by the university for the international students with compulsory inclusion of skill development programs in the curriculum.
- Providing comfortable air-conditioned accommodation with attached kitchenette for international students to cook the food of their choice.
- Few sessions on teaching local language and Hindi during the induction program to International students to make it easy for them to interact with local vendors for their daily needs.
- Our International student alumni should be encouraged to hold sessions in their home countries, share their experiences with aspiring students, and encourage them to choose India for their higher education abroad.
- Encouraging international students to hold sessions on their culture, language, cuisines, music and dance for Indian students.
- Mandatory participation of Indian students of the institute in specifically designed international programs such as Industrial visits, Internships abroad, Summer schools, and winter schools.

- Mandatory enrolment and completion of one course offered by reputed university abroad based on the curriculum.
- Compulsory Capstone project under Co-supervision with International faculty/Industry expert.
- Organizing events encouraging cross-cultural communication as industries need skilled human resources to work efficiently with multicultural teams in a variety of situations and lotions.
- Offering scholarships, improved international student services, pathway programs, degree recognition schemes to increase student mobility.
- Participation in International fairs visits to Universities to popularise the programs offered by Symbiosis to International students.
- With increased mobile subscriptions and digitization in education, the geographical boundaries are collapsing. There is a dire need to create online content of a high standard and offering students across the boundaries. Such programs may be joint academic programs, including online teaching and actual contact hours.

#### Mobility of faculty/Staff

- Encouraging faculty to participate in international conferences, seminars, workshops.
- Research collaborations with international faculty.
- Writing joint research proposals for grants and publish research papers and books in collaboration with international faculty.
- Visiting universities abroad on research & teaching assignments.
- Inviting professors from abroad to teach, research, conducting FDPs /seminars/talks under various government schemes such as GIAN, SPARC, DUO fellowship etc.
- Inviting international faculty to co-supervise Ph.D. programs.
- Seek inputs/feedback from International faculty to design new programs, developing curriculum.
- Creating forums for frequent interaction with faculty from abroad.
- Incentivizing/acknowledging the efforts of faculty/staff for their contribution in bringing in Internationalization at home through research/academics.

#### Enhancing International Student mobility

Most of the countries around the world are trying to attract international students considering the major contribution by international student mobility in the Internationalization of their educational system. . More and more institutions of higher education are coming forward to initiate academic collaborations with universities abroad and signing academic agreements to promote student and faculty mobility.

International students not only contribute towards increased revenue but also bring more diversity in the institutions of higher learning. The institutions need to ensure that their international students feel comfortable at home and look after well so that not only do they graduate successfully but also carry good memories with them and become the ambassadors of the institution. Minute attention is to be paid right from the induction of international students in the program until they graduate. Bridge courses, English-speaking programs, and other such programs help international students to adopt the new environment and culture quickly and align their skills and knowledge with local requirements.

It is also very essential that the curricula and teaching pedagogies should appeal to the global student market, enabling students to earn transferable or internationally recognized credentials. There is a strong need to understand instruction and assessment strategies for international students who might not be used to the local instructional and assessment methods. Though it is expected that international students will adapt to the local instructional and evaluation methods still there needs to be due consideration to be given to understand and anticipate the challenges and difficulties faced by international students.

Globalization is the fastest-growing phenomena the twenty-first century has witnessed. It brought along with it a dramatic transformation in the method of functioning of the institutions of Higher Education. Internationalization in higher education has become one of the prime agendas of the Universities and the institutions of higher education around the globe. The universities have realized their responsibility to equip their graduates not just with subject knowledge, but also with the required skills, ability to work in multinational, diverse environment and communicate effectively across cultures, techno perceptive and capable to handle ever-rising professional demands in this fast-changing globalized world. In this context, the institution of higher education is striving hard to develop its graduates with an international outlook and mindset and capable of functioning effectively. Internationalization in higher education can be brought in with a curriculum of international standards, the participation of students and faculty in international academic programs, International conferences, collaborative research, co-teaching of programs and offering exclusively designed programs, which will attract international students as having these students on campus have a direct impact on the Internationalization and cultural diversity of the institution.

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