

TOWARDS AN EDUCATED INDIA:

STUDENTS ON THE MOVE FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

In 2009, over 3.3 million students were pursuing higher education outside their country. If the projections are to be believed, by 2025, there will be nearly eight million students studying abroad, away from their homes. Why are students on the move? It is the result of internationalisation of higher education, opening doors to students who are crossing national borders to improve their career through

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that is offered in developed countries, and the experience of staying (and very often working) abroad definitely gives a value added advantage to these students. This may answer the question as to why students go abroad to study, but there is another dimension to this outflow.

They show the same rationale. Under the General Agreement on Trade and Services (GATS), this trade in providing education services is legitimised. An enormous market for education has been opened. It is only in a country like India that we still proclaim that education is a social good

is indeed too much! Some are asking the Government that if the goddess of wealth Lakshmi could be liberalised in the nineties, why the goddess Saraswati cannot be liberalised at the dawn of the 21st century? The increasing demand for higher education in the developing world has opened up a new market that even a developing country like India can make use of. China has already recognised this market. In

scholarships are being offered under cultural agreements, encompassing a political agenda. But these numbers have been small. Now China is keen to expose the youth of the world to its language and culture and are making controlled but well organised efforts at attracting international students to its universities.

Before concluding, one would like to draw attention to the programme called 'The 100,000



higher education.

The leading country sending students abroad is China, with over 820,000 of its students having marched abroad! The corresponding number of Indian students abroad would be around 170,000. The numbers are mind boggling. What is interesting to note is that most of the students going abroad for higher studies are from developing countries; and they are going for their studies to developed countries. This attraction indicates that there is some magic in the education offered in the developed world. It gives confidence to the students for improving their social status and giving them better career in life. By and large, the quality of education

The developed countries are making increasing marketing efforts to attract foreign students to their shores. Countries like Australia, UK and USA (and this list is slowly increasing even to include China) have a vested interest in attracting students. The United States adds roughly \$20 billion per year to its economy, from the students studying there. The revenue generated is the result of tuition fees and living expenses incurred by these foreign students. The US Department of Commerce monitors this inflow and makes sure that this 'education industry' is nurtured through proper market drives. Similar budget figures are available for other developed countries.

and making profit in this sector is unethical! We have ensured that the tuition fees charged by the private education providers are regulated and not decided by market forces. The economic impact of student mobility is a new dimension to the noble profession of providing Vidya, considered to be in the ethical domain of goddess Saraswati. The private education providers in India are being asked by the Government to get into this business of providing education in the public-private-partnership (PPP) mode. But the process of control and regulation in the education sector as being practiced by the Government, in an economically liberalised soci-

spite of the language barrier, they have managed to attract over 238,000 international students to the country. India, with a predominant English medium in its higher education institutions, has managed to attract barely 21,728 students so far. We have even put an upper limit 'quota' that prevents private universities from attracting international students even if they can and wish to do so. Yes, we are still in a license raj when it comes to the business of education!

Attracting international students also has a political dimension. Countries, including India, have traditionally used education as a means of promoting mutual understanding between nations and

Strong' recently announced by President Obama. This will take 100,000 American Students to China during the next four years! Chinese are welcoming them with open doors - well controlled and literally 'guarded'. Does India have its agenda for student mobility? Or are we still waiting for the Parliament to approve the new education reforms that are getting old while in waiting? No, we do not want to be like China, nor like the USA! We are an independent nation. But are we on the move?

Authored by Dr P J Lavakare, Consultant, Institute of International Education (IIE USA), Pune and a senior member of Higher Education Forum (HEF)



Mumbai's fair lady

She has many roles and does justice to them all. With her new role as a member of the UGC, Dr Indu Shahani, is moving ahead faster than ever

Going ahead

She's been the principal of HR College, and brought many changes to better the system there. After becoming the Sheriff of Mumbai, she launched the Women's Helpline 1298 with the support of twenty leading NGOs; promoted voluntary blood donation for the citizens to free the patients from the pressure of procuring blood; harnessed student energy for the Municipal Corporation's Clean-Up Mumbai Campaign. She has also led Sheriff's delegations to interact with premier institutions and universities to many countries across the globe.

A visionary and thought leader, Dr Indu Shahani, with more than three decades of teaching experience, is a doyen in the field of academics. She has been on the forefront of nurturing future leaders. She is a firm believer of a student empowered teaching-learning model which places the responsibility of learning on the learner

and also promotes creative faculty development.

No wonder she finds the time and energy to wear several hats, including that of Advisor - India for the International Baccalaureate Organisation (IBO) and key positions at the Academic Council, Faculty of Commerce and Board of Studies in Business Management. She has pioneered partnerships with various bodies such as CII, Bombay Chamber of Commerce, Indian Merchants' Chamber and other leading corporate organisations. Dr Shahani works towards significant collaboration between industry and academia.

Her latest achievement is becoming a member of the University Grants Commission (UGC), appointed by the government of India. The UGC has been vested with two responsibilities: that of providing funds and that of coordination, determination and maintenance of standards in institutions of higher education. Dr Shahani has already been doing her bit in this field, and with this platform, we only wish her the best.

Change your thoughts

Venkateswara Gupta, Chairman, Alamuri Ratnamala Institute of Engineering and Technology (ARMIET), talks about his passion for learning, and his strong belief in higher education

Hard talk

Can you tell us about your career?

After completing my BTech from Osmania University in mechanical engineering, I came to Mumbai to do my Master's in Management Studies (MMS) at K J Somaiya Institute of Management Studies. After completing my MMS, I started my career as a management trainee with the Piramal Group. I went on to become the Head of the Special Tools Division of the Piramal Group, and went on ahead in many positions in the corporate sector.

What inspired you to set up an educational trust?

I always had an inclination for teaching. I have taught engineering and management students for four years. I wanted to contribute something meaningful to society.

What is your take on the



three years that you have spent with ARMIET?

ARMIET was started in 2008 and within a span of three years, the college has gained credibility and has become a respectable place to study. Most students are from the areas surrounding Thane, Kalyan and Dombivili. While following the broad outline by the University, ARMIET focuses on practicality. Students are encouraged to develop judgment, which is a basic need of an engineer.

What are your plans to ensure placements for your students?

Our objective is to make every student that graduates from our institute, employable. We are ensuring that there is adequate interface between the students and the industry. We are working towards imparting soft skills training to the students. Finally, we have a placement cell, which on a continuous basis is interacting with the industry and updating companies on campus activities and developments.

What is the secret behind your success?

All through my life I have always been ambitious and I am a self-motivated individual. Whether it is in handling my studies, career, assignments or in my handling of superiors or subordinates, I have always been proactive and created opportunities for myself, and in the process for others. I always do my home work right and that gives me immense confidence in approaching any task. I believe in myself and research deeply any subject, before I take up anything that I wish to do. I believe in putting in that extra bit into everything I do. Meticulous planning, confidence, commitment and hard work are the pillars on which I always depend.

What is your advice to the young generation?

Change your thoughts and you can change your world. This simple philosophy, if used, can change the world for you. Trust me, to be a winner, run smart and learn; you will definitely succeed. You won't win if you don't begin.

Keep up

High quality skills are said to ensure growth at the personal, at the enterprise and at the national level. If that be so, the economic success of Asia's most advanced country, Japan, stands as testimony to the skills of its people. Boosting the proficiency of its workforce, both by imparting domain-specific skills and the core technical kind, is an ongoing endeavour in the land of the rising sun. Japanese acquire skills at different stages of their career. Higher education, reading, and participation in hands-on workshops are well supported by company training and measures by the government.

Not that the Indian government lacks efforts to train its people. Now that the country is fast moving towards acquiring a developed status, the importance of government-level efforts like the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), a public-private partnership that helps train and upgrade skills of Indian workers, and industry-level training programmes cannot be over-emphasised.

Still, India can leapfrog its training and skills upgrade process by executing projects jointly with Japan. What better way can the Indian industry learn but from the masters? In this context, the July 2011 inked MoU between the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and the



International cooperation to develop skills

With Japan's eyes trained on India, the country can expect to see the skills of its workforce develop rapidly to help investors meet their targets, says ANKUR MEHRA

Japan Research Institute Limited, aimed at cooperating and working jointly on projects in energy, environment and water management technologies, promises to stand India in good

stead. Indians absorbed in these projects are bound to pick up essential and high-end skills. Japan's recent offer to cooperate with India to improve the safety of Indian atomic reactors,

notwithstanding the fact that it is battling the Fukushima crisis at home, is a significant move since it promises to transfer essential skills to personnel manning existing and the slew of reactors proposed to be established.

With the two nations having signed the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement earlier this year, Japan's Deputy Minister (Economy), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Shinichi Nishimiya is known to have opined that all kinds of economic activities will ease, and thus probably pave the way for accelerated expansion between the two countries.

Accelerated expansion is likely to translate into faster sharing and transfer of skills. Skill-enhancing training and research and development has been earmarked as a priority area for several ventures between companies and organisations in India and Japan as well.

Not only core skills but general skills are also useful across industries and in every walk of life. Such soft skills encompassing teamwork, leadership, communication and time management cannot be quantified but are vital for a project's success. Individuals must consciously work to strengthen these abilities. Then, Japanese initiatives like Kaizen, in the business arena, promise to help India fulfil the ambitious economic goals it has set for itself.

(The writer is Associate Partner - India Japan Global Partnership Summit, 2011)

Feedback

Green is the way
Dear Editor,

When we talk of anything green, the emphasis should be on solar power (Think Green - August 1). The government has set up the Jawahar Solar Mission to use this green form of energy. India is fortunate that it is blessed with plenty of sunshine for more than half of the year, except monsoon.

The emphasis should be on inclusion of courses on renewable energy in the curriculum of the Indian Institutes of Technology, and the IIMs. Not only this, diploma-level courses should also be started in the various Industrial Training Institutes across the country. Some state governments like Gujarat and Maharashtra have drawn up plans to set up captive solar power plants on a large scale, and link it with the national power grid.

It is surprising that villagers are more aware of the use of solar power than people in the urban areas. Solar panels have been installed in the remote villages of UP and Bihar by villagers themselves, for purposes like charging of mobile phones, watching television, and lighting homes.

The Right To Education Act will be strengthened only if students have power to study at their homes. The BMC has already made it mandatory for new buildings in Mumbai to use solar power for geysers, and same is the case in Thane also.

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