

Internationalisation of Higher Education in India - NITI Aayog's Roadmap under NEP 2020

December 23, 2025 • vajiramandravi.com



Internationalisation of Higher Education in India Latest News

- NITI Aayog released a report titled “Internationalisation of Higher Education in India: Prospects, Potential, and Policy Recommendations”.
- The report aligns with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and comes soon after the introduction of the Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill, 2025, which aims to **overhaul higher education regulation**.
- The focus is on **correcting the severe imbalance** between inbound and outbound student mobility and positioning India as a global education and research hub.

Rationale for Internationalisation

- In 2024, for every 1 international student studying in India, 28 Indian students went abroad (1:28 ratio).
- As of 2022, India hosted only about 47,000 international students, despite a 518% increase since 2001.
- Forecasts suggest 7.89–11 lakh international students by 2047, depending on policy intensity.

- Internationalisation is seen as crucial for **knowledge diplomacy**, talent circulation, reducing brain drain, and economic sustainability.

Key Findings of the Report

- **Economic and strategic concerns:**
 - Outward remittances under RBI's Liberalised Remittance Scheme (**LRS**) increased by about 2000% in the last decade.
 - Indian students' overseas education expenditure is projected at ₹6.2 lakh crore by 2025 (~2% of GDP).
 - This spending equals about 75% of India's trade deficit (FY 2024-25).
 - **Concentration** of 8.5 lakh out of 13.5 lakh outbound students in high-income countries (USA, UK, Australia).
 - Over 16 lakh Indians renounced citizenship since 2011, indicating **long-term talent loss**.
- **Perception and institutional gaps:**
 - 41% of institutes cited limited scholarships/financial aid as a key barrier.
 - 30% institutes flagged perception of education quality in India.
 - **Other constraints** include inadequate international infrastructure, limited global programme offerings, weak international student support systems, and cultural adaptation challenges.

Major Policy Recommendations

- **Strategic and financial measures:**
 - **Bharat Vidya Kosh:** As a national research sovereign wealth fund (suggesting a \$10 billion corpus, of which 50% can be raised from diaspora/philanthropy + 50% from Centre).
 - **Vishwa Bandhu scholarship:** To attract foreign students.
 - **Vishwa Bandhu fellowship:** To attract foreign research talent and faculty.
 - **Bharat ki AAN (Alumni Ambassador Network):** To leverage diaspora Indians who have studied at top India universities into acting as ambassadors for Indian higher education.
- **Mobility and global partnerships:**
 - **Europe's Erasmus+ like programme:**
 - To suggest the creation of a "**multilateral academic mobility framework**" tailored to specific country groupings like ASEAN, BRICS, BIMSTEC, etc.
 - This could be called the "**Tagore framework**", named after Asia's first Nobel laureate, Rabindranath Tagore.
 - Promotion of "**campus within campus**" and more international campuses in India.
- **Regulatory and governance reforms:**
 - Easier entry-exit norms for foreign students and faculty.
 - Fast-track tenure pathways for foreign faculty.
 - Competitive, internationally benchmarked salaries.
 - **Single-window clearance** system for visas, bank accounts, tax IDs, housing and administrative needs.

- Alignment with non-binding internationalisation frameworks under the proposed **Manak Parishad** (Standards Council).
- **Branding, rankings and outreach:**
 - Expansion of **NIRF** parameters to include outreach and inclusivity, globalisation and partnerships.
 - **Bharat ki AAN:** Mobilising Indian diaspora alumni as global ambassadors of Indian HEIs.
- **Curriculum and academic culture:** Updated and globally relevant curricula. Emphasis on international research collaboration and cross-cultural learning ecosystems.

Methodology of the Study

- **Online survey** of 160 Indian institutions.
- **Key informant interviews** with 30 institutions across 16 countries.
- **National Workshop** at IIT Madras.
- **Transnational** Education Roundtable in the UK.

Challenges Identified and Way Forward

- **Persistent quality perception gap:** Leverage diaspora capital, soft power, and civilisational knowledge.
- **Fragmented regulatory ecosystem:** Ensure policy coherence between NEP 2020, regulatory reforms, and global engagement.
- **Weak internationalisation culture:** Treat internationalisation as a strategic national priority, not merely an academic reform.
- **Risk of continued brain drain and capital flight:** Shift from student export model to a global education destination model.

Conclusion

- The NITI Aayog's roadmap underscores that internationalisation of higher education is central to India's economic **resilience**, strategic **autonomy**, and soft power projection.
- India can transform from a net exporter of students to a **global knowledge hub**, in line with the aspirations of NEP 2020 and Viksit Bharat 2047.

Source: TH

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/internationalisation-of-higher-education-in-india-niti-aayogs-roadmap-under-nep-2020/>
 © Vajiram & Ravi. For personal use only.