

EDUCATIONPLUS

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R.W. Alexander
Jesudasan

For several decades, meritorious Indian students have migrated to pursue higher education overseas. The reverse – foreign students coming to India for education purposes – has largely been of short duration and to complete specific tasks. In its 2022 notification, the University Grants Commission (UGC) encouraged the establishment of foreign universities in India and increased the number of seats in various undergraduate and postgraduate programmes by 25%. The latter aims to enhance enrollment of foreign students in insti-

tutes of higher education in India. Further, the UGC has also asked institutions to adopt a smooth and simple admission process for international students based on the equivalence of entry qualifications. In this situation, it is worth considering what can help attract foreign students to Indian varsities.

Strategies The first involves strengthening our traditional arts and cultural studies with appropriate internships. Indian institutions should capitalise on the country's history, culture and traditions by offering programmes and educational trips and exposure to the country's diversity.

Another is the provision to appoint chair or research professors or professors of practice, especially with regard to indigenous technologies. Foreign students can be offered internships in areas connected to local knowledge systems and the development of new products with the help of such specialists. Thirdly, institutions need to upgrade the standard of hostels, as these vary depending on the institution. Attention must also be given to the creation of outdoor and indoor sports and recreation areas. Fostering cultural exchange programmes is another way to attract foreign students to India. Apart from present-

ing various aspects of Indian regional cultures, institutions can also encourage foreign students to share details of the food, games, festivals from their own countries. Finally, the most important part is scaling up the standard of higher education in our institutions, especially the course content and practical aspects of education. This will not only ensure that foreign students come to India but also encourage our students to stay back for higher education, research, and employment.

The writer is former Principal and Secretary, Madras Christian College, Chennai, and former Pro Vice-Chancellor, HITS, Chennai. Email alexjesu62@gmail.com



OFF THE EDGE
Nandini Raman

I want to do M.Des. Transportation Design. Which colleges in India and abroad are good? Also will scholarships be available? Rohit

Dear Rohit, Some top colleges in India are the Industrial Design Centre (IDC) and IIT-Bombay, Mumbai; National Institute of Design (NID), Ahmedabad; MIT Institute of Design (MITID), Pune; World University of Design (WUD), Sonapat; Hindustan Institute of Technology and Science (HITS), Chennai; and Strate School of Design, Bengaluru. Abroad, colleges to consider include Royal College of Art (RCA), London, and Coventry University, the U.K.; Umeå Institute of Design (UID), Sweden; Istituto Europeo di Design (IED), Torino, and Scuola Politecnica di Design (SPD), Milan, Italy; ArtCenter College of Design, Pasadena, and College for Creative Studies (CCS), Detroit, the U.S.; and Pforzheim University, Germany.

Scholarships depend on the college, academic merit, and portfolio. Look up the college websites and others such as Tata Trusts, Inlaks Shivdasani Foundation, Aga Khan Foundation and others for details.

I have a 9.2 CGPA in

Seek support
Uncertain about your career options? Low on self-confidence? This column may help

Electronics and Instrumentation but campus placements don't seem to be happening. How can I find a job? Or should I do a Master's? Ramesh

Dear Ramesh, Don't get discouraged. Your academic record is strong and, with a focused, proactive job search strategy, you will find a suitable opportunity. Get on online job portals like LinkedIn, Indeed, and Freshersworld. Visit websites of companies that you are interested in and look for roles and recruitment notifications.

Network and build a professional connection with alumni, industry professionals, and recruiters to learn about leads. Attend industry events. Ensure that your resume emphasises relevant technical skills for the role/s that you apply for by highlighting your projects and internship experience.

Consider off-campus placements, job fairs and recruitment drives.

A Master's depends on your career goals and circumstances. An M.Tech. will help you specialise in a niche area within your domain and enhance your job prospects. Consider taking the GATE, as it will open doors to M.Tech. programmes in top institutes as well as recruitment in some PSUs.

I am a first-year Geography Honours student and want to take the UPSC exams. But between commuting to college and coursework, I am not able to prepare. Sometimes I feel I will not clear the UPSC, that I am just wasting my parents' money, and should just go back home. Please help. Nisha

Dear Nisha, You seem overwhelmed between the demands of your coursework and your ambition. The first year is about adjusting to a new academic environment, exploring your subject, and building a strong foundational understanding and critical thinking skills. Be true and honest to yourself. How much time does commuting, coursework and other activities? What are your energy levels after college? Are you working on a structured plan or just feeling guilty about not studying enough? A sustainable strategy might help! Prioritise your degree and do well in it.

Slowly integrate the UPSC preparation by breaking it down into small, manageable steps into your existing routine. Create a realistic schedule beyond your college commitments and identify small pockets of time for UPSC-related activities. Seek

support when you feel overwhelmed. Discuss your concerns with faculty advisors who may be able to guide you. Finally, don't compare your progress with that of others. Everyone's journey is different.

I graduated in Agriculture (2024), but don't have the means to start a business. What opportunities do I have? Vijayalakshmi

Dear Vijayalakshmi, Many state and central government departments of agriculture recruit graduates for Agricultural Officer or Extension Officer roles. Look for notifications for exams such as the Indian Forest Service or from the Indian Council of Agriculture (ICAR) and its research institutes for scientists and research assistants. Opportunities are available in public and private sector banks and in organisations such as National Fertilizers Limited (NFL), Food Corporation of India, and State Seed Corporations.

Update your resume and register on job portals like LinkedIn, Indeed, and specialised agricultural job sites. Consider an internship with a company or organisation in your field of interest to gain experience and build connections.

Disclaimer: This column is merely a guiding voice and provides advice and suggestions on education and careers.

The writer is a practising counsellor and a trainer. Send your questions to eduplus.thehindu@gmail.com with the subject line Off the Edge

SCHOLARSHIPS

Free Coaching for DNT Students under the Scheme for Economic Empowerment of DNTs (SEED)

An initiative by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India. Eligibility: Students belonging to De-notified, Nomadic, and Semi-Nomadic Tribes willing to pursue coaching for competitive exams such as NEET, JEE Main, CLAT, NDA, TOEFL, SAT, CA-CPT, RRB, Banking, Insurance, State Police, and CPL and have passed Class 12 and have an annual family income must be less than or equal to ₹800,000. Applicants should

not be availing of similar benefits from any other Government Scheme. Reward: Up to ₹120,000 plus benefits Application: Online Deadline: August 3 www.b4s.in/edge/FCDNT2

Kotak Kanya Scholarship An initiative of the Kotak Education Foundation Eligibility: Girls who have scored 75% or more in Class 12 and are in the first year of UG programmes in NIRF/NAAC accredited institutions with an annual family income of less than ₹600,000 Rewards: ₹1,50,000 a year Application: Online Deadline: August 31 www.b4s.in/edge/KKGS4

Infosys Foundation STEM Stars Scholarship Programme

An initiative of Infosys Foundation. Eligibility: Girls who have completed Class 12 and are enrolled in the first year of UG STEM courses at recognised institutions; second-year B.Arch students and those pursuing five-year Integrated or Dual Degree programmes; Annual family income must not exceed ₹800,000. Rewards: Up to ₹100,000 a year Application: Online Deadline: September 15 www.b4s.in/edge/ISTS3

Courtesy: buddy4study.com

SAVE THE DATE

TEDxABBS Acharya Bangalore B-School (ABBS) will host TEDxABBS, a TED eve on July 26 to spark conversations around sustainability, environmental conservation, innovation, and green living. Speakers include Sriшти Kukreja and Fehi Mohammed, who advocate for conscious and eco-friendly lifestyles; Ram Prasat Manohar, Chairman of BWSSB, who will speak on sustainable urban water solutions; Babu Padmanaban from Steer World on clean technology innovations; and Shammi Param from The Science Museum on science communication. The event will also feature veteran environmentalist Dr. Yellappa Reddy; forest and wildlife conservationist Srinivasulu, and Eat Raja, founder of India's first zero-waste juice bar, and Sumesh Nayak, an urban jungle conservationist. To register, visit https://tinyurl.com/msdsz57z

Admissions and Scholarships Hindustan Institute of Technology and Science has opened admissions for its MBA course with specialisations offered include Finance, Marketing, Human Resources, Hospital Management, Aviation

Management, Logistics and Supply Chain Management, Media and Entertainment, and Business Analytics. Merit-based scholarships are available. Eligibility: Minimum 50% marks in any UG discipline and valid scores in CAT, MAT, XAT, or CMAT. Deadline: July 30 https://apply.hindustanuniv.ac.in

The University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, the U.K., invites applications for its M.Sc. Aerospace Engineering starting in September 2025 and January 2026. Scholarships are available. Eligibility: A first-class or second-class honours degree (or international equivalent) in Engineering, Physical Sciences, or a closely related discipline. Overall IELTS (Academic) score of 6.5 with no individual band less than 5.5. https://tinyurl.com/2s7zkebx

XLRI has opened applications for the Xavier Aptitude Test (XAT) 2026 which will be held on January 4, 2026. Deadline: December 5. https://xatonline.in

IIT-Gandhinagar invites applications for a Certificate programme in Foundations of Data Science for Engineers. Eligibility: Minimum 60% (6.0 CGPA) in UG in relevant field. Maths in class 12 is mandatory. Deadline: August 15 https://tinyurl.com/4v7bfe2s

Motion Education has launched the Motion Talent Search Exam with rewards ranging from scholarships and free coaching for over 500 students. Eligibility: Students from classes 6 to 10, 11 and 12 (Science stream) When: July 20, August 3, and August 24 (online) Deadline: Up to two days before the selected exam date https://motion.ac.in/mtse/

Western Overseas Study Abroad has issued an admission alert for Indian students who wish to pursue Bachelor's and Master's degrees in universities in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the U.K., the U.S. and Europe. It offers end-to-end support including personalised career counselling, university and country shortlisting, SOP and documentation assistance, application submissions, visa processing, and standardised test coaching for exams. More information is available at https://western-overseas.com/

JIRSMUN 2025 JAIN International Residential School (JIRS), Bengaluru, will host its Model United Nations Conference, JIRSMUN 2025. The event will feature six committees and a cultural exchange programme. When: August 29 to 31 Schools can register at https://tinyurl.com/yet7x4dm

Vishal R. Choradiya

As admissions unfold across universities and colleges in India, one cannot help but notice the aggressive advertising blitz of private institutions and coaching centres. From glowing endorsements of alumni who cracked top-tier competitive exams to slick presentations of rankings and accreditations, higher education is increasingly being packaged and promoted as a premium commodity. These campaigns – ubiquitous across billboards, social media platforms, and even IPL ad breaks – rarely speak of learning, community, or growth. Instead, they sell a vision of education defined by metrics, placements, and prestige.

Setting aside valid concerns raised by scholars about the opaque and often dubious nature of many ranking mechanisms, the deeper issue is what this kind of messaging reveals – and obscures – about our understanding of higher education. In its current form, it reflects a predominantly commodified imagination: education as a product, students as customers, and degrees as guarantees of personal return on investment. Lost in this model is the idea of education as a public good – one that nurtures not only individual potential but also collective responsibility, critical thinking, and civic engagement.

Narrow vision At the heart of this commodification lies the increasing privatisation of Indian higher education. Severe and sustained underfunding of public universities has created a vacuum eagerly filled by private institutions and coaching industries. These cater largely to the upper and upper-middle



interests of a few. Ironically, while private industry increasingly shapes the objectives of higher education, its financial contribution remains negligible. It is the public that largely funds the production of human capital, only for the benefits to accrue privately. This arrangement is neither fair nor sustainable. It reinforces inequality, exploits public investment, and erodes the possibility of imagining education as a shared societal endeavour.

Shift in orientation

What is urgently needed, then, is a collective effort to reclaim the social dimensions of higher education – how it is funded, how it is delivered, and to what ends it aspires. This begins with a renewed commitment to robust public investment in universities, not just in infrastructure but also in faculty, research, and student support systems. It also demands a reorientation of our pedagogical models to prioritise collaboration, dialogue, and critical engagement over isolated content consumption.

Most importantly, it calls for a cultural shift: a revaluation of education as a means to build an enlightened, egalitarian, and mutually sustaining society. This vision must resist the seduction of glitzy advertisements and hollow rankings, and instead affirm the transformative power of education to shape not only careers but also communities.

At a time when education is being sold on bus banners and TV slots, we must ask: are we investing in a future built on shared values and knowledge or merely purchasing tickets to personal advancement?

The writer is an assistant professor with the Department of Professional Studies, Christ University, Bengaluru.

