

INDIA'S EDUCATION POLICY: SUBMISSION TO THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

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CONTENTS

Introduction	3
The New Education Policy	5
Recommendations	6
Conclusion	10
Participating Institutions	11

INTRODUCTION

Achieving full potential in higher education

Indian Higher Education is on the verge of a major transformation as it modernises to meet unprecedented levels of demand, mounting pressure from rapid economic, demographic, and technological changes, and the associated evolving needs of industry.

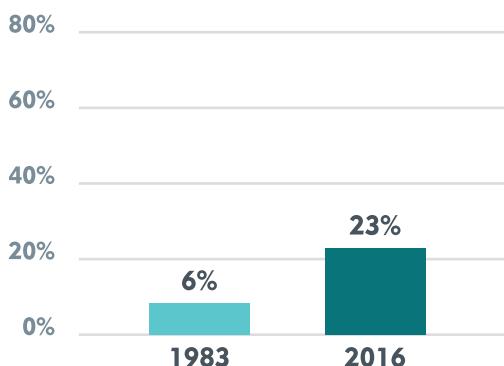
India's present challenge and opportunity is to create a higher education system that allows its young population to achieve its true potential in the 21st century.

Providing sufficient and high quality education are two inter-related challenges that the Government of India and the State governments are seeking to address.

Meeting the demand for higher education

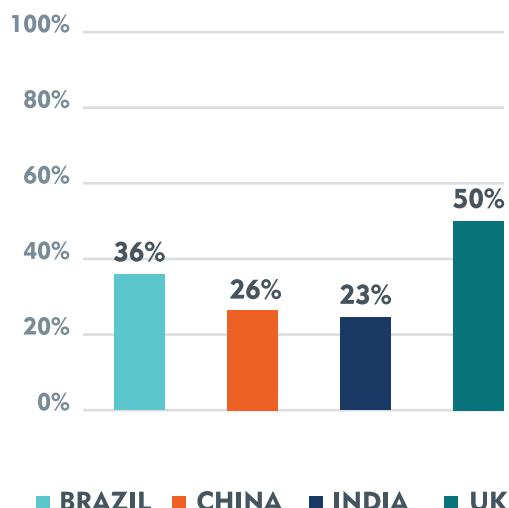
The past 30 years have seen a proliferation of private educational institutions and a steady expansion in the proportion of those attending college or university.

INDIANS ATTENDING UNIVERSITY



Despite strong growth in both the number of institutions and enrolment, India's participation in higher education is still low when compared to China, Brazil and the UK.

PARTICIPATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION



In 2014, the Indian government set a goal to increase gross enrolment to 30% by 2020, which meant providing 40 million university places, an increase of 14 million.

In addition, by 2030, India will have the largest number of people of college-going age - a staggering 140 million. Currently, 736 universities educate 28.6 million students. India will need at least another 1,500 institutions by 2030 to accommodate this huge influx of students.

Sources

British Council Report February 2014, Understanding India: the future of higher education and the opportunities for international co-operation, p.4
 [Online] Available from: https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/understanding_india_report.pdf
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 Accessed March 1, 2018.

INDIA'S HIGHER EDUCATION EXPANSION

	2018	2030
STUDENTS	28.6 MILLION	5X (140 MILLION)
UNIVERSITIES	736	3X (2,236 APPROX.)

Improving the quality of teaching and learning

Governments across India are determined to improve the quality of higher education to ensure that all young people are given the skills and knowledge to meet the needs of 21st century employers. Central to this is making sure that there are sufficient numbers of high quality faculty, and a closer alignment between teaching, research, and vocational skills training.

The UK India Business Council believes that UK and other foreign universities, and indeed employers, can work with India to rise to these challenges.

UK companies employ around 800,000 people in India. On average, they invest 7% of their turnover on skills training, and they carry out innovation and R&D in India. So there is strong potential for

collaboration with Indian education institutions.

This report collates the views of UK universities. The UK universities that we have consulted (listed under Participating Institutions) are active in India, partnering with Indian institutions (public and private). The partnerships are spread across research, faculty exchanges, executive training, and providing knowledge transfer on curriculum development, quality assurance, and faculty development.

Indian law currently prohibits foreign institutions from setting up their campuses in the country. The recognition of foreign qualifications is an issue, and foreign faculty are not allowed to take up full-time positions at Indian higher education institutions. Yet despite these challenges, UK institutions remain keen to do more in India.

This report sets out a number of recommendations on the new education policy that UK institutions believe will enable the Government of India to achieve its goal of enhancing the provision of higher education across the country.

These recommendations are based on UK institutions' commitment to India and the Government of India's development of a new education policy.

THE NEW NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY

Four pillars to produce better citizens of tomorrow

The 1986 National Policy on Education, as reviewed in 1992, has been the guiding document for over three decades.

The announcement of a new National Education Policy is an extremely welcome move. If India wants to fulfil its growth potential and deliver employment outcomes, its new education policy must be centred on the four pillars of excellence, equal access, expansion, and employability. This will develop a resilient system that balances cost, quality, and scale.



FOUR PILLARS OF THE NEW EDUCATION POLICY

- 1 EXCELLENCE**
- 2 EQUAL ACCESS**
- 3 EXPANSION**
- 4 EMPLOYABILITY**

Once these basic foundations are in place, India will accelerate its progress to becoming a world-class education hub and a knowledge superpower.

With a desire to drive reforms, the Government of India has tasked the Kasturirangan Committee to "make

Indian education contemporary, learner-centric, research-oriented, improve its quality, and internationalise it to produce better citizens of tomorrow".

The new policy should put inclusiveness, innovation, and international standards of quality at the heart of its agenda. It should be formulated in a participatory manner and should be designed to serve the country for the next 20 years.

To this end, the committee embarked on a global stakeholder consultation inviting responses from both national and international stakeholders.

Given the commitment UK institutions have to India and the emphasis of the new policy on quality, learning outcomes, teaching and research (all areas in which the UK has considerable expertise), the UK India Business Council interviewed 10 top UK universities and their collective recommendations are detailed below.

INDIA WILL ACCELERATE ITS PROGRESS TO BECOMING A WORLD-CLASS EDUCATION HUB AND A KNOWLEDGE SUPERPOWER

Sources

TSR Subramanian, 2016, Why India needs a new education policy, [Online] Available from: <https://www.indiatoday.in/magazine/up-front/story/20160704-why-india-needs-a-new-education-policy-829136-2016-06-23> Accessed March 1, 2018.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A common view was that while the Government of India should make improvements to the education policy, it is important to maintain the unique value system outlined in the original national education policy. The unique value system is admired and should remain the bedrock of all future policy related to education in India. UK universities would also strongly endorse the principle of quality education for all.

Role of Foreign Education Providers in India

1. Establishing a clear roadmap of guidelines for foreign universities to operate in India

Foreign universities would greatly benefit from a clear set of guidelines on how to operate in the Indian education landscape. Ideally, this should be tailored to fit the various higher education models of universities and business schools. The guidelines should lay down the specific rules and channels of engagement associated with each structure.

Despite a strong appetite for collaboration from both the Indian and foreign entity, the absence of such a roadmap and the uncertainty around the rules of establishing international partnerships has been detrimental to partnerships that could have flourished.

Sources

Arvind Panagariya, 2018, Liberating India's best colleges: HRD minister Javadekar has just announced the most far-reaching reforms in higher education, [Online] Available from: <https://blogs.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/toi-edit-page/liberating-indias-best-colleges-hrd-minister-javadekar-has-just-announced-the-most-far-reaching-reforms-in-higher-education/> Accessed March 1, 2018.

2. Recognition of foreign qualifications by the Government of India

Indian authorities do not recognise foreign qualifications obtained through articulation and pathway programmes or the 1-year Masters programme offered by UK universities, which is recognised widely elsewhere. This means that graduates struggle to gain employment in the Indian public sector. In the case of undergraduates, it is difficult to pursue a Masters programme at an Indian university.

Currently, this is regulated by the UGC but outsourced to the AIU. In addition to more resource allocation, there needs to be a mind-set shift – from giving importance to the existing ‘time-based’ model to acknowledging the value of the ‘learning outcome-based’ model which focuses on credits acquired rather than the number of lectures taken. While the Government has introduced a credit-based framework, this is yet to be implemented by many institutions.

3. Allow foreign universities to set up their campuses in India

In order to truly commit to internationalisation and enable it to be a factor in equality, the Indian government should allow foreign higher education providers to offer their courses in the country through bricks and mortar and not just through validation and franchising.

In addition to internationalising the curriculum and infrastructure, the

establishment of foreign university campuses in India will have the added benefit of significantly increasing access and helping to meet the country's immense demographic challenge. This is because it will attract a segment of Indian society that can afford this education, thus freeing up space in domestic institutions. Government funds could be focused towards domestic institutions.

4. Look beyond the overall ranking to identify UK universities with the specialisms to fit India's requirements

The Government of India's intention to allow only the top-ranked 200 foreign education providers to partner with top Indian institutions is a step in the right direction, but this will not achieve the goal of attracting the world's best universities to India.

A university's overall QS world ranking can place it in the top 200. So, for example, a UK University that does not fall into the top 200 may actually be in the top 10 globally for, say, mechanical engineering. Conversely, a top ranking UK University may not excel when it comes to their mechanical engineering course. Yet, the current thinking in India would allow the top ranking university to bring a low quality mechanical engineering course to India, but stop a brilliant course coming from a university that falls outside the top 200 list. We would therefore recommend that a more flexible approach is

taken, which would enable India to welcome the best courses from foreign institutions (not necessarily in the top 200) that have the skills and specialisms that best fit India's specific requirements.

Another point to consider is that some UK Universities which are not in the top 500 in rankings may not be very research intensive but have high teaching quality/standards that could add significant value through a partnership.

Millions of young Indians and employers would benefit from bringing in a greater cross-section of foreign universities with diverse skills in areas that match India's needs.

Encouraging Excellence, Innovation and Employability

5. Increase the number of Institutions of Eminence beyond 20

Given the size of the Indian higher education system, it is felt that this initiative should be expanded by a further 20 institutions every year. UK universities very much welcome this initiative, and are keen to engage with Indian institutions to exchange best practice in both directions. This would increasingly broad-base excellence and success, increase standards, and expand the range of international collaborations Indian institutions will have. This will create an increasingly virtuous cycle of improvement, success, and connectivity.

6. Greater support and flexibility for research-intensive institutions

Higher Education research institutions - specifically the 100 named centres of excellence – could achieve even greater success if they supplement their government funding with private sector funded research through tax incentives to the private funders. This tighter academia-industry collaboration done under industry's stewardship would generate win-win outcomes – more and better research, which can be deployed to the benefit of the people of India. In addition to deepening domestic industry and academia links, supplementary funds from the private sector would give these institutions the financial flexibility, independence and confidence to forge new research collaborations with both UK universities and UK corporates.

7. Empower more universities beyond Category I and II

UK universities very much welcome the recent announcement to grant more autonomy to Category 1 and Category 2 universities, enabling them to establish more international partnerships easily.

At the same time, we believe that this autonomy should be extended to the leading state institutions in category 3. Global universities will want to work with these quality category 3 institutes.

As with increasing the number of Institutions of Eminence, the implementation of this

recommendation will broad base excellence and expand the range of international collaborations.

8. Factor in private sector involvement in the education policy

The private sector, which currently accounts for 59% of all tertiary enrolment, continues to grow rapidly. It is expected to play a significant role in the future expansion of higher education in India.

Consequently, there needs to be a clearly laid out policy with respect to private sector participation in the education system. This policy should encourage and support institutions that deliver quality while blocking institutions that fall below par.

9. Harness technology to deliver solutions, with more support for distance learning and other flexible models of education

Digital India creates a fantastic platform on which India can lead the world in many areas, including the delivery of higher education.

As noted above, to meet its enrolment ratio target of 30% by 2030, India will need to build another 1,500 institutions. This does not seem feasible. So a blend of bricks and mortar and digital engagement will need to be deployed.

Digital learning technologies represent the biggest opportunity. They will transform the Indian higher education landscape, address

capacity issues, and meet the expanding future student demand from all strata of society. Given the magnitude of this task, Indian educational institutions would benefit by collaborating with UK universities to build their capability to deliver online education across the country.

Given its emphasis on digitisation and inclusive education, the Government of India should be the enabler and active supporter of the flexible model of education - for example, open universities offering distance learning and online learning programmes.

10. Sharpen the focus on developing employability skills, and enhance the recognition of the value of vocational skills

India will need to produce graduates with the skills and qualities employers need, to capitalise on its demographic dividend, and achieve its economic and social potential.

Governments over the world including India and the UK are faced with the challenge of having too many graduates and not enough people with the so-called “vocational” skills actually needed by employers.

There is a real case to be made in favour of merging vocational skills with mainstream education. The demarcation of government policies between skills and education could be a barrier to providing appropriate vocational skills.

Given the Union Budget's emphasis on developing a holistic education policy, we recommend that the MHRD and the Ministry of Skills should look for ways to work more closely together to implement policies. This could be done by considering models such as degree apprenticeships which are growing in popularity in the UK where students get a degree and strong practical skills in areas such as electrical, mechanical and aerospace engineering.

This would provide a joined-up avenue for horizontal and vertical mobility, and will have the added advantage of fostering dignity and social acceptability for quality vocational training.

Simplify the Higher Education Ecosystem

11. Consolidate various government bodies into one single, powerful department

Education institutions find the number and variety of governmental bodies involved in the higher education system overly complex, thus impacting their ability and willingness to engage in India. It is therefore recommended that they be brought under a single, powerful department.

This “single window” would lead to an understanding of where responsibility and accountability lie, and accelerate decision-making. This will benefit the education providers and the students.

CONCLUSION

The Government of India's decision to remodel and restructure the Indian education system through a consultative process is to be applauded. It has facilitated a debate about how to educate future generations of Indians, drawing inputs from eminent Indian experts, and well-wishers from across the world.

UK universities are among these well-wishers who are committed to India and who want to deepen that commitment.

The UK India Business Council and the contributing universities would like to congratulate the Ministry of Human Resource Development on this policy development, and we offer our continued support, including at the implementation phase.

**UK UNIVERSITIES
ARE AMONG THESE
WELL-WISHERS WHO ARE
COMMITTED TO INDIA**

PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS



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WHO ARE WE?

The UK India Business Council believes passionately that the UK-India business partnership creates jobs and growth in both countries. Through our insights, networks, and policy advocacy, we support businesses to succeed.

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