



Research Paper

## Internationalization of Higher Education (A Case of Iranian Students in India)

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**ABSTRACT:** In this era of globalization, India is fast emerging as a popular educational destination for foreign students. The quality of higher education in India, particularly in the disciplines of science, technology and mathematics as well as in ideological subjects, has been attracting students to Indian universities from all over the world. Umbilical historical ties, shared culture, a feeling of 'home away from home' and rich variety of quality education are the main reasons, particularly for Asians, to opt for Indian as a destination for higher education.

**KEYWORDS:** Internalisations, International Students, Iran,

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India has the second largest network of higher education in the world, and the third largest reserve of scientific and technical manpower. It has undergone a rapid expansion in the post independence period. According to All India Survey on Higher Education in 2019-2020, there were 1043 Universities out of which 396 universities are privately managed and 420 universities are located in rural area, 17 universities are exclusively for women 13 Institutes of National Importance. There were 42343 colleges, out of which 78.6 % colleges are privately managed, 65.2% private-unaided and 13.4% private aided. (AISHE 2019-20).

TABLE NO-01  
**Number of Colleges and Universities in India**

Year	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-2020
No. of Colleges	-----	39050	39931	42343	40025
No. of Universities	799	864	903	993	1043

Source: All India Survey of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, GOI. (Compilation of different Year data).

In 2019-20, an estimated 38.5 million students were enrolled in the institutions of Higher Education with 19.6 million boys and 18.9 million females. Female constitute 49% of the total enrollment. Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in Higher education in India is 27.1, which is calculated for 18-23 years of age group. GER for male population is 26.9 and for female, it is 27.3. For Scheduled Castes, it is 23.4 and for Scheduled Tribes, it is 18.0 as compared to the national GER of 27.1 ((AISHE 2019-20). Higher education is further enriched by specialized universities, Indian Institutes of Technology, Management, Agriculture and Medical Sciences. Today Indian education system is one of largest not only in size but also with varieties of courses offered.

Higher education is imparted in India at various levels and in various types of formal education institutions. These can be classified as follows:

- (a) Universities
- (b) Deemed Universities
- (c) Institutions recognized as of national importance, such as Indian Institute of Technology, and All India Institute of Medical Sciences
- (d) Research Institutions

(e) Institutions (colleges) for higher education

Institutes of higher education are ideally placed to use globalization as a tool to bridge the knowledge gap in order to enrich the dialogue between peoples and between cultures. Cooperation among scientist working in the same discipline transcends national boundaries and is a powerful tool for the internationalization of research, technology, ideas, attitudes and activities. The universities and government of knowledge-wealthy countries should employ means whereby the potential of the poorest regions of the world may be enhanced and their access to information improved. These include exchange for students and teachers, assistant in the development of communication system, particularly on line system, the pooling of research findings, inter-university networking and the establishment of regional centers of excellence.

International students have a significant presence in the higher education of India and continue to grow. Almost 75,000 students chose India for pursuing their studies in 2019 while 72,268 students came in the year 2018. The previous two years also saw over 70,000 such students. According to MEA's data, other countries from which students arrived on visa in the year 2021 are Nigeria (1,424), Sudan (1,088), Tanzania (1,426), Ethiopia (481), Iran (448), Malaysia (683), Maldives (428), Myanmar (401), Yemen (528), and Zimbabwe (600).Iranian students constitute the largest student community from West Asian region around 15000 in India. The present study is an attempt to study the foreign students in developing countries and that too specifically on Iranian students in India (MEA 2019).

TABLE NO-02  
International Students in India from Western Asia Region  
(2014-2015 to 2019-20)

SNO	COUNTRIES	2014-15	2019-2020
1	Bahrain	197	31
2	Iran	837	422
3	Iraq	775	422
4	Israel	8	NA
5	Jordan	8	66
6	Kuwait	329	26
7	Lebanon	1	NA
8	Oman	481	41
9	Palestine	15	NA
10	Qatar	123	10
11	Saudi Arabia	247	42
12	Syria	50	261
13	Turkey	25	NA
14	UAE	650	101
15	Yemen	632	411

Source: Association of Indian Universities (AIU, New Delhi) Various Year

**Reason for coming to India**

There are number of reasons for Iranian students coming to India in large numbers such as:

1. lack of professional colleges
2. tough entrance examination
3. cultural similarities between India and Iran
4. less distance from Tehran as compared to Western Countries,
5. moderate fee structure in India, and
6. English as the medium of instruction in Indian universities.

Iranian students in India come from higher middle class and mostly from urban areas such as Tehran, Isfahan, Mashad, Tabriz etc. Large numbers of Iranian students are self finance and very few of them are getting Indian or Iranian fellowships for their studies. The main concentrations of Iranian students are in Pune, Chandigrah, Delhi and Mysore.

We can divide the Iranian students coming to India in three categories first is the students between the age group of 14-24 coming just after passing 12<sup>th</sup> class and they have lots of problem in India for few months to adjust and the second is between the age of 24-30 come for their masters programmes or some professional courses like MBA, MCA and others this category of students have little English and comfortable with their courses in India the third group is above 30 years and coming for Doctorate degrees from India majority of them are getting fellowships in India or they are holding some positions in Iran like university teacher etc.

After arrival in India the first problem faced by the Iranian is communication. Majority of the Iranian students cannot speak English. This is because the medium of instruction in Iran is Persian not English. But after spending few months they overcome with the problem of English. The majority of Iranian students attend English classes in the universities or some private institutions. But in India the Iranian students also face the problem of pronunciation. Some students faced the problem of understanding text book and some have the problem of higher standard in the Indian universities.

Iranian students in India found in all courses including business management, and other science subjects. Few Iranian students also doing their courses from distance education and some private universities in India like Manipal University, Amity University etc.

The students also face the problem of accommodation in India. It is very difficult to find a suitable accommodation after the arrival. Most of the students staying in independent flats or shared with fellow Iranian students. There are very few Iranian students staying in university hostels.

Some of the students faced emotional problems in India. The students between the age group of 18-24 faced the problem of homesickness and isolation in India, the older students have less problem but they also admit that few months it very difficult to adjust in a new environment. To adjust in the new environment and come up the problems the students formed their association in every university they are studying. The student associations help the students in all matter within their limits.

Regarding the climate condition, as a result of the differences in their home climate conditions and that of India, students found the climate of India unsatisfactory or dislike it. They considered the summer and winter seems serves. The international students' population in India is not equally distributed over the country or in various disciplines. The students prefer the western (especially Maharashtra) and the southern parts of India. The main reason as the foreign students chooses the southern part is due to weather condition.

The Iranian chooses their educational destination to southern part of India because of the climate. As seen in the survey majority of Iranian students are residing in Pune and Bangalore. Those students who studying in Chandigarh, Delhi and other parts of India complaining about the hot weather.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the internationalization of education in India has become a crucial component in the country's efforts to compete on the global stage. The Indian government has taken various initiatives to enhance internationalization in the education sector, such as launching international collaborations, creating more study abroad opportunities, and increasing foreign faculty recruitment. These efforts have resulted in a significant increase in the number of foreign students coming to India for higher education.

Moreover, the internationalization of education in India has had many positive impacts, including enhancing the quality of education, promoting cultural exchange, and improving research collaborations. However, there are still many challenges that need to be addressed, such as language barriers, accreditation issues, and ensuring the safety of international students.

Overall, the internationalization of education in India is a complex process that requires continued attention and support from all stakeholders. As the world becomes more interconnected, India must continue to prioritize internationalization to ensure its competitiveness in the global knowledge economy.

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