

TRENDSPOTTING: WHY THINGS MATTER?

The Hearth Lecture Series

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Global Campus Chronicles: India's Transnational Education Revolution

The National Education Policy 2020 ("NEP") is the first comprehensive overhaul of the education landscape in India since 1986 (except for an amendment in 1992). One of the visions of the NEP is to encourage transnational education. Towards this end, one of the measures is to permit foreign higher educational institutions (FHEI) to establish campuses in India. Since the NEP, several guidelines and regulations on internationalising higher education have been passed in India.¹

Since the first legislative attempt in 2010², there has been an underlying assumption forming the rationale behind the transnational education goals of India. This assumption has been that the high-performing educational institutions abroad will flock to the country to set up branch campuses and regulatory restrictions are the only deterrent to this.

However, evidence suggests that many top-performing global universities are hesitant to set up campuses abroad due to several factors such as quality and reputation control, academic freedom, faculty, operational and regulatory challenges, and financial limitations. Rather than establishing full-fledged campuses abroad, top-tier educational institutions strongly prefer strengthening their global presence through partnerships, collaborations, and online education. While policy and regulatory advancements aimed at furthering transnational education in India are welcome, there is currently an absence of precedence of top-tier global universities setting up campuses outside their home countries. According to 2020 data from the Cross-Border Education Research Team (CBERT), 37 countries host foreign higher education institutions (FHEIs), with 306 campuses worldwide. China is the leader with 42 campuses, followed by the UAE with 33, Singapore with 16, Malaysia with 15, and Qatar with 11. However, except for NYU Shanghai, none of these campuses belong to top-ranking global universities.³

¹ Guidelines for Internationalisation of Higher Education by the Ministry of Education in 2021 (accessible [here](#)); University Grants Commission (academic collaboration between Indian and foreign higher educational institutions to offer twinning, joint degree and dual degree programmes) Regulations 2022 (accessible [here](#)); IFSCA (Setting up and Operation of International Branch Campuses and Offshore Education Centres) Regulations 2022 (accessible [here](#)).

² Foreign Educational Institutions (Regulation of Entry and Operations) Bill (lapsed).

³ Forbes India, Foreign university campuses in India: Is the move practical? January 2023 (updated in April 2024); Accessible [here](#).

In the upcoming Trendspotting session, our panellists will explore whether it is worthwhile for India to pursue second-tier foreign higher education institutions (FHEIs). With absolute enrollment numbers reaching approximately 43.3 million⁴—a significant 18% increase over five years—India faces a critical decision: Should the focus be on expanding undergraduate education, or is there a greater need for postgraduates to address the gaps in research and higher education faculty?

One of the key questions is whether facilitating FHEI campuses in India will attract more international students—currently around 46,000⁵—or help retain the 750,000 Indian students who went abroad for their studies in 2022⁶. Additionally, what role can these foreign campuses play in enhancing higher education in India? Will they contribute to increasing the gross enrolment rate, which stands at 28.4%⁷ for the 18-23 age group? Do the concerns regarding the impact on the national educational landscape voiced in 2010 remain? If not, what has changed?

Join us on **26 September 2024, 7 PM, at Gulmohar Hall, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi** as we invite a group of leading educators, education policy, and industry experts to delve into these questions and more.

Suggested Readings

The University of Southampton awarded a licence to establish its campus in India, August 2024. Read more [here](#).

“The University of Southampton has become the first UK university to be granted a licence by the Indian government to create a comprehensive campus in the country.”

A [post](#) by Alison Barrett, Country Director, British Council of India, IC3 Conference 2024.

“Yesterday we welcomed ... [the] University of St Andrews leading a delegation of representatives from the University sector in Scotland to Delhi to participate in the IC3 conference. ...We celebrated the range of connections between India and Scotland. For example, there are currently 6 partnerships between India and Scotland under our *GoingGlobalPartnerships* programme, 28 *UKIERI partnerships* from phases 3 and 4 alone, many scholars at Scottish Universities from *Chevening*, *GREAT*, and *WomenInStem*

⁴ All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2020-2021 by the Ministry of Education.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Lok Sabha, Unstarred Question no. 667, Answered on 06.02.2023. ‘Indian Students Going Abroad’. Accessible [here](#).

⁷ All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2020-2021 by the Ministry of Education.

scholarships programmes and many creative connections...12,235 Indian students enrolled at a Scottish University in 22-23 which was a 20% increase from the year before.”

International Symposium on International Migration and Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations Secretariat, 2006. Accessible [here](#).

The paper explores the impact of globalisation on higher education, especially through cross-border education initiatives. It highlights that the growing demand for higher education surpasses the capacity of many countries, prompting more students to study abroad. Higher education institutions are forming partnerships, leveraging online technologies, and establishing branch campuses outside their home countries. These developments allow students to access quality education close to home. While traditional student mobility remains prevalent, new methods of delivering international education are emerging, which could reshape future student movement patterns.

Wilkins, S., & Rumbley, L. (2018). What a Branch Campus Is: A Revised Definition. International Higher Education, 2(93), 12–14. Accessible [here](#).

International branch campuses (IBCs) are entities owned at least partially by a foreign higher education institution, operating under its name, and offering programs or credentials that bear the foreign institution’s name. Key features include ownership, substantive control by the home institution over strategic decisions, and basic infrastructure like libraries and computer labs to ensure a similar student experience as the home campus. The definition emphasises that IBCs should not be confused with partnerships or study abroad centres.

Chris Mackie, Transnational Education and Globalization: A Look into the Complex Environment of International Branch Campuses, World Education Services, 2019. Accessible [here](#).

The article examines the rise and complexities of international branch campuses (IBCs), established by universities abroad for various objectives. These goals include generating revenue, boosting global reputation, enhancing research capabilities, and providing access to quality education in regions with limited educational infrastructure. Success factors for IBCs include strong home-host country relationships and strategic location choices. Most IBCs are located in Asia, especially in China and the UAE, while key exporting countries include the U.S. and the UK. The environment for IBCs is dynamic and influenced by geopolitical and economic factors.

Chris Mackie, International Branch Campuses Part Two: China and the United Arab Emirates, World Education Services, 2019. Accessible [here](#).

The article continues the discussion from the first part (referenced above) and focuses on international branch campuses (IBCs) in China and the UAE. The UAE has attracted numerous IBCs through economic diversification efforts and the establishment of Free Zones that offer incentives for foreign institutions. In contrast, China's IBCs are part of its strategy to enhance

higher education quality and internationalisation, with regulatory support beginning in the 1990s. Both countries aim to boost their global education profiles and meet the growing demand for high-quality education, albeit through different approaches and motivations.

Wilkins, S. (2021), Two decades of international branch campus development, 2000-2020: A review. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 35(1), 311-326. Accessible [here](#).

The paper reviews the development of international branch campuses (IBCs) from 2000 to 2020. IBCs have experienced successes and failures, with some expanding and others closing due to unmet targets. IBCs are driven by goals such as revenue generation, enhancing global reputation, and meeting educational demands. Successful IBCs often benefit from strong home-host country relationships and strategic locations. Despite challenges, the trend of establishing new IBCs continues, particularly in countries aiming to become transnational education hubs, indicating a sustained demand for this form of education.

María Escriba-Beltran, Javier Muñoz-de-Prat, Cristina Villó, Insights into international branch campuses: Mapping trends through a systematic review, *Journal of Business Research* 101 (2019) 507–51.

This study analyses international branch campus (IBC) literature trends from 1960 to 2017 through a systematic review of the different research approaches, views, and positions to map global scientific production. Over the last two decades, universities worldwide have opened branch campuses abroad, reaching a peak of 249 across thirty-three countries in January 2017. International studies and surveys have identified a 26% increase over the last five years and a concentration of the industry. Since 2017, the emergent field of IBC has experienced a geometric growth regarding the number of academic publications on this topic. The review indicates an important amount of literature on IBC related to some topics studied—managerial and academic staff issues and educational hubs—and a lack of research on a wide range of areas.

Sanjay Krishnapratap Pawar, India's global education hub ambitions: Recent student mobility trends, the underlying dynamics and strategy perspectives, *Cogent Education*, 2024. Accessible [here](#).

India, traditionally a major exporter of mobile students, has implemented diverse policies to attract international students. This research uses secondary analysis of international student mobility (ISM) statistics from 2012 to 2021 and examines Indian higher education policy discourses. The findings show a modest increase in international student enrollments in India compared to the global ISM trend and the growing roles of other Asian host countries. The Indian ISM landscape appears risky due to its heavy reliance on a few South Asian countries. Reasons for slow inbound ISM growth and strategies for attracting international students are discussed. Additionally, a framework-based assessment for diversifying student sources in East Africa is presented.

Hirak Dasgupta and Sanjay Krishnapratap Pawar, International branch campuses in India: An alternative to studying abroad! Cogent Education, 2024. Accessible [here](#).

The student movement has shifted towards south-south flows, with countries in Asia and the Middle East hosting more IBCs and students moving within these regions. This trend has drawn attention from policymakers, marketers, and international education experts. This study explores the factors important to Indian students in assessing the value of IBCs in India as an alternative to studying abroad, identifying three key factors. As the findings are drawn from studies conducted in three universities in Maharashtra, they are not generalisable. Nonetheless, the studies suggest new research directions for other emerging host countries like the Gulf region and sub-Saharan Africa.

Disclaimer: The summaries and excerpts provided above are for reference only and intended solely to encourage discussion on the theme. They do not represent the professional opinion of The Hearth Advisors Group or its associates. For the authors' full reasoning, research methods, affiliations, and conclusion, please consult the original texts.