

HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA: MOVING TOWARDS GLOBAL RELEVANCE AND COMPETITIVENESS

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ABSTRACT

Higher Education sector has witnessed a tremendous increase in the number of Universities/University level Institutions & Colleges since Independence. The number of Universities has increased 34 times from 20 in 1950 to 677 in 2014. The sector boasts of 45 Central Universities of which 40 are under the purview of Ministry of Human Resource Development, 318 State Universities, 185 State Private universities, 129 Deemed to be Universities, 51 Institutions of National Importance (established under Acts of Parliament) under MHRD (IITs - 16, NITs – 30 and IISERs – 5) and four Institutions (established under various State legislations). The number of colleges has also registered manifold increase of 74 times with just 500 in 1950 growing to 37,204, as on 31st March, 2013. The quantum growth in the Higher Education sector is spear-headed by Universities, which are the highest seats of learning. In India, "University" means a University established or incorporated by or under a Central Act, a Provincial Act or a State Act and includes any such institution as may, in consultation with the University concerned, be recognised by the University Grants Commission (UGC) in accordance with the regulations made in this regard under the UGC Act, 1956. Every year, millions of students from within the country and abroad, enter these portals mainly for their graduate, post graduate studies while millions leave these portals for the world outside.

Higher Education is the shared responsibility of both the Centre and the States. The coordination and determination of standards in Universities & Colleges is entrusted to the UGC and other statutory regulatory bodies. The Central Government provides grants to the UGC and establishes Central Universities/Institutions of National Importance in the country. The Central Government is also responsible for declaring an educational institution as "Deemed-to-be University" on the recommendations of the UGC. This paper attempts to identify the move of Indian higher education towards relevance and competitiveness globally.

Key Words: UGC, Higher Education, AISHE, GER and Foreign Students

I. INTRODUCTION

All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) highlighted the fact that the Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) has shown significant improvement from 19.4% in 2010-11 to 23.6% in 2014-15. The target of 30% GER by 2020 as envisaged in 12th Plan would be achieved and efforts be made to increase number of female teachers in higher education. The data base acts as rich depository that gives direction while devising policies to improve higher education. Union Minister suggested that State universities in conjunction with regulatory bodies like AICTE should strive to update curriculum, which may include industry participation, use of ICT enabled education, collaboration with international organizations to make education more dynamic and increase employability. While appreciating the initiatives of states of Gujarat, Karnataka, and Odisha; The Union Minister called upon Ministry of Human Resource Development to explore the feasibility of replicating best practices like 'Jnana-Samnvay' of Karnataka at national level.

The survey covers all the Higher Education (HE) institutions of the country including Universities, Colleges and Stand-Alone institutions. The entire survey has been voluntary, based on motivation of respondents; and without any statutory mandate in place for collecting information of this nature. It needs a Survey like this to bring out the correct and complete picture of the system so that relevant statistics are available to the Central Government as well as State Governments, in order to devise future policies. The survey is also unique in the sense that it is a participatory effort between State Governments, Regulatory Statutory Authorities and the Ministries of the Government of India. The survey compiles and manages statistics directly online from respondent institutions. The main items of data collection under survey are Basic details, Programme details, Teaching and Non-Teaching staff, Student Enrolment, Examination Result, Infrastructure, Scholarships and Financial. The AISHE data is the source of information for 'Know Your College' portal (KYC) www.knowyourcollege-gov.in/ With the launch of 2015-16 survey, the time-lag will be reduced to bare minimum. All the institutions located in the country are requested to participate in the Survey and provide relevant data.

The major findings of the AISHE 2014-15 are as follows -

- 1) Increase in overall enrolment from 27.5 million in 2010-11 to 33.3 million in 2014-15.
- 2) Improvement in Gross Enrolment Ratio which is a ratio of enrolment in higher education to population in the eligible age group (18-23) years from 19.4% on 2010-11 to 23.6% in 2014-15.
- 3) Gender Parity Index (GPI), a ratio of proportional representation of female and male, has marginally improved from 0.86 to 0.93 to the corresponding period.
- 4) Number of institutions of higher education listed on AISHE portal has also increased significantly – universities from 621 to 757 and colleges from 32, 974 to 38,056 during the same period.
- 5) The total number of foreign students enrolled in higher education is 42,293.

- 6) The foreign students come from 164 different countries from across the globe. The top 10 countries constitute 64% of the total foreign students enrolled.
- 7) Highest share of foreign students come from the neighboring countries of which Nepal is 21% of the total, followed by, Afghanistan (9%), Bhutan (6%). Malaysia and Sudan constitutes (5%) each.

II. OBJECTIVES:

1. To know the collaboration of AICTE with Foreign Universities.
2. To highlight that the Indian Higher Education System acts as key source to foreign students.
3. To observe the representation of foreign students from and to India

III. COLLABORATION WITH FOREIGN UNIVERSITIES

University Grants Commission (UGC) and All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) have issued regulations/guidelines on collaboration between Indian and Foreign Universities with a view to increase synergy between Indian and foreign academic institutions; to offer students additional choices and; to improve curriculum and the delivery of knowledge and educational content. The UGC has notified the UGC (Promotion and Maintenance of Standards of Academic Collaboration between Indian and Foreign Educational Institutions) Regulations, 2016 in the official gazette on 11th July, 2016. As per the Regulations, Indian Universities and Colleges having the highest grade of accreditation/threshold accreditation, and conforming to other eligibility conditions as laid down in the Regulations, can apply online to the UGC for starting twinning arrangements with reputed Foreign Educational Institutions (FEIs) having the prescribed quality.

Seven Twinning/ Foreign Collaboration proposals have been approved for the Academic Year 2016-17. List of Institute-wise AICTE approved Twinning/ Foreign Collaboration proposals for the AY 2016-17 is as under:

Table I
Indian Institute Foreign University

Sl.No.	Indian Institute Foreign University
1.	Gandhinagar Institute of Technology, Ahmedabad DE Montfort University, Leicester, U.K.
2.	Daly College Business School, Madhya Pradesh DE Montfort University, Leicester, U.K.
3.	Universal Business School, Maharashtra Cardiff Metropolitan University
4.	Institute of Hotel Management, Maharashtra University of Huddersfield, U.K.
5.	GMR School of Business, Telengana Schulich School of Business, York University, Toronto, Canada.
6.	S.R. International Institute of Technology, Telegana University of Massachusetts

7. Ansal Technical Campus, Uttar Pradesh Valiparaiso University, USA.

Source: AICTE 2015 - 2016

A Task Force was constituted under the Chairmanship of Prof. M. M. Sharma vide this Ministry's Order dated 22nd March, 2005 with regard to assess scientific research in Universities. The Terms of Reference (ToR) of the Task Force were to (i) assess the status of basic scientific research and training in universities, (ii) suggest solutions and strategies to retrieve and enhance the excellence of the universities and (iii) assess resources required to implement the recommended solutions along with their modalities. To re-assess the present status of basic scientific research and training in universities, the Task Force has been reconstituted under the Chairmanship of Dr. Anil D. Sahasrabudhe, the then Director and Professor, College of Engineering, Pune on 25th November, 2014.

IV. INDIANS EDUCATION SYSTEM – A KEY SOURCE TO FOREIGN STUDENTS

In the summer of 2014, Narendra Modi became India's Prime Minister in a landslide election, giving him a mandate to launch much-needed reforms to the country's education system. Mr Modi's convincing win sparked optimism for a new era of prosperity and opportunity, and indeed, India is set to overtake China in terms of yearly GDP growth by 2017. As the government moves forward in implementing improvements to – and increasing the capacity of – India's education system, it is also faced with questions about how to further internationalize its universities and institutions.

RELATIVELY LOW INBOUND MOBILITY RATES

The Indian government aims to increase the current higher education participation rate from its relatively low level now – 18% (compared to 26% in China and 36% in Brazil) – to 30% by 2020, a target that would require an increase of 14 million spaces over six years. As ambitious as this goal is, the British Council has still observed that, "By some estimates, even if India succeeds in its target of 30% [gross enrolment rate] by 2020, 100 million qualified students will still not have places at university." The drive to get more Indian students into higher education is necessarily a huge undertaking, and it may be why there has been limited success in (and focus on) increasing the number of inbound international students to India. In 2000/01, there were roughly 7,000 international students studying in the country, while in 2012/13, there were just over 20,000 – an increase that is lower than the overall growth in international student mobility, and a level of inbound that is considerably less than the roughly 200,000 Indians who study abroad. It is understandable that India must concentrate on expanding its higher education capacity (the number of universities has increased from 266 in 2000/01 to 700 in 2013/14) and domestic student enrolments (from 8.4 million to about 20 million over the same period) before it places more emphasis on internationalizing its universities; ensuring talented Indian students find the places they need in universities at home is naturally the key consideration.

And yet, with India's growing economic power and the surge in other Asian destinations' ability to attract foreign students, it may well become a greater priority to further establish India as a study destination in the region. Internationalization would also – as it does around the world – bring in important revenue flow to Indian higher education institutions and expanded diplomatic, economic, and community links. There is, however, a steep climb ahead: for example, there are currently 20 Indian institutions in the new QS global rankings devoted to institutions in the BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India, and China), with two in the top 50 and seven in the top 100. By comparison, China has 71 institutions in the BRICS top 200, and six of these are within the top 10. The 2014 QS BRICS ranking devoted a specific section to internationalization, and on this measure, India did not fare well: only one Indian institution made it into the BRICS top 100 for proportion of international faculty, and just two made it into the top 100 for proportion of international students. In a related development, the Indian Council of Cultural Relations found that of the 3,465 scholarship slots offered to foreign students for study in India, 1,361 (39%) were unused in 2013/14.

In terms of existing international students in India, a recent research study published in International Higher Education found that since the mid-1990s the share of students choosing India from other Asian countries has increased, while that of Africa has declined. The study found that South Asia and the Gulf Region continue to be important source countries for Indian institutions, but also that new opportunities have emerged in Central Asia and East Asia. Roughly 80% of international students come to India for undergraduate studies, about 18% for postgraduate studies, and approximately 2% for doctoral programmes /research.

UNDERLYING CHALLENGES IN INDIA'S HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

India's relatively weak inbound numbers also highlight challenges within India's tertiary system – challenges that prompt so many Indians to study abroad. A recent British Council report paints a picture of a system beset by issues of quality in many of its institutions. It cites “a chronic shortage of faculty, poor quality teaching, outdated and rigid curricula and pedagogy, lack of accountability and quality assurance, and separation of research and teaching.” The report also notes issues regarding research capacity and innovation, pointing to low levels of PhD enrolments thus an insufficient number of talented researchers.

There are also concerns about the ability of Indian-schooled graduates to compete in the Indian and global economy. A recent report by Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) and Ernst & Young (EY) – Higher Education in India: Moving towards global relevance and competitiveness – found that only a small proportion of Indian graduates were employable. It concluded that this low employability “is driven by factors like out-dated curricula, shortage of quality faculty, high student-teacher ratios, lack of institutional and industry linkages, and lack of autonomy to introduce new and innovative courses.”

The report establishes a goal for India to have 90% of graduates “readily employable” by 2030.

GROWING DEMAND CONTINUES TO FUEL OUTBOUND MOBILITY

Indian outbound mobility is driven by a supply-demand gap and concerns with quality in education, and the US remains a leading destination for Indian students. The US-based Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) reports that US graduate schools have seen dramatic increases in the number of admissions offers for Indian students over the last two years (25% more in 2013/2014 following a 27% increase in 2012/2013). And the Education Testing Service (ETS) reported that the Graduate Record Examination test volume in India for 2012 grew by approximately 30% compared to the prior year. Finally, the American Embassy in New Delhi reported that early data on student visa approvals to the US increased by a massive 50% from October 2012 through early 2013 compared to the same period in the previous year.

In Australia, the number of Indian students is also on an upswing. The director of the Victorian Government Business Office in Bangalore, Annie Santhana, recently told *University World News* that, “In September 2014 over 50,000 Indian students enrolled across Australia, of which half (25,000) are enrolled in Victoria,” contributing to a 20% increase of Indian students to Victoria alone. Similarly, the latest industry statistics from Australia report a 29.3% increase in Indian enrolment year-to-date November 2014 (compared to the same period in 2013). And forecasts indicate that the number of Indian students in Australia will continue to grow substantially in coming years. In New Zealand, meanwhile, India remains a key market, particularly for the Private Training Establishment (PTE) sector, according to a recent market profile by Education New Zealand. India is New Zealand’s second-largest and fastest-growing source country for international students – thanks in part to New Zealand’s marketing and media efforts. Overall, there are almost 12,000 Indian students in New Zealand, two-thirds of whom study in the PTE sector.

V. INDIAN STUDENTS MOBILITY TRENDS FROM INDIA AND GLOBALLY

- ❖ Australia is among the top preferred destination among Indian students, given that it got the second-highest number of students from India in 2014 (after USA). In the preference list of countries among students however, Australia does not figure in the Top 3 choices. While US continues to be by far the most popular #1 choice,
- ❖ Surprisingly UK continues to be the second preference despite the sharp decline in its numbers from India in the past few years.
- ❖ Canada is the surprising third choice, beating Australia comfortably as a popular choice. These are among the key findings of the survey, suggesting that a new reality is taking shape in India. Neither. Canada, at 7.1%, while Australia was 6.5% and US at 5.6%. Among countries that get more than 50,000 students from India annually, what has been the highest jump in numbers – 10%, 15% or

20%? Well, none of the above. Last year, US numbers from India jumped by almost 30%! The international student mobility market is evidently seeing a lot of shifting patterns.

- ❖ In 2015, while some older trends have gained strength, new ones are also demanding as much attention. One, the US as a destination country just redefined some rules of the game last year, growing overall by 10% after a long time, with a big boost from India. The leader setting such a scorching pace last year will have many of its rivals re-assessing their market share projections for the near future at least. Two, India has definitely announced itself as the biggest player among origin countries, after China.
- ❖ India's numbers have been a bit of a see-saw, but 12% growth in 2014, and now clocking even higher rate of 17.8% - this is the second year in a row that India's rate has been higher than China. Three, so while China is settling down to a steady pace as a market leader, India is the key factor behind growth momentum in international student mobility market.
- ❖ India crossed the 350,000 mark this year, and then some more to finish at 360,000. Four, with China at almost exactly twice this number, these two countries account for a big chunk of the top destination markets. We did the market-share analysis for the top three markets – US, Australia and Canada. India + China account for 43%-plus in US and Canada, and Australia is just a shade under 40%. So these two markets should shape a lot of recruitment strategies for the universities and colleges in the coming years. Five, UK is no longer a key destination, while Australia and New Zealand continue to strengthen their position as the top choice for Indian students outside of North America.
- ❖ As in the previous year, our research team analyzed data from 2005 and collated new data for 2015 to come up with a fresh bunch of market insights. After the section that details out our research methodology, you will find the trends synthesized in two sections: global trends and India-specific trends. We hope you find the analysis useful.
- ❖ Nearly 85% of international student mobility from India is accounted for by 5 countries: USA, UK, Australia, Canada and New Zealand. So we chose the report's focus on data and patterns for these countries mostly. We have collated data from other countries as well, including China and Germany, US growth highest in at least 10 years
- ❖ So the US is likely to cross the 1mn-mark a year ahead of our projections, in 2016 itself. That will be a pretty big deal – the first country anywhere in the world with a base of 1mn international students. Growing at 10%-plus on 886,000 student strength is quite an amazing achievement. Only New Zealand, whose market is less than 10% of US, has a higher growth rate than US. China's numbers to US also grew by 11%, but that growth rate was slower than the previous year. India, on the other hand, has played a leading part in this growth story. Canada has grown almost 10% for the past 5 years For a while now, this has been the unsung growth story. And then, in 2014, when international

student numbers there almost equaled that of UK everyone finally sat up and took notice of Canada as a leading destination country (At 434,871, it was just about 600 students fewer). Well, Canada refuses to release its numbers on time, along with other countries. What's however clear is Canada's higher growth during the past five years, 2009-2014. In fact, at 9.1% CAGR, that's been the highest among all the leading destination countries.

❖ Highest-ever India numbers growth to US Yes, ever since US started collating international student market data from over 50 years ago, the spike in student traffic from India has been the highest ever. In 2015, 29.4% more students were from India compared to 2014. The international student numbers from India was almost 133,000 last year. That's 13.6% of the total US market. This spike in India numbers is a key factor that pushed overall US growth rate past the 10% mark after a very long time.

a. The Indian market is growing at a faster pace than ever before. In all key destination markets (except UK), student numbers from India grew faster than overall numbers.

b. With China settling down to steady international student growth rates of 10% year-on-year, the big growth impetus will come from India now. More trends in international students' mobility will be driven by what's happening in India.

c. In terms of sheer influence, there is nobody who comes even close to the US as a preferred destination. As 2015 numbers show, it can pull ahead when it chooses to. So other contenders – Australia and Canada – cannot afford to slacken their efforts.

d. The undergraduate market in India is beginning to come on its own. Other countries don't share break-up between UG and PG numbers, but the trends from the largest destination market, US, clearly shows a strong UG market building up in India now.

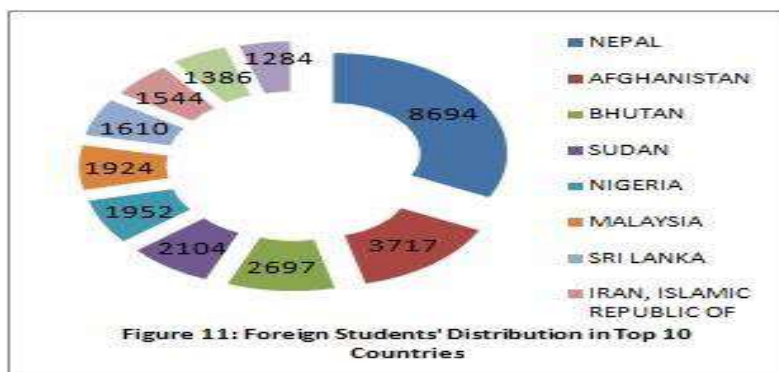
e. Australia is back as the second-favorite choice for Indian students, and the perception challenges are firmly behind it now.

f. As more and more students from India seek to go abroad for studies, they are now beginning to look at non-traditional options aggressively – China and Germany are becoming more successful in wooing Indian students.

VI. REPRESENTATION OF FOREIGN STUDENTS

The total number of foreign national students enrolled in India is 42,293. Country-wise and level-wise foreign students in responding Institutions are given. The foreign students come from 163 different countries from all across the globe. The top 10 countries of the foreign students are as in Figure 1.

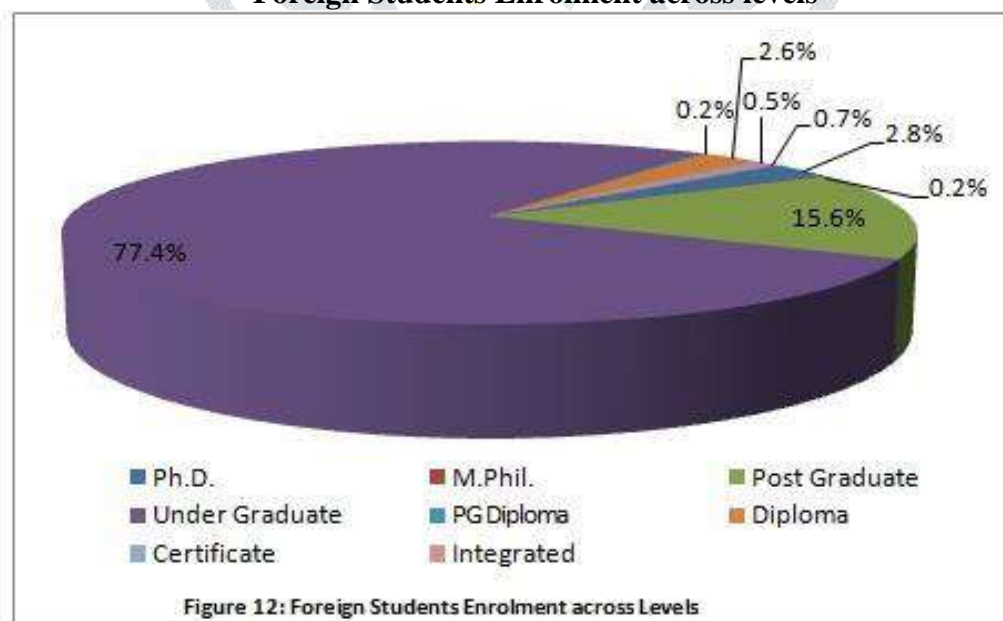
Figure 1: Foreign students distribution in Top 10 Countries



Source: AISHE - 2014 - 2015

These 10 countries constitute 64 % of the total foreign students enrolled. Rest of the 36% students comes from remaining 153 countries. Highest share of students come from the neighboring countries of which Nepal is 21% of the total, followed by Afghanistan 9%, Bhutan 6%, Malaysia 5%, Nigeria 5% and Sudan 5%. Iran and Sri Lanka each country constitutes 4 % of the foreign students. Moreover, among major contributors, only 1 country viz., Sri Lanka has more female students than males (60%). Iran and Malaysia have almost an equal share of male and female students. On the other hand, Sudan (92.1%) Afghanistan (91.8%), and Iraq (88.0%) have a considerably higher number of male students. Although maximum number of foreign students comes from Nepal, the maximum number enrolled in Ph.D. is from Iran. The highest numbers of students are enrolled in Undergraduate courses, that is, 77.4% of the total foreign students, followed by Post Graduate with about 15.6% enrolment. Enrolment in rest of the levels constitutes 7 % (Figure 2).

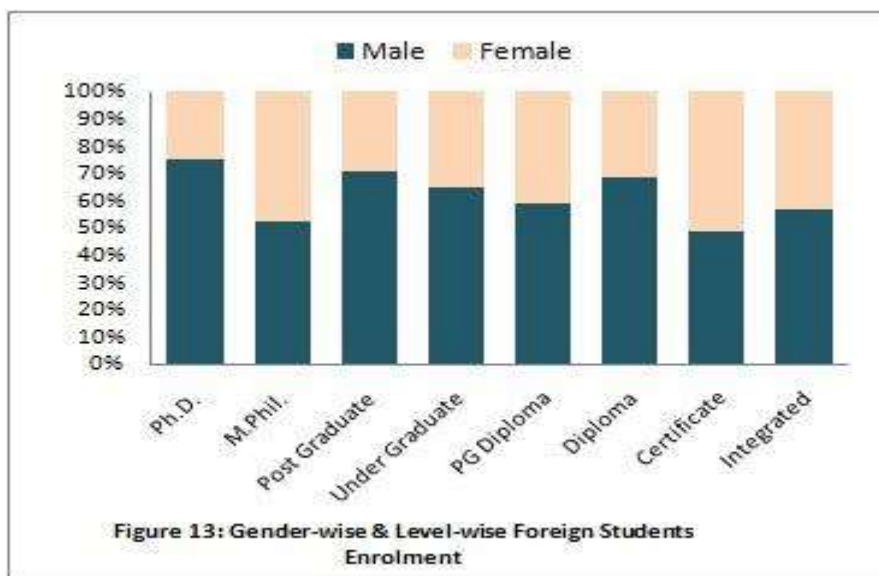
Figure 2: Foreign Students Enrolment across levels



Source: AISHE - 2014 - 2015

Foreign male students are higher in almost all the levels, except in Certificate where female students are higher than the male students. Post Graduate has 71% of male students and Under Graduate has 65% of male foreign students. (Figure 3)

Figure3
Gender – wise & Level-wise Foreign Students Enrolment



Source: AISHE - 2014 - 2015

Looking at the State-wise distribution, it can be seen that Karnataka has the highest number of students coming from foreign countries which is 13956. Apart from Karnataka, Tamil Nadu (5698), Maharashtra (5135), Uttar Pradesh (3263), Telangana (3065), Delhi (1995), Punjab (1518) and Andhra Pradesh (1207) reflects more than 1,000 foreign students.

(a) Programme-wise Foreign Students

There are 16 programmes which are observing more than 1000 foreign students and accounts for more than 82% of the foreign Students. On the top we have B.Tech. with 4478 students with 87% male students, followed by B.A having 3450 students with 53% male students, B.B.A having 2803 students with 71% male enrolment. B.Pharm has 2683 students with 77% male students. B.Sc. has 2623 students with 64% male students. B.Com. has total number of 2598 students with 65% male students. There are 2357 foreign students enrolled in M.B.B.S. out of which 51% are male students. B.C.A has total number of 2227 students out of which 88% are male. B.E has total number of 1881 students with 11% female students. BSc. (Nursing) has total number of 1556 students out of which 95% are female. At the Post Graduation level 1485 students are enrolled at MSc. level with 75% male students. M.A has reported enrolment of 1483 students with 65% of male students. BBM has total number of 1376 students with 69% male students. MBA

has total number of 1270 students with 70% male students. Ph.D. has reported the enrolment of 1142 foreign students with 75% male students. Bachelor of Dental Surgery (B.D.S) has total number of 1061 students with 62% female students.

Conclusion

With the current push to expand and improve India's domestic education system, it's possible that before long, India will join a growing number of Asian education hubs in presenting new study abroad options for foreign students. Already collaborating with many other nations in business and trade, already a formidable economic power, India seems poised to push its education system forward to the point it becomes yet one more way it connects to the rest of the world. And as the British Council observes, Indian institutions will be "looking globally for partners" as they expand to accommodate domestic demand and improve to the point where they can attract and accommodate greater numbers of international students.

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