

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS OF INDIA WITH REFERENCE TO YOUTH EXCHANGE

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ABSTRACT

In order to meet the needs of internationalization and globalization the countries all over the world are taking active initiatives to overcome the limitations of cultural, regional, language and other differences. This gives more emphasis to encourage the programs and initiatives on the part of the economies right from grass root level by having more youth exchange programs. In India youth constitutes more than 40% of the India' population and hence holds greater responsibility in bidding a prosperous nation. India has the traditional belief of building a strong economy through strengthening its youth and hence majority of the universities, colleges, institutes, NGOs and even the secondary schools are taking more active part in youth exchange program. There are number of agreements and memorandum of understanding signed in almost every part of the country with the universities, colleges and other associations of other countries to encourage more youth exchange programs and government is also taking active steps to encourage these initiatives by the entities. This paper shows the recent happenings and steps taken to encourage the youth exchange since due to the changing global trends there has been decrease in the number of students going abroad for international education.

Keywords: Students exchange, Germany, US, Australia, BRITE, YFU

BACKGROUND

From the past many years it is observed that significant number of students are diverting to the English speaking countries with the increase in the globalization and internationalization. This has made the cross cultural encounters an important and inevitable part of the educational and also the employment experiences for administrators, professionals and also the business people all over the world.

Intercultural social interactions has potentially contributed to enhance personal development and also provided excellent opportunities for building global professional networks. It has sometimes constituted the most fruitful aspect of exchange students' experiences (Clyne & Rizvi, 1998; Pittaway, Ferguson, & Breen, 1998). Nevertheless, they can also impose significant challenges for international students from a linguistic and cultural background very different from that of the host country. (Dobson, Sharma, & Calderon, 1998). They are

more needed in the present times of conflicts, world peace and fast moving internationalization. It is greatly realized in the recent past that there is a rigorous and the critical need for the youth exchange to broaden the international understandings among the nations. Constant efforts to encourage the study and feel of foreign cultures has provided greater opportunities for the students to broaden their knowledge and understanding of the world. "International education not only promotes mutual understanding and cooperation among nations, it can also strengthen national security, foreign policy, and economic competitiveness. Indeed, our quality of education and life will be enhanced by learning foreign languages and by facilitating international exchanges for students and teachers." - U.S. Secretary of Education, Rod Paige.

INTRODUCTION

A student exchange program generally could be defined as a program where students from secondary school or university choose to study abroad in partner institutions. The terms 'student exchange' and 'study abroad' are often used interchangeably however study abroad usually involves the student study full time and not in partnered institution like student going for exchange where they will be studying in the partner university of their home institution. But in some countries, an exchange student is also considered a study abroad student because they are studying in different country than their own. Student exchange program does not necessarily require the student going out of the country but it could also be an exchange program within the continent and its territory which is the National student exchange program (NSE).

According to the U.S. government, foreign exchange programs exist to provide certain international cultural exchange programs designed to provide practical training and employment, and sharing of the history, culture, and traditions of participants home country citing the Q series international cultural exchange visa's specifications as provided by the U.S. department of state.

The term "exchanges" means that partnered institution exchange their student but not necessarily the students have to find a counterpart from the other institution to exchange with. No tradeoff is actually required. Two types of student exchange program are international and national student exchange program. A student exchange programs could be joined either by the secondary school or university student excluding National Student Exchange where it is design primarily for university student studying in American continent and its territory.

An exchange student could live with a host family or in a designated place including hostels, affordable apartment/house or student lodge. The cost for each program differs according to countries and institution. The participants could either apply/receive scholarship, self-funded or apply/receive loan.

Student exchanges became popular after World War II, and have the aim of helping to increase the participants' understanding and tolerance of other cultures, as well as improving their language skills and broadening their social horizons. An exchange student typically stays in the host country for a relatively short period of time, often 6 to 10 months, in contrast to international students or those on study abroad programs which can last for

several years. Some students on exchange programs can receive academic credit from the country they study in.

OBJECTIVES OF YOUTH EXCHANGE PROGRAM

- To enhance the educational experience of student
- To strengthen the networking between students and Universities
- Broaden personal and educational perspectives
- Explore, appreciate and understand different cultures
- To enhance the ability of the student in second language learning
- To eliminate fear and prejudice among nations
- Enable student to experience international education

Benefits of Youth Exchange Programs

To Students-

1. Educational

- International learning and knowledge propels students towards acceptance and understanding of an array of different cultural and community perspectives.
- Language acquisition is achieved through practical immersion.
- Increase awareness and adoption of alternative, multi-faceted approaches to learning.
- Acquire analytical and problem solving skills.
- Enhanced interest in global issues as well as broadening general knowledge.

2. Personal

- Self-development and awareness leading to enhanced self-confidence and self-esteem. This is often the most noticeable change in returned exchange students.
- Enhance maturity and social poise; fuelled by the necessity to confront challenges outside a familiar support network and comfort zone.
- The integration into another family as well as the development of lifelong friendships could foster an appreciation of home and family.
- A tremendous sense of accomplishment upon completion encourages students to develop independent opinions, make informed decisions and strive to attain fresh goals.

3. Long-term

- Students who go on to tertiary studies find themselves more comfortable in 'foreign' environments.

- Prospective employers in almost every field look favorably upon experience gained while living overseas and knowledge obtained of another language and culture.
- Increased pressure to communicate and relate to others develops an awareness of group dynamics and personal sensitivity towards others
- Successful program completion represents an excellent measure of personal flexibility, encompassing an ability to reach compromise, focus and succeed through challenging times.

Benefits to Countries

Study abroad could contribute to both of the “host countries” and the “sending countries”.

For “host countries”:

- The major “host countries” could maintain influence, spread their culture to “sending countries” with recruiting talent from “sending countries”
- Foreign students contribute to the local economy in these “host countries” in directly, such as the expense for tuition, rent, foods as well as products.

For “sending countries”:

- Study abroad is important for the development of some sending countries and to establish the higher quality academic institution in sending countries. Therefore developing countries prefer to send their students to developed countries for further study.
- The university in sending countries originated as a conservation institution and the university in developing nations as born as a radical institution.

Indian Initiatives in Encouraging International Relations With Reference To Youth Exchange Programs

For years India has been actively working to enrich its relations with the different countries of the world in almost all the areas of trade and business. So far as the development of the youth is concerned India has strong traditional belief of building the great and prosperous economy through empowering its youth. More than 40% of the population in India belongs to this category and hence there is a greater focus on the development of the youth of the country. Various universities, colleges, secondary schools, business schools and institutions and various NGOS are working internationally in empowering and building the youth of the country to encounter issues of globalization more effectively. There has been various committees and foundations also working in international youth exchange programs.

Every day number of agreements and memorandum of understandings are signed by the universities, colleges and NGOs of the India with that of the other countries on youth exchange to strengthen the partnerships and also to encourage and bring out more worth in the exchange programs. Although majority of the countries are covered in the internationalization of the student exchange there are some countries which are closer in relationship with India so far as the youth exchange programs are concerned, some of them are China, US, UK, Australia and Germany. But this is not an end to its profile there are

many other countries which forms a good partnership in youth exchange. Along with these countries numerous initiatives are taken, different councils are established which facilitates these international exchanges' and they have actually made it possible for the number of people those of thought of it but could never found it to be so realistic and possible otherwise.

Some Of The Latest Initiatives In This Concern Are Highlighted Below-

India's Efforts to Encourage Its Exchange Ties with Australia-

Recently India has entered into new commitments with Australia which brought significant opportunity for Australia and India to strengthen their bilateral education relationship that had been made over the past year between Minister Gillard and Minister Sibal by signing a Joint Statement on Education Cooperation. The Joint Statement expands the existing exchange program between Australia and India to include greater cooperation across all education sectors. The Joint Statement includes the development of a new India-Australia Education Council, the first bi-national body of its kind to be established between India and another country. Other initiatives agreed to under the Joint Statement include:

- To facilitate the organisation of an India-Australia Inter- University Convention of Vice-Chancellors and Academia to interact on issues of mutual concern among academics
- To facilitate the initiation of a Joint Faculty Development Program through regular exchange of faculty for mutual learning in areas of teaching, research, curriculum and development, and

To develop a Memorandum of Cooperation between India and Australia on monitoring standards and regulations applicable to the operations and activities of education agents and the movement and well-being of international students

Inter Cultural Dialogue & Exchange – India

ICDE – India is a multi-faith, multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and secular organisation, that provides opportunities for inter-cultural learning and training program through, international voluntary work and Global Education.

It provides opportunities to young people from India to go abroad and encourages people from other countries to come to India and participate in a **one-year inter-cultural learning and training program through, international voluntary work and Global Education.**

India (ICDE-India) is the partner organization, appointed by the Federation of ICYE's for conducting the exchange programme in India , who have consultative status and operational relations with

- United Nations Economic and Social Council - ECOSOC (Consultative Status)
- United Nations Department of Public Information, DPI-NGO Committee
- UNESCO (Official Operational Relations)
- UNESCO NGOs Liaison Committee

- European Commission, Directorate General Education and Culture – Youth Unit
- World Council of Churches (working relations as international ecumenical organisation)
- Co-ordinating Committee of International Voluntary Service (CCIVS)

Youth for Understanding (YFU) India is part of a worldwide movement of committed individuals and organizations working together to prepare young people for their responsibilities and challenges in a fast changing world. YFU aspires to excellence in the field of youth exchange. Worldwide, the movement seeks to set the standard for quality service and support the participants. YFU offers young people in dozens of countries the adventure of a lifetime: the opportunity to explore other nations and cultures, master new languages, and discover themselves.

To achieve these significant educational goals, this movement provides young people in the ages of 15 to 18 a variety of intensive exchange opportunities. Young enough to fully adjust to a new country and culture, yet old enough to benefit from their experiences, students reap the rewards of host family and community life. This also contributes to the personal growth and also openness to new ideas and attitudes, along with the deeper awareness of the common interest in the future and of shared human values. Respect for human diversity is fostered and relationships transcending social and cultural barriers are nurtured. The overall effect is to reduce prejudice, moderate conflict, and reinforce cooperation among peoples.

India's Relation with China With Reference To Youth Exchange-

India and China has been in the ancient civilizational contact. In recent past the process of diversification and development of bilateral relations has also gathered pace. There has also been a focus on enhancing mutually beneficial cooperation among nations through simultaneously addressing differences. The broad contours of cultural cooperation of the India-China was laid down in May 1988 when the Agreement on Cultural Cooperation was signed which provided for an executive Cultural Exchange Programme (CEP) for implementation. In Dec 2010 the latest CEP was signed when the Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao visited India. The agreement provides for cooperation of cultural fields in a gamut which included exchanges of visits of writers, performing artists, archivists, officials and archaeologists by organizing film festivals, cultural festivals and exchanges in the areas of youth affairs, mass media and sports.

A MOU was also concluded in April 2005, between the Governments of two countries and India also mitted to build an Indian-style Buddhist Temple in the International Garden on the west side of the White Horse Temple in Luoyang, Henan Province. Indian President Smt. Pratibha Patil in May 2010 inaugurated the temple during her visit to China. Earlier in February 2007, the Xuanzang Memorial Hall was inaugurated at Nalanda (India). A Centre for Indian Studies was inaugurated in Peking University in June 2003. The Centre has a visiting Professor of Hindi on deputation from ICCR. Other visiting Professor chairs were established in Shenzhen University (2008), Jinan University (2010) and Fudan University (Shanghai) (2010). The year 2008 marked the 70th anniversary of the Indian Medical Mission to China and the two countries organized India-China Joint Medical Mission to commemorate the event. During the visit of Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh in January

2008, the Mission was flagged off. Ten doctors from India visited China in January 2008 and a team of Chinese doctors went to India in the latter part of the year under a MOU between the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) and the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC). The second version of the same was exchanged in 2010. The new Culture and Information Wing of the Mission began functioning from June 2008.

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed in Beijing in December 2009 by the Governments of India and China to organize the "Festival of India" in China and the "Festival of China" in India in 2010. The decision to hold the two festivals was taken by the two Governments during the visit of H.E. Mr. Hu Jintao, President of the People's Republic of China to India in November 2006. As part of the Festival of India in China from April to Oct 2010, eleven Indian performing groups performed in 40 cities across China. The Festival also included India Film Weeks in three cities, one large scale Exhibition in three cities, India's participation at the Beijing International Book Fair – 2010 as Guest of Honor country, a series of food festivals and a Painting Exhibition by Chinese artists on Indian themes, etc.

India's Continuous Focus on Encouraging Youth Exchange Initiatives with UK-

There has been observed a fast changing relationship between India and UK and it is also observed that the changes are more frequently taking place in this relationship in the 21st century. With the very objective of the learn, share and connect worldwide the British Council of United Kingdom has always strived to enhance the International cultural relations of country with the other parts of the globe by making its cultural window open more widely for the rest of the world. Due to the shared colonial history of India and UK in the past has provided a platform to the strong bilateral relation. Change is also taking place at a faster pace with the changing winds of the political spectrum in current scenario.

The bilateral relations among the two countries have given greater weight age to the student exchange programmes which can help in strengthening the cultural ties of the two economies. Common teaching language which is English has also helped in accomplishing the task more successfully. More and more research and dialogues initiatives are encouraged by the British council and also the partner organisations of the two countries which can provide more opportunities for mutual benefits in increasing the value of the bilateral relationships among the two countries. British council has always emphasized on the growing use of the English language to make the exchange programs happen in the way required and our country has adopted it which has actually helped in bringing about more resonance in terms of artistic contacts, educational and business contacts.

India's Further Initiatives to Strengthen Its Youth Exchange Ties With Germany -

There are number of program in respect of youth exchange undertaken by India with Germany and in the coming years the two countries have decided to further strengthen its ties of youth exchange by bringing about more youth exchange programs wherein more school visits will be encouraged and the benefit will also be extended to the financially disadvantaged students. Many of the initiatives will be encouraged by AFS which is an

intercultural exchange association through partial and complete scholarships to the number of students.

There are also efforts made to have the idea of exchange of journalists of the two countries which can actually help to gain more understanding of the political, social, civic and business society of India. This will also help India to gain clearer and better perception of Germany through its journalists visiting and gaining proper knowledge in Germany.

New projects are initiated and there has been observed the remarkable cooperation among the two countries in the field of economy, politics, culture, education and science, to further strengthen these ties there has been a fifteen months long celebration planned for the current year in India which will highlight collaborative projects and program showing different facets of development and urban life such as architecture, mobility, energy planning, cultural infrastructure and urban art. New areas of urban development will be highlighted and further new areas will be explored through tout the cities to reach to ore target audiences.

India's Increasing Youth Exchange Initiatives with US-

With US, India has always elevated its relations in almost all fronts. We can see the strong ties in respect of trade and also increasing visits of people travelling between countries. Over the last five year the students going to the US universities have been doubled and for the many years in row India has remained in the leading place for being a place of origin in US for foreign students.

However there are some bilateral regulations specially in case of US which has come in way of these youth exchange programs and the efforts should be taken by the US economies to remove these barriers and give more worth to these youth exchange initiatives as these programs also gives many benefits to the host countries.

One of the latest initiatives which can strengthen the future prospects of India's international youth exchange initiatives took place in October 2011 where in the Institute of International Education of New York came up with the new initiative called as BRITE i.e. Business and Research Internship for Technology and Education which will promote opportunities internationally for US undergraduates and graduates in India. This will provide more opportunities to US students to have more exposure and understanding of Indian business and culture. The initiative is also focused on strengthening the business ties of two countries and also encouraging the future leadership in two countries.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Youth exchange programs have contributed a lot in strengthen the ties among the countries and also helped in gaining the proper understanding of different cultural and language differences. With the growing internationalization and globalization the countries need to keep pace with the changes and the changing needs of the globalization and hence the youth which forms the majority portion of the countries' population has to take up the task of living up with the diversified cultural differences in a most suitable way. Hence these youth exchange programs are taken up at the priority for enhancement by different countries. India has realized the importance of these youth exchange programs from the past many years and is also continuously realization the changing effects to be given to these exchange programs.

This has resulted into many exchange initiatives taken up by different universities, institutes, NGOS of India with that of other countries.

Many of the countries have recently reported the decreasing percentage of students going international for higher studies which may be due to the changes in global economic trends and to further encourage the exchange there is a need to focus on the following-

- More initiatives with new countries and regions should be encouraged in order to have better understanding of the different parts of the globe and the different culture and languages.
- There should be more cost effective study abroad programs and options created.
- The summer study programs and options should be increased in the number and benefit must also reach to the disadvantaged and the deserving groups.
- The outcome of the programs should be increased in its worth by utilizing these international students as the educational resources.
- Equal opportunities should be provided to the faculty to gain international experiences and some budget should also be reserved at the office of international affairs for the faculty to enable them travel overseas which can help them to understand the educational sites abroad and also explore further linkages among countries which can also motivate research and development internationally.
- The international faculty swap program should be established in which the faculties should be exchanged for the whole or the partial academic year or for the term in the overseas universities. Proper exchange benefit in the form of salary and other benefits should also be provided which can work as a motivator for the international exchange and also can cover up the cost of the exchange program to the desired extend.
- There should be more expansion and integration of teaching and learning more foreign languages and cultures.
- Efforts should be made to increase the number of internationally related courses and summer internships which can give students greater exposure to the global corporate world.

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