

INDIA AS A GLOBAL DESTINATION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES*

PREM VRAT**

This paper develops a theme for nurturing the potential of India as a global destination for higher education. It points out the glorious history of ancient Indian higher education which was indeed global because scholars from all over the world came to India in search of knowledge at Nalanda, Takshila, Vikramshila and others. However in current times; particularly in higher technical and management education segments, the perception of poor quality of education and low employability of graduates is resulting in many students from India going abroad for even undergraduate education in addition to post graduate and research and most Indian higher education, institutions are either not able to attract students from abroad or have policy road blocks in such a flow of students and scholars from other parts of the world. Apart from other intangible aspects, there are huge opportunity costs in terms of billions of dollars' worth of opportunity lost due to low or no intake of foreign students in Indian higher education system. The theme paper outlines the strengths and opportunities Indian institutions have to attract talent globally as well as problems and challenges that prevent it from happening. The paper addresses issues to enhance perceived quality and employability of graduates in India and lists policy support as well as the global mind-set required in addition to high quality academic infrastructure and intellectual capital needed. It focuses on attracting the best possible faculty to inspire, involve and transform students and liberal funding as well as freedom as a prerequisite to nurture globally benchmarked higher education institutions. A set of recommendations are made to make India a global destination for higher education.
