

China now a global edu magnet

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Mumbai: The world goes to China to entice its young to their colleges. As in India, there too, higher education fairs, road shows and special admission campaigns drive thousands to pick brochures that give a peek into life on a campus in the West. Suddenly last year, China moved to a different level, leaving India lumbering ranks below. China joined the big league becoming one of the top six nations to host international students on its land.

South Korea continued to send the maximum number of students (27.1%) to China, but the surprise entrant, a close second was the US. When this decade opened, China

was not on any student's radar; now, most are studying humanities, followed by medicine. But fresh data put together by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development shows that there are as many international students in China as there are in Australia or in Germany, pulling our neighbour right up on the chart.

It sits there in the company of giants like the United States, the United Kingdom and France, three nations that now capture 40% of the international student market which is growing at a feverish pace. Since 2000, the number of students leaving home in the pursuit of higher education increased by 65%, totaling about 3.3 million students globally.

Clearly, international education has turned into an export house; a fertile ground where share among nations is constantly altering—the rise of Canada and China, the drop in US's singular hold, the UK inching towards the number 1 spot and smaller Asian nations like Singapore marching in for space. **Dynamic exchange replaces brain drain**

Mumbai: China has made rapid strides in the unlikely field of higher education and is attracting several thousand foreign students every year.

Speaking of the rise of the Asian region, Rajika Bhandari, Raisa Belyavina and Robert Gutierrez in their work, 'Student Mobility and the Internationalization of Higher Education', note, "While this has resulted in a somewhat smaller market share for top host countries, it is nonetheless a positive development as it has brought more countries into the field of international education and has changed the relationship between sending and receiving countries from a unidirectional 'brain drain' type of mobility to one of dynamic, mutual exchange."

The trio feels the journey from being a nation which sees its scholars leave the shores for greener academic pastures to becoming a magnet for students from around the world, is a long one, fraught with challenges.

"They (the rising Asian countries) are likely to face the dilemma of how to increase the capacity of their higher education systems to provide adequate opportunities for their expanding college-age population while also accommodating incoming international students and engaging in the type of international educational exchange that is necessary in today's globally competitive world."

India, with about 22,000 international students, has a tough test to crack once the Foreign Education Providers' Bill is passed. It will have to build an SOP to lure the brightest if it must transform this nation into an international classroom.

A STUDYIN GROWTH USA: Shrinking Hold Since the 1950s, the US has been the leading destination for international students, and it continues to host an increasing number of students and scholars from around the world. The shift in the US's world share as a host of international students from 28% to 20% over the past decade is due to multiple factors, including the increased capacity of the higher education sector in many non-traditional destinations, especially in Asia, to host domestic as well as international students; strong

national-level internationalization

policies and strategies in competing destinations; domestic economic, demographic, and workforce conditions that might affect students' decisions regarding an overseas education; and the rise of non-traditional forms of educational delivery such as virtual learning and offshore education

Roaring Asian Tigers

Singapore has been making strides in this area with the establishment of Education Singapore, a new agency charged with promoting and marketing Singapore and attracting 1,50,000 foreign students by 2015. Malaysia seeks to attract 80,000 international students by 2010; China seeks to host 5,00,000 by 2020; and Japan has set the goal of hosting 3,00,000 international students by 2020 **India: A Sleeping Giant**

India has not been as significant a host for students from other countries. It's due in large part to the same quality and capacity issues of its higher education sector that lead so many Indians to seek educational opportunities elsewhere. Though students from 195 countries come to India for undergraduate, postgraduate and research programmes from 127 universities, they total around 21,778 (2009), or about 8% of the total of outbound students **(Source: Student Mobility and the Internationalization of Higher Education, Project Atlas)**



2001	
Nation	Share of international students
US	28%
UK	11%
Germany	9%
France	7%
Australia	4%
Japan	3%
Spain	2%
Belgium	2%
Others	34%
2009	
US	20%
UK	13%
France	8%
China	7%
Germany	7%
Australia	7%
Canada	4%
Japan	4%
Others	30%

(Source: OECD, 2010)