

Editorial

Internationalisation of Higher Education

Internationalisation has moved from a marginal concern in higher education policy to a central organising idea. Universities across the world stand in the cross-currents of geopolitical tension, rapid technological change, uneven economic growth and profound questions about cultural identity. The aftermath of the pandemic continues to reshape mobility patterns and the very meaning of presence, while the Sustainable Development Goals urge systems of knowledge to speak to shared human challenges rather than narrow national advantage. In India, and within Telangana in particular, these pressures intersect with an ambitious reform moment symbolised by the National Education Policy 2020. Institutions are asked to widen access, improve quality and project a global presence, all at once. In such a context, the phrase “Internationalisation of Higher Education” demands patient unpacking. It names not a single project but a set of tensions between market and public good, mobility and rootedness, global communication and local voice.

This issue of the *Telangana Journal of Higher Education* responds to that need for patient thought. The articles gathered here speak to regulatory regimes, cross-border partnerships, talent migration, linguistic power, digital technologies and questions of equity that cut across them all. Read together, they portray internationalisation as an uneven and sometimes fragile process—shaped by trade rules and global indices, yet sustained in the end by classrooms, communities and human relationships. The articles reach beyond metropolitan institutions to tribal welfare colleges, beyond formal agreements to alumni networks, and beyond physical travel to digital interactions and artificial intelligence. What emerges is a conversation that is at once empirical and normative, rooted in national policy debates yet attentive to worldwide patterns. The issue invites readers to think not only about how India and Telangana can engage with the world, but also about what kind of world higher education ought to bring into being.

The opening contribution sets the stage by situating Indian higher education within global regulatory systems. In “Internationalising and Transnationalising Higher Education: UNESCO, GATS, OECD and India’s Regulated Openness,” V. Balakista Reddy contrasts two powerful logics. UNESCO treats education as a public good and attaches priority to academic rights, fairness and quality without demanding uniform content across nations. The World Trade Organization’s General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), by contrast, treats education as a tradable service yet leaves room for states to preserve domestic control. Reddy traces how India has approached this intersection with unusual caution. The country has refused binding concessions under GATS while gradually experimenting with cross-border collaboration under the policy umbrella of NEP 2020. Transnational education—branch campuses, franchised programmes and online degrees—appears in this article as both promise and threat. By bringing OECD and UNESCO quality guidelines into the discussion, the article proposes “managed openness” as a path that widens mobility yet protects equity and public funding. It reminds readers that internationalisation is not only about institutional ambition or student desire. It is also about regulatory craft that keeps higher education open to the world while accountable to its citizens.

From this policy-centred beginning, the focus shifts to the lived texture of collaboration. “Cross-Cultural Challenges in International Academic Partnerships” by Aasheesh Kumar, Sangeeta and Sarita turns attention to the interpersonal and organisational conditions on which global ties rest. The authors show how language barriers, contrasting leadership styles, work habits and institutional traditions can unsettle even well-financed collaborations. Their discussion draws on theories of intercultural communication and organisational culture, yet it gains particular force from the contrast between a successful University of Melbourne–National University of Singapore partnership and a troubled European consortium. Respect, clarity and a balanced distribution of

power emerge as central to durable cooperation. Cultural competence training, transparency, shared decision-making and continual feedback appear not as add-ons but as the very conditions of meaningful partnership. In placing human understanding at the heart of academic globalisation, this article complements Reddy's emphasis on rules and guidelines. Internationalisation demands both—sound policy design and day-to-day practices that honour diversity, fairness and dialogue.

If these early articles bring legal regimes and intercultural dynamics into view, “Riding the Global Tide: An Empirical Review of Globalisation in Higher Education” by Gautam Makwana and H. Elizabeth pulls the camera further back. Their review surveys empirical work from 2000 to 2023 on three major forces—changes in curriculum and pedagogy, the movement of students and academics, and the rise of market-driven institutional hierarchies. The picture that emerges is double-edged. On the one hand, globalisation has expanded international connections, multilingual instruction and cross-border partnerships. On the other, it has encouraged widespread adoption of Western academic models, growing dependence on foreign students for revenue and widening inequality between universities in the global North and South. Makwana and Elizabeth characterise globalisation as both integrating and fragmenting. Opportunity widens, yet stratification deepens. Their call for a shift from market competition towards ethical reciprocity, cultural balance and commitment to the public good resonates with the argument for regulated openness in Reddy's article and with the ethical cornerstones of partnership described by Kumar, Sangeeta and Sarita. Together, these early essays sketch a field in which internationalisation cannot be reduced to numerical targets for mobility or rankings. It must be judged by its capacity to protect the diversity of knowledge and fairness in access.

The next contribution brings this global discussion into direct conversation with Indian intellectual traditions. In “The Effect of Globalisation on Quality, Fairness, Innovation, and Connection of the Indian Knowledge System in Higher Education,” V. Vijaya Lakshmi, G. Renuka and T. Ugandhar investigate how globalisation shapes standards, inclusivity and creative growth while renewing attention to the Indian Knowledge System. Their article describes how initiatives such as Study in India and GIAN, along with foreign collaborations and mobility of students and faculty, have altered teaching and research practices. At the same time, it traces how NEP 2020 links global partnerships to the revival of ancient Indian scholarship. The result is not simple absorption of international trends but a deliberate attempt to combine traditional insight with modern inquiry. The authors note that cross-border learning can widen equity, yet they are alert to resource constraints and digital divides that limit access. By drawing these strands together, the article situates internationalisation as a balance between participation in a global knowledge economy and renewal of indigenous intellectual traditions. The question is not whether India should engage the world, but how it can do so while protecting and reenergising its own knowledge systems.

Student movement across borders forms the subject of the next two pieces, which together reframe debates on migration and talent flows. Beera Curie's “The Role of Globalisation in Educational Migration” traces how global interconnectedness has reshaped international student mobility and its links to labour markets. Drawing on theories of push and pull factors, transnational networks and capital accumulation, the article shows that students travel not only out of aspiration but also out of constraint—limited infrastructure, restricted access and discrimination at home, alongside scholarships, flexible work policies and strong research environments abroad. Curie points to the dual impact of globalisation—brain drain in sending nations and brain gain in receiving ones—while noting cultural exchange and the spread of global competencies. Yet the article does not romanticise mobility. It pays close attention to inequities in access and financial pressures that determine who moves and who remains. Policy suggestions centre on strengthening local provision, balancing flows and encouraging return migration through employment opportunities and institutional partnerships. Here, internationalisation appears as both symptom

and tool of global inequality. The challenge is to turn movement into mutual enrichment rather than one-sided extraction.

K. Bhaskar extends this focus in “Brain Drain Versus Brain Gain: Reassessing Global Talent Mobility in the Higher Education Sector.” Where Curie maps contemporary flows and their causes, Bhaskar revisits the long-standing debate on brain drain by presenting academic migration as circulation. Drawing on data from UNESCO, the OECD and the World Bank, the article traces how scholarships, bilateral policies and post-study work arrangements influence movement between developed and developing nations. Case studies of India, China, South Korea and Ireland reveal that state strategies and diaspora networks can convert outward migration into developmental gain. Yet the article is frank about difficulties—unequal opportunities, brain waste and the commercialisation of education. Even so, Bhaskar argues that well-crafted policies can support a fair two-way exchange centred on cooperation and shared knowledge. Together, the articles by Curie and Bhaskar invite readers to rethink internationalisation not as a one-directional flow of talent towards the global North but as a complex web of departures, returns and transnational ties that can serve common interests when governed with foresight.

While these discussions concentrate on movement out of and back into national systems, the next article turns attention to those whom higher education often leaves at the margins. “Building Global Competence in Tribal Students: A Model from Telangana Tribal Welfare Residential Degree Colleges” by K. Seetha Lakshmi and G. Neeraja Sinha offers a detailed plan for connecting tribal education in Telangana with international ambitions. The authors situate the Telangana Tribal Welfare Residential Educational Institutions Society within wider efforts to link inclusion and globalisation. Drawing on NEP 2020 and UGC guidelines of 2021, the article describes how academic partnerships, virtual exchanges, faculty training and scholarship pathways might prepare tribal students to participate in the global knowledge economy while still grounded in their cultures. Language training, digital empowerment and virtual connectivity become tools to counter limited exposure and the digital divide. Initiatives such as Study in India, TASK and collaborations with IITs and overseas universities appear as bridges between local aspiration and international opportunity. In foregrounding first-generation learners from marginalised communities, this piece challenges any view of internationalisation that focuses only on elite institutions and affluent students. It asks what global competence means when approached from the standpoint of those historically excluded from higher education.

Freedom of thought and expression has always been a quiet thread in discussions of internationalisation. Adama Srinivas Reddy makes this thread explicit in “Global Academic Freedom Index: A Comparative Study of the United States and Europe.” The article places academic freedom at the centre of global higher education by using the Academic Freedom Index and data from V-Dem and Scholars at Risk. The comparison of the United States and Europe reveals pressures that cross borders—executive interventions in Washington and the subtler strains of soft governance in European systems. Transnational bodies such as UNESCO and processes such as Bologna emerge here as both guardians and possible sources of constraint. By linking shifts in democracy and policy to data on academic freedom, Reddy suggests that the health of international higher education lies not only in mobility statistics or partnership counts, but in the degree to which scholars can teach, research and exchange ideas without fear. This article thus extends the meaning of internationalisation beyond student numbers towards ethical and institutional foundations, without which genuine global dialogue is impossible.

From formal indices and rights, the issue turns to informal networks and the quieter labour of cultural mediation. In “Connecting Cultures: International Alumni as Cultural Mediators at Nalanda University,” Madushani Weerakoon examines how former students from abroad act as

bridges between nations. By tracing interviews and alumni records, the article links Nalanda's contemporary global engagement to its ancient reputation for openness. Alumni operate at the intersection of familiarity with local customs and ease with global communication. They mentor new students, translate across languages and contexts and sustain ongoing projects. This work goes beyond official diplomacy. It demonstrates intercultural competence in everyday practice and strengthens institutional reputation over time. Weerakoon treats alumni networks not simply as fundraising instruments but as living circuits of understanding. In the context of internationalisation debates, this study reminds readers that universities extend their influence through the lives of their graduates, who carry institutional ethos into workplaces and communities around the world.

Equity concerns surface again in “Gendered Experiences in International Student Migration” by Aruna Priya Kanukuntla. While earlier articles discuss migration in aggregate terms, Aruna Priya exposes the unequal conditions under which women travel for study and settle into new academic and social environments. Drawing on migration studies, gender analysis and research on international education, the article describes barriers that arise before departure—family expectations, financial limitations and safety concerns—and difficulties that continue abroad through insecure housing, restrictive visa rules and the challenge of entering new professional networks. The argument is straightforward yet challenging. Internationalisation cannot be judged only by the number of students crossing borders. It must confront the question of who moves, under what constraints and with what protections. Aruna Priya calls for systematic data collection by gender, targeted counselling, secure living and working conditions and cross-border agreements on student protection. She urges mental-health support and scholarship programmes that correct gender imbalances. The article presses home the idea that global learning fulfils its promise only when safety, dignity and equality travel with every student.

The language of instruction forms another deep current within this issue. Two companion papers focus on English as both conduit and barrier in global higher education. In “The Role of English in Global Classrooms: Opportunities, Challenges, and Implications for the Internationalisation of Higher Education,” Sreenivas Madupu and B. Brahmananda Chary discuss how English shapes teaching, learning and academic exchange. English appears here as a bridge that opens access to international research, mobility and employment. At the same time, it widens the gap between those fluent in it and those excluded by limited proficiency. The authors draw on work on English as a lingua franca and on English-medium instruction in multilingual contexts. Their analysis shows how countries such as India must constantly weigh global competitiveness against linguistic justice, especially within the policy context of NEP 2020. The article advocates multilingual education that treats every language as a resource for thought. Bilingual models, language learning support centres and recognition for scholarship in local languages are proposed as ways to avoid turning English into a wall. Internationalisation, in this reading, stands or falls on whether it can respect linguistic plurality.

E. Ram Bhaskar Raju and Erra Namratha extend this line of thought in “Harnessing the Power of English in Shaping the Global Higher Education.” While Madupu and Chary approach the matter conceptually and in policy terms, Raju and Namratha turn to evidence from surveys and interviews with students and teachers in non-English-speaking contexts. Their study shows that English proficiency shapes not only academic attainment but also social connection and emotional well-being in English-medium classrooms. Students with a strong command of English participate fully and perform better. Those with weaker skills experience isolation, anxiety and limited progress. The global rise of English as the language of research and teaching thus carries a paradox. It eases international communication yet amplifies inequity. The authors urge universities to treat English as a bridge that must be supported by intentional measures—targeted language support, inclusive

pedagogy and faculty development—rather than as a neutral backdrop. Together, these two articles show that language policy lies at the heart of internationalisation debates. They invite institutions in Telangana and beyond to ask who benefits when English dominates, and what can be done to protect both global reach and local voice.

The closing article turns to a more recent force reshaping international higher education. “AI Tools in English Literature and Language Education Across the World” by Ch. Sirisha Rani explores how artificial intelligence is changing literary practice and language teaching. The article situates tools such as ChatGPT, Google Gemini and other language platforms within a broader shift towards digital and online learning environments. These technologies now participate in writing, interpretation and analysis of texts, while also supporting listening, speaking, reading and writing skills in blended and online classrooms. Sirisha Rani compares digital and traditional modes of instruction using motivation, self-regulation and satisfaction as key indicators of learning. She also raises ethical questions about authorship, creativity and the risk that mechanical precision might displace human imagination. In this light, AI appears as both global connector and moral test for educators and writers. The article links these concerns back to internationalisation by pointing out that technology moves knowledge across borders with unprecedented speed. At the same time, it transforms the deeper human exchanges that sustain literature and education. The question becomes how universities can adopt AI in ways that respect creativity, uphold fairness and retain a human core to learning.

Taken together, the contributions to this issue of *TJHE* portray internationalisation as a many-layered process. Regulatory choices about UNESCO conventions, GATS flexibilities, and OECD–UNESCO quality guidelines interact with institutional partnerships that depend on cultural sensitivity and mutual respect. Globalisation changes curricula, pedagogy and institutional hierarchies, yet its meaning in India is shaped by engagements with the Indian Knowledge System and by efforts to tie ancient traditions to contemporary research. Student and talent mobility illustrates both opportunity and vulnerability—paths to global competence and development on the one hand, patterns of inequality, gendered risk and brain waste on the other. Initiatives in tribal welfare colleges in Telangana show that internationalisation can deepen inclusion rather than reproduce privilege when pursued with attention to local context. Academic freedom indices remind us that the capacity to think and speak openly is integral to any shared scholarly project. Alumni networks, language policies and emerging technologies, finally, show how everyday practices, from mentoring to classroom discourse and digital use, carry global ambitions into lived experience.

What, then, does this collection suggest about the future of internationalisation in higher education in India and in Telangana in particular? One insight concerns the broadening of the term itself. Internationalisation cannot be confined to the movement of students and faculty or the signing of memoranda of understanding. It touches on who is allowed into global conversations, which languages count as vehicles of knowledge, how local intellectual traditions are valued, and whether scholars retain the freedom to pursue inquiry wherever it leads. Another insight concerns tension between aspiration and responsibility. Systems and institutions seek global visibility and rankings. Yet as these articles repeatedly indicate, genuine strength lies in regulated openness, ethical reciprocity, inclusion of marginalised communities, gender justice and protection of academic freedom. A third insight points towards practice. Policies matter. So do human relationships—in partnerships, in classrooms, in alumni engagement and in guidance for students navigating unfamiliar cultures or technologies.

For readers in Telangana and beyond, this issue offers not quick formulas but a set of invitations. Policymakers may find in Reddy’s discussion of regulated openness, in the analyses of globalisation

by Makwana, Elizabeth, Vijaya Lakshmi, Renuka and Ugandhar, and in the studies of migration by Curie and Bhaskar, material for rethinking strategies that balance national interest with international cooperation. Practitioners and institutional leaders can learn from the partnership experiences discussed by Kumar, Sangeeta and Sarita, from the inclusive model proposed by Lakshmi and Sinha, and from the attention to gendered risk articulated by Kanukuntla. Teachers and language specialists may draw on the insights of Madupu, Chary, Raju, Namratha and Sirisha Rani as they face classrooms transformed by English dominance and AI-based tools. Scholars concerned with the deeper conditions of academic life will find in Adama Srinivas Reddy's focus on academic freedom and in Weerakoon's account of alumni cultural mediation a reminder that internationalisation is, at heart, about the quality of human exchange.

This editorial hopes that readers will move from these pages to the articles themselves with curiosity and critical interest. Each contribution offers one piece of a complex puzzle. No single article settles the questions raised by internationalisation—indeed, the value of this collection lies in its refusal to flatten nuance. Taken together, the essays show that engaging the world is not an optional extra for higher education in Telangana or in India more broadly. It is an inescapable condition. The challenge is not whether to internationalise but how to do so in ways that deepen knowledge, protect equity and sustain cultures while opening them to dialogue. If this issue prompts renewed debate, thoughtful policy, more inclusive institutional practice and more searching scholarship, it will have served its purpose.

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