

INTERNATIONALIZATION OF INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION IN LIGHT OF NEP-2020

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ABSTRACT

The paper begins with a historical overview of some of the reputed ancient Indian higher educational institutions, having global academic excellence, followed by the National Education Policy 2020 (henceforth NEP 2020). The NEP-2020 presented a robust policy document for the Internationalization of Higher Education with different ways and means like IBC's, Alumni Connect, Credit Recognition under Twinning, Joint and Dual Degree Programme, Internationalization at Home, Global Citizenship Approach, and much more. The current global landscape of higher education has been changing dramatically over the decades. In an ever-changing world, global awareness and interconnectedness through the Internationalization of higher education have a significant role to play in shaping the next generations of learners. India committed to revamping and reinvigorating the higher education system through the new National Education Policy (NEP 2020), for taking its rightful place among the best higher education systems in the world. The NEP 2020 extensively focuses on attaining the highest global standards in the quality of higher education. Further, it reinforces the need to attract a greater number of international students and achieve the goal of "Internationalization at home". This policy appreciates the critical need to promote India as a "global study destination providing premium education at affordable costs thereby helping to restore its role as Vishwa Guru". The paper discussed the aforementioned ways and means for the Internationalization of Higher Education.

KEYWORDS: NEP-2020, Higher education, Internationalization, Nalanda, Takshashila and Vikramashila

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF ANCIENT INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

India has a long holistic and multidisciplinary learning record as a global destination for higher education, institutions like Nalanda, Takshashila and Vikramashila served as the melting pot of scholars from across the world connected through 'Uttarapath or Sadak-e-Azam'.

NALANDA UNIVERSITY

Various historical documents revealed that Nalanda University in Pataliputra region (presently in Bihar) is renowned for its academic excellence. Historical sources indicate that the University had a long and illustrious life that lasted almost continually for 800 years from the fifth to the twelfth century CE. It was a completely residential university and had dormitories to house 10000 students and provided accommodation to 2000 professors. Due to its International reputation and academic excellence, the university attracted scholars and students in large numbers from China, Mongolia, Tibet, Greece, Persia, Korea, Turkey, and others from South East Asia. The level of teaching was extremely high. Chinese monk Hiuen Tsang (602–664 C.E) notes that the intellectual flow of knowledge flourished in Nalanda after the 3rd or 4th centuries AD. During his time as a student, 1510 teachers and 10,000 monks were present on the campus. Modern-day Indologists and archaeologists predict that the number ranged from 1000 to 4000.¹ This University has been considered by many historians as the first global university of the world. It was a multi-disciplinary university of higher learning devoted to Buddhist studies, fine arts, medicines, mathematics, astronomy, politics and art of war. It had a nine storied library with 9 million manuscripts at the beginning of the 12th century. This library was destroyed by fire which was raging for nearly three months to destroy it. It can be termed as the epitome of culture, a soul of ancient academia. One of the most important curriculums that were taught at Nalanda was Chikitsa Vidya meaning medical education. In his scholarly work entitled 'Ancient India', R.C. Majumdar stated that India emerged as a truly global destination of higher learning from almost 40 countries across Asia and Europe at that time.² Takshashila

Takshashila³ was an ancient capital city of the Buddhist kingdom of Gandhara and a center of learning. It is one of the most known ancient universities in India. Taxila was an early centre of learning to date back to the 5th century BC. It became a noted centre of learning at least several centuries before Christ, and continued to attract students until the destruction of the city in the 5th century AD. Takshashila is perhaps best known because of its association with Chanakya (was an ancient Indian polymath who was active as a teacher, author, strategist, philosopher, economist, jurist, and royal advisor. He is traditionally identified as Kauṭilya or Vishnugupta). The famous treatise

Arthashastra (Sanskrit for The knowledge of Economics) by Chanakya, is said to have been composed in Takshashila. Chanakya (or Kautilya), the Maurya Emperor Chandragupta and the Ayurvedic healer Charaka⁴ studied at Taxila. Generally, a student entered Takshashila at the age of sixteen. The Vedas and the Eighteen Arts, which included skills such as archery, hunting, and elephant lore, were taught, in addition to its law school, medical school, and school of military science.⁵ It was because of its excellence that they could attract hundreds of students from distant parts of the sub-continent, in spite of the long and dangerous journey which they had to undergo. It is considered a place of religious and historical sanctity by Hindus and Buddhists and was the seat of Vedic learning. Greek historians accompanying the Macedonian conqueror described Taxila as “wealthy, prosperous, and well-governed.” Taxila was situated at the pivotal junction of South Asia and Central Asia. Its origin as a city goes back to c. 1000 BC. Some ruins at Taxila date to the time of the Achaemenid Empire in the 6th century BC followed successively by Mauryan, Indo-Greek, Indo-Scythian, and Kushan periods. The archaeologist Alexander Cunningham rediscovered the ruins of Taxila in the mid-19th century. Numerous references show that students in hundreds used to flock to this city from distant places like Banaras, Rajagrh, Mithila, Ujjain, Koiala, Madhya Desa and from the Kuru Kingdoms in the north. Takshashila was thus the intellectual capital of India, a Central University that exercised suzerainty over the world of letters in India. All the other centres of learning in deferent parts of the country were affiliated to it. A study of various references shows that the following crafts were taught in this university: Law, Mathematics, Accountancy, Agriculture, Commerce Cattle breeding, Smithy, Carpentry, Medicine arid Surgery, Archery and allied Military arts, Astrology, Divination, Magic, Snake charming, Art of finding hidden treasures, Music, Dancing ' and Painting⁶.

VIKRAMASHILA

Unlike other ancient places of learning, Vikramashila location is now the site of Antichak village, Bhagalpur district in Bihar⁷, opened its gates to only those who wished to become Buddhist monks. After attaining their education, these monks travelled to far-off lands to spread Buddhism. It is stated that the Vikramashila campus had six different colleges with each one imparting a different specialization. Subjects such as Sanskrit grammar, Logic, Metaphysics, Philosophy, Buddhist Tantra and Ritualism wherein vogue.

As per the accounts of Tibetan pilgrim monks, it was at Vikramashila where the culture of awarding degrees and recognition was first started. The titles of Mahapandit and Pandit were accorded as per merit to those who completed their education. The extraordinary alums had their portraits painted on the walls of the university. Vikramashila met the same fate as Nalanda in 1203 AD. In many ways, the fate of both universities was entwined. In addition to being exceptional universities, both enjoyed great royal patronage in their time, both had astonishing libraries, and both were ransacked and burnt to the ground by the same Turkic invader, Bakhtiyar Khilji.

Like Nalanda and Takshashila, Vikramashila also attracted students from all over the world. Other ancient universities included Odantipuri in Bihar, Somapura now in Bangladesh, and Pushpagiri in Odisha served the

³ The place derived its name from Taksha, a son of Bharata. The Ramayana narrates how Bharata, after defeating the Gandharvas, founded the two famous cities—Takshashila in the Gandharva Deia for Taksha and Pushkalavata for the other son Pushkala in the Gandhara.

⁴ Charaka was one of the principal contributors to Ayurveda, a system of medicine and lifestyle developed in Ancient India. He is known as an editor of the medical treatise entitled Charaka Samhita, one of the foundational texts of classical Indian medicine and Ayurveda.

⁵ <https://www.thestatesman.com/education/list-ancient-indian-universities-1503075194.html>

⁶ D. G. Apte (1971) “Universities in Ancient India” Faculty of Education and Psychology Haharafa Sayajirao University of Baroda, p.23

⁷ Anupam, Hitendra (2001). "Significance of Tibetan Sources in the Study of Odantapuri and Vikaramsila Mahavihars". Proceedings of the Indian History Congress. 61: 424–428.

educational needs, and India was indeed a global destination for higher education. A recent research on ancient Indian higher education institutions by C. Ramanujan has highlighted few common features, most of these great institutions used to practice such as globally relevant curricula, innovation through research and collaboration, best of the class faculties, resource supports and international recognition and respect for their education.⁸ These features have definitely emerged as the key determinant for Internationalization of Higher Education.

NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020 AND INTERNATIONALIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

National Education Policy 2020⁹ (the first education policy of the 21st century) aims to address the many growing developmental imperatives of India like economic growth, social justice and equality, scientific advancement, national integration, cultural preservation and promote India as Vishwa Guru and global study destination. It is the revision and revamping of all aspects of the education structure, including its regulation and governance, to create a new system that is aligned with the aspirational goals of 21st century education, including SDG4¹⁰ and laid emphasis on the development of the creative potential and both the ‘foundational capacities’ of literacy and numeracy and ‘higher-order’ cognitive capacities, such as critical thinking and problem solving – but also social, ethical, and emotional capacities and dispositions of each individual.

Towards the attainment of the above-mentioned aims and objectives with the holistic and multidisciplinary educational approach, NEP 2020 is to revamp and reinvigorate the educational scenario in general and higher education in particular with the flexible and innovative curricula of all HEIs shall include credit-based courses and projects in the areas of community engagement and service¹¹, environmental education¹², and value-based education. As the world is becoming increasingly interconnected, Global Citizenship Education (GCED)¹³, a response to contemporary global challenges, will be provided to empower learners to become aware of and understand global issues and to become active promoters of more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure, and sustainable societies.¹⁴ NEP 2020 formulated the policy in line with the international market demands and opportunities.

To promote India as a global study destination and Internationalization of Higher Education, NEP 2020 stipulates various measures, which inter alia include facilitating research/teaching collaborations and faculty/student exchange with high-quality foreign HEI and signing of relevant mutually beneficial MOUs with foreign countries; encouraging high performing Indian universities to set up campuses in other countries; selected universities e.g., those from among the top 500 universities in the world will be facilitated to operate in India and a legislative framework facilitating such entry will be put in place and such universities will be given special dispensation regarding regulatory, governance and content norms on par with other autonomous institutions of India; setting up of International Student Office at each HEI for welcoming and supporting students arriving from abroad; counting credits acquired in foreign universities, wherever appropriate as per requirement for each HEI; and courses and programs in subjects, such as Indology, Indian Languages, Ayush systems of

⁸ Ramalingam, D. (2015), Overseas Education: A mass exodus from India, Higher Education Weekly, Issue 98, pp. 5- 7.

⁹ The National Education Policy of India 2020 (NEP 2020), approved by the Union Cabinet of India on 29 July 2020, outlines the vision of the new education system of India. It replaces the previous National Policy on Education, 1986. The vision of the policy is to build an education system rooted in Indian ethos that contributes directly to transforming India by providing high-quality education to all, thereby making India a global knowledge superpower.

¹⁰ The global education development agenda reflected in the Goal 4 (SDG4) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by India in 2015 - seeks to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” by 2030. Such a lofty goal will require the entire education system to be reconfigured to support and foster learning, so that all of the critical targets and goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development can be achieved.

¹¹ It aims at producing engaged, productive, and contributing citizens for building an equitable, inclusive, and plural society as envisaged by our Constitution

¹² include areas such as climate change, pollution, waste management, sanitation, conservation of biological diversity, management of biological resources and biodiversity, forest and wildlife conservation, and sustainable development and living

¹³ Global Citizenship Education (GCED) is UNESCO’s response to these challenges. It works by empowering learners of all ages to understand that these are global, not local issues and to become active promoters of more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure and sustainable societies.

¹⁴ <https://www.aiu.ac.in/INIHE.php>

medicines, Yoga, Arts, Naturopathy¹⁵ etc. In line with the recommendations of National Education Policy (NEP), 2020¹⁶, several measures have been initiated to strengthen Internationalization of the Higher Education; guidelines on Internationalization of Higher Education were notified by UGC in July, 2021 that includes:

- i. Setting up of Office for International Affairs and Alumni Connect Cell in the campus of Universities hosting foreign students, 179 Universities have established Office for International Affairs and 158 Universities have set up Alumni Connect Cells.
- ii. In order to foster academic collaboration between Indian HEIs and foreign HEIs, “University Grants Commission (Academic Collaboration between Indian and Foreign Higher Educational Institutions to offer Twinning, Joint Degree and Dual Degree Programme) Regulations, 2022” have been notified on 2nd May, 2022.
- iii. World-class foreign universities and institutions will be allowed in the gift City- Gujarat to offer courses in Financial Management, FinTech, Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics free from domestic regulations, except those by International Financial Services Centers Authority (IFSCA) to facilitate availability of high-end human resources for financial services and technology.
- iv. UGC Institutions of Eminence Deemed to be Universities Regulations have been amended to allow Institutions of Eminence to set up Off-Shore campuses by Institutions of Eminence (IoEs)¹⁷.

STRATEGIC PROGRAMME AND INITIATIVES

In order to achieve these objectives and synergizing national policy and institutional strategy a thrust is given to internationalization of higher education, significant initiatives are formulated at both at institution and regulatory/government level. Accordingly, these guidelines cover various strategic programmes/initiatives for internationalization of higher education.

INTERNATIONALIZATION AT HOME:

The most important of all strategies related to internationalization is “Internationalization at Home”¹⁸, which means integrating the dimensions of international learning environment within our higher education institutions. HEIs are encouraged to put necessary effort towards ‘internationalization at home’ such as:

- Capacity building in internationalization initiatives
- Collaborative communication between Indian and international faculty
- International dimension to curricula in the sciences, social sciences, and beyond to spark a deeper reflection about course content and effective pedagogy to promote better learning outcomes for all students.
- Other areas of strength in India such as Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), computer science, gaming should be tied up with internship and apprenticeship to make them attractive for foreign students.
- Quality residential facilities to students from abroad to ensure effective
- living conditions and learning environment to international students
- On-campus support to students from abroad to provide continuous and inclusive support to international students, designed to facilitate students’ social and academic success and focusing particularly on the transition processes.
- Integrating incoming international students with local communities including assigning faculty mentors, host families and student buddies.

¹⁵ Naturopathy—also called naturopathic medicine—is a medical system that has evolved from a combination of traditional practices and health care approaches popular in Europe during the 19th century. People visit naturopathic practitioners for various health-related purposes, including primary care, overall well-being, and treatment of illnesses. Naturopathic practitioners use many different treatment approaches. Examples include: Dietary and lifestyle changes, Stress reduction, Herbs and other dietary supplements, Homeopathy, Manipulative therapies, Exercise therapy, Practitioner-guided detoxification, Psychotherapy and counseling.

¹⁶ https://www.ugc.ac.in/pdfnews/1906947_Revised-Draft-Framework-in-the-light-of-NEP-2020.pdf

¹⁷ <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1849878>

¹⁸ The term “Internationalization at Home” and its definition were first introduced in 2001. Since then, strongly related and overlapping concepts and definitions have emerged, notably Internationalization of the Curriculum and Campus Internationalization, which have led to confusion over terminology and risk distracting attention from the main job of implementing internationalized curricula

- Friendly environment for incoming students to have a safe, positive, and holistic experience
- Offering local language courses and other bridge courses as needed
- Foster connections among domestic and international students and value the inputs of international students on campus
- Courses and programme in subjects such as knowledge of India and its languages, arts, history, culture, and global context; global literacy
- Incorporate internationalization objectives into the institution's broader quality assurance processes for teaching and learning, community engagement and student satisfaction.

TWINNING, JOINT DEGREE AND DUAL DEGREE PROGRAMME:

The University Grants Commission (UGC) approved regulations where Indian and foreign higher education institutions can now offer joint or dual degrees and twinning programme. Announcing the regulation, formally called UGC (Academic Collaboration between Indian and Foreign Higher Educational Institutions to offer Twinning, Joint Degree and Dual Degree Programme) Regulations, 2022, Chairman M Jagadesh Kumar said that this would be of "great interest to the student community as well as higher educational institutions". The idea behind twinning programme is holistic development of the learners with the help of cultural exchanges and social cohesion.¹⁹ Mobility under Twinning programme will equip the learners with best practices, approaches and methods of teaching and learning in international institutions. However, the degree under twinning arrangement shall be given solely by the Indian Higher Education Institution.²⁰ This will aid in capacity building of institutions and help students in career planning and opportunities. Indian Higher Education Institutions are encouraged to offer degree programme under twinning arrangement.

- As NEP 2020 suggested, this twinning arrangement will give effect to Credit Recognition
- Credit Recognition and Transfer means 'Credit' conferred by a Foreign Higher Education Institution to be recognised, quantified and included towards the credit requirements for a programme delivered by an Indian Higher Education Institution under a mutual twinning arrangement
- The collaborating Indian Higher Education Institution may enter into Agreement/MoUs with Foreign Higher Education Institution for recognition of credits under twinning arrangements
- In case of an institution affiliated to the University, NOC to be obtained from the affiliating University. The institution concerned, affiliating University and the Foreign Higher Education Institution shall enter into tripartite agreement/MoU for the purpose
- In this, the existing curricula may be supplemented by the additional curricula of the collaborating universities. The joint course structure can be worked out on the basis of need assessment and to complement the course structure of the corresponding semester
- The degree offered under such Twinning programme shall be awarded by the Indian Higher Education Institution only
- The credits obtained at the Foreign Higher Education Institution shall be reflected in the transcript
- The Indian Higher Education Institutions should also make provision for exit pathways for student who are unable to complete the Twinning programme including for failing to secure VISA should be allowed to complete the programme in the Indian Higher Education Institution.

GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP APPROACH

Global awareness and interconnectedness are increasingly sought after in today's global knowledge society. International dimension to curriculum, international offering in educational activities, international competencies in faculty and students etc. will prosper the institutions towards internationalization of higher education. Internationalization is not an end in itself but a driver of qualitative change in higher education. One of the foremost qualitative changes is fostering global ethos within universities and making learners 'Global Citizen'. Global citizen is someone who is aware of and understands the wider world and actively works towards making our planet more equal, fair and sustainable. Higher Education Institutions may take a Global citizen approach at their institution.

¹⁹ Hamid, A. (2016), International Education and Student mobility, Asian Journal of Service Management, Vol. 8(1), p. 67.

²⁰ Singh, K. and Hamid, A. (2016), Higher Education in International Business Market: A critical analysis, Journal of International Business and Economics, Vol. 34(2), pp. 341-346.

- Developing knowledge, skills and values in our next generation which they need to engage with the world and believing that “we can all make a difference”
- Empowering students with understanding of how the world works economically, politically, socially, culturally, technologically and ecologically.
- HEIs may endeavor to inculcate essential values such as diversity, interdependence, empathy and perspective in students.
- Engaging with community services with special focus in and around the higher education institution will contribute at a range of level from local to global
- Credit based projects and courses in the areas of community engagement, environmental education and value-based education
- Short courses and workshops on human and constitutional values, respect for others, cleanliness, courtesy, democratic spirit, spirit of service, respect for public property, scientific temper, responsibility, pluralism, equality, and justice
- Inculcate skill in students, such as
 - Critical thinking
 - Communication
 - Technology skills
 - Cross-cultural awareness
 - Adaptability
- Global citizens harness this knowledge, values, skills and are uniquely positioned to contribute in multiple contexts – locally, nationally and internationally. They will be extremely critical for building a more sustainable, resilient and compassionate world in the 21st century

ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH COLLABORATION:

Academics and research in Higher Education Institutions around the world faces a number of wide ranging and interlinked global challenges such as food security, energy security, infectious disease etc. Collaboration among the top universities is essential to identify causes, addressing concerns and dealing with the impacts. This will also accelerate the progress of institutions and enhance the quality of education. Higher Education Institutions are encouraged to enter into collaborating activities, complying the relevant norms and Regulations. The activities may include:

- Student exchange programme for short-duration visits to reputed Universities abroad Semester-abroad programme under Twinning programme scheme.
- Faculty members are encouraged to get exposure to foreign universities in exchange programme, short-term projects etc.
- Expanding strategic research partnership with international Higher Education Institutions
- Organizing academic and research workshops, seminar and conferences in partnership with international universities
- Collaborating with alumni (both students and faculty) at various foreign Universities for academic and research activities
- Formation of knowledge partnership i.e., a network of individual researchers who contribute knowledge, experience, resources and participate in two-way communications
- Establishment of Chairs abroad in the name of eminent Indian scientists/ scholars and philosophers

ALUMNI CONNECT

The Alumni are a strong support to any Higher Education Institution. An active Alumni Association can contribute in academic matters, student support as well as mobilization of resources – financial and non- financial. Connecting with Alumni will enable the institutions to utilize the services of the alumni as brand ambassadors to showcase the strengths of Indian Higher Education system. Alumni of foreign origin as well as Indian alumni living abroad can play a crucial role in brand building of the Indian Higher Education Institutions abroad and making India a global study destination. Higher education institutions in India need to create a culture for alumni to reconnect, devise suitable vehicles for brand building and give due recognition to their contributions. The “Alumni Connect” encourages Indian HEIs to engage with Alumni (of foreign origin and Indians living abroad).²¹ In order to maintain a continuous engagement with the alumni, the HEIs may undertake a number of activities:

- Establish an alumni cell and maintain a detailed database of the alumni living abroad (both Indian and foreign)
- Sharing with the alumni regarding the latest initiatives of the institution
- Virtually connecting with the alumni and inviting them for participation in conferences/webinars
- Networking get-togethers among the alumni including through video conferencing
- Providing brochure, pamphlets and other advertising materials about the institution, programme, courses for its dissemination abroad
- Engage in community service activity with help of Alumni
- Honouring distinguished alumni for supporting in brand building exercise as well as overall development of the institution

MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT:

Periodic review of the progress of different components of internationalization of higher education in India, in accordance with the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will be conducted. Remedial measures and contingency strategy will be made upon interim assessment. The monitoring will be done on the following framework:

- Operationalization of portal on various indicators of internationalization
- Key performance indicators based on these Guidelines will be framed, yearly progress reports on KPIs
- Assessment of the desired results in terms of quantitative as well as qualitative output
- Remedial measures and transparent continuous feedback mechanisms with student feedback fed into future plans and modifications in strategies
- Evaluation studies to support the planning and management of interventions to promote internationalization.
- Assessment of internationalization to be made part of ranking and accreditation to incentivize the Higher Education Institutions and gradual synchronization of National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) and National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) assessment parameters with international ranking like QS²² and THE.²³

CONCLUSION

With its huge growing population and 40 million Indians are pursuing higher education, India cannot be lag behind and slow in reacting to the wave of Internationalization. There are both opportunities and challenges in internationalizing higher education. The opportunities include enhanced capacity, greater access for students, development of joint curriculum, greater diversity of programs, exposure to a variety of teaching and learning methods, growing comparability of qualifications, exposure to established systems of education administration and management, less brain drain of gifted and bright students to foreign institutions, the fusion of cultures, exchange of research ideas and enhancement of research capacity, the establishment of the multinational and cross-disciplinary team and generation of new academic environments. The challenges and risks concern the quality of provision, high fees leading to an elitist provision, and inequality of access leading to a two-tier system which is inconsistent with the equity and access philosophy of both the institution and the national government. By the NEP 2020, India will be promoted as a global study destination providing premium education at affordable costs thereby helping to restore its role as a Vishwa Guru. There lies the opportunity for Indian higher education institutions and policymakers in addressing issues related to curriculum delivery, quality of teaching, the relevance of course content, learning and teaching strategies used, and offering programs that are both globally and locally relevant. Under NEP 2020, the top 500 foreign universities will be

²¹ Albatch, P., 1989. The New Internationalism: Foreign students and Scholars. *Studies in higher education*, 14(2), pp. 125- 136.

²² Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) is a British company specialising in the analysis of higher education institutions around the world. The company was founded in 1990 by Nunzio Quacquarelli. QS World University Rankings is an annual publication of university rankings by Quacquarelli Symonds (QS). The QS system comprises three parts: the global overall ranking, the subject rankings (which name the world's top universities for the study of 51 different subjects and five composite faculty areas), and five independent regional tables—namely Asia, Latin America, Emerging Europe and Central Asia, the Arab Region, and BRICS ²³
https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/upload_document/int_he.pdf

facilitated to operate in India, they will be free to fix admission criteria and fee structure, to recruit faculty and staff from India and abroad, and shall not offer any program that jeopardizes India's national interests.

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