

# 18 Global Studies in Indian Universities

*Past Imperfect, Future Circumspect*

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## APATHY FOR THE DISTANT

The American humourist Ian Frazier once remarked, ‘every once in a while, people need to be in the presence of things that are really far away’. It is inherent to human nature to seek to expand the horizon of the mind and explore further and beyond one’s immediate environs. This is why the word ‘far-sighted’ has positive connotations in most contexts, as a marker of advanced mental faculties that can see, perceive, and explain matters which are not close either in space or time. Concepts like cosmopolitanism, universalism, and internationalism have emerged out of this innate human capacity to stare into the distances and to establish a connection with distant events, processes, and outcomes.

The poet laureate Rabindranath Tagore—a pioneer in developing global consciousness and breaking free of the tyranny of narrow, parochial

visions—has aptly said, ‘our mind has faculties which are universal, but its habits are insular.’<sup>1</sup> Sadly in Indian academia, this habit has turned into a malaise with no easy remedies on hand. Instead of developing what political scientist Sidney Tarrow terms as ‘rooted cosmopolitanism’, wherein individuals and activists remain attached to local issues, events, and spaces while ‘moving cognitively and spatially outside their spatial origins’,<sup>2</sup> Indian universities are peopled mostly with tunnel vision social scientists who are unable to connect with or develop expertise on distant regions, and diverse themes that operate in the wider world.

The progressive narrowing of intellectual lenses in Indian universities to confine themselves to the study of largely domestic or at best South Asian concerns, and the eschewing of the heritage of globalism and internationalism bequeathed from Tagore, Jawaharlal Nehru,<sup>3</sup> and Subhas Chandra Bose,<sup>4</sup> is a betrayal that has cost India as a nation, as it fumbles to find the scholastic fire-power to articulate its claim to major power status. If there is a ‘reluctance that seems to define India’s coming of age’<sup>5</sup> despite its gradual accumulation of material strength in the last two decades, the blame falls squarely on its universities and think tanks that have failed to generate the ideational basis for the nation to have a global foreign policy and global involvement.

If one were to take a compass from a geometry box and begin drawing concentric circles around India for how far the Indian strategist and academician should cast their eyes, where should the radius limit be set?

<sup>1</sup> Tagore, Rabindranath, *The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore*, Vol. IV (New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers, 2007), p. 602.

<sup>2</sup> Tarrow, Sidney, *The New Transnational Activism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 42.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Chacko, Priya, ‘The Internationalist Nationalist: Pursuing an Ethical Modernity with Jawaharlal Nehru’, in Robbie Shilliam (ed.), *International Relations and Non-Western Thought: Imperialism, Colonialism and Investigations of Global Modernity* (London: Routledge, 2010).

<sup>4</sup> Despite the popular notion that Bose was only a staunch Indian nationalist, he was an early advocate of studying world affairs rigorously. In his own words, ‘we must have a correct appreciation of the world situation at every stage and should know how to take advantage of it’. Cf. Subhas Bose, *Words of Freedom. Ideas of a Nation* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2010), p. 57.

<sup>5</sup> Mattoo, Amitabh (ed.), *The Reluctant Superpower: Understanding India and its Aspirations* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2012).

This author has argued often that the entire known world should be the ambit for India's sight, attention, involvement, and action. The time for a maximalist globalized approach in India to understanding and plunging into the wider world rather than acting apologetically or in baby steps just within South Asia or East Asia is well upon us.

India's conservative career diplomatic corps often resist this expansionary vision, citing paucity of personnel and of investible budgets to become more globally proactive. Manjari Chatterjee Miller of Boston University has also documented how these foreign policy bureaucrats headquartered in New Delhi are insulated from outside influences and psychologically ill-prepared to assume international responsibilities and leadership owing to fears about 'raising expectations'.<sup>6</sup>

Outside the cautious and reactive Indian Ministry of External Affairs, does India have the intellectual means to push for and navigate a truly global journey from the Arctic to the Antarctic and from Vancouver to Vladivostok? In 2010, I argued that India's political leadership and news media had boxed themselves into a Pakistan- and China-obsessed community that has little interest or advanced knowledge of more distant regions of the world. So perverse is this myopia that any average discussion in the public realm about 'international' issues automatically implies something related to India's next-door neighbours only. A lengthy quote from my own problematization in 2010 better explicates this depressing scenario of a short supply of knowledge production on global issues and events:

The narrow educational and experiential backgrounds of the current Indian political class and the obsessive media focus on just the country's immediate neighbours have reproduced a frog-in-the-well mentality that discourages knowledge accumulation and production beyond a certain geographical radius or comfort zone. There are, for example, countless Pakistan and Sri Lanka hands in and outside government in India but hardly anyone who has a masterly grasp of the politics and predilections of the Caribbean or Bolivarian America.<sup>7</sup>

Since 2014, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has delivered on much-needed global ambition and footprint in the way India approaches the world. Yet, a de-globalized mindset lingers in our universities. Until India does not

<sup>6</sup> Miller, Manjari 'India's Feeble Foreign Policy: A Would-Be Great Power Resists its Own Rise?' *Foreign Affairs* (2012): p. 14.

<sup>7</sup> Chaulia, Sreeram 'India in a Globalised World', *Geopolitics* (May 2010): p. 59.

build up a corpus of wide-ranging thematic and geographical area experts within its academia, it has no future as a prominent global player. Leaving the task of steering India's destiny in the international arena to the self-congratulatory and overcautious bureaucrats of its Ministry of External Affairs is no solution due to the mandarins' absence of initiative to think out-of-the-box and imaginatively.

Reforming India's foreign policy bureaucracy is not the mandate of this article,<sup>8</sup> but it suffices here to note that lacking a resurgence in world-class training and research in Indian universities, the fields of debate and critical stock-taking of success and failure of Indian diplomacy will remain underdeveloped or left to clever journalists who lack the systematic analytical lenses of academicians.

For India to heed Prime Minister Modi's call and overcome the reluctance to 'go global' and negate the stultifying apathy about distant lands and their problems, the onus is on its universities to come up with a new generation of independent-minded, globally cognizant and sharp thinkers from faculty members and graduate students who have excellent training in comparative perspectives and technical competence in specific issue areas.

How can Indian universities make versatile international affairs professionals, who can be useful to government as well as in the international non-profit and for-profit sectors? If change agents within universities ask such questions to start with, the answers are not very counter-intuitive or difficult to find.

## REBOOTING GLOBAL AFFAIRS EDUCATION

None can gainsay the fact that excellence in universities comprises a most 'powerful, yet under-appreciated national resource.'<sup>9</sup> The examples of Japan and the Asian Tiger economies since World War II reveal how central school and university educational revamps were to trigger overall

<sup>8</sup> For a stinging critique of the Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officialdom and their refusal to innovate or evaluate their own flaws, see Shashi Tharoor, *Pax Indica: India and the World of the Twenty-First Century* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2012), Chapter Nine.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Jonathan Cole, *The Great American University: Its Rise to Preeminence, its Indispensable National Role, Why It Must Be Protected* (New York: Public Affairs, 2010).

economic prosperity and rise of these societies as prominent actors in the international realm. The Pakistani economist Mahbub ul Haq has shown that there was an 'education miracle' behind the East Asian miracle from the 1960s, which drove up the human capital levels to unprecedented heights in the Asian context.<sup>10</sup>

If there is to be a South Asian miracle like the East Asian one, there is no escape from the imperative to build world-class universities and invest strategically in raising the quality of higher education, including the social sciences. The causal link between committing human and material resources to education and observing a marked economic and international rise in a nation should not be erroneously inverted. Countries like India cannot hope for improved educational standards after a certain level of increased living standards and GDP growth occur. Rather, the revolution in education must precede and accompany the ascent to major power status.

Nothing short of a radical re-education and retooling of India's social science stables and academic infrastructure on global studies can rectify the gaping holes which stunt the nation's aspirations to be great and good in the world at large. It will require a qualitative leap in the Indian university imagination to benchmark itself against peers internationally and develop a far more rigorous and intellectually engaging pedagogy and epistemology on foreign issues.

Since global studies are a sub-discipline of core social science disciplines like political science, economics, sociology, and history, the sorry fate that has befallen the social sciences in general in India is a generic cause for the low standards of research and teaching in foreign affairs. The same lack of funding, equipment, autonomy from government control, and freedom from politicization which bedevils all the social sciences in India<sup>11</sup> also afflict the study of global affairs.

If one were to just compare the library collections on international affairs in an average Indian university that has a department of political science or international relations with that of an average Chinese, Japanese, or South Korean university, it sends out a rough indicator of how behind India is in developing the software for its entry into the ranks of major

<sup>10</sup> Haq, Mahbub, *Human Development in South Asia* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 31.

<sup>11</sup> Chaudhary, Shreesh 'Why Neglect Humanities and Social Sciences', *The Hindu* (12 July 2009).

world powers. But the rot goes a lot deeper than simply the absence of enough money and material. The rest of this chapter will identify how global studies in Indian universities has suffered from poor conceptual planning, badly structured incentives, non-achievement based organizational culture, parasitic relationships with the government and private sectors, and unproductive work ethics that hinder quality enhancement.

## A MEDIOCRE GLOBAL STUDIES 'SYSTEM'

India's far and few between university departments dedicated to the study of foreign affairs have mostly missed the advent of the new phenomenon of global policy studies. The vast majority of them still offer graduate degree programmes in the obsolete 'International Relations' (IR) genre, which has been bypassed in the last two decades by spectacular shifts in the material distribution of power and wealth in the global economy. Cutting edge scholars like Stephanie Lawson of Macquarie University have posited that we have long since shifted into a 'post-international' world where non-state actors like gigantic multinational corporations (MNCs), transnational terrorist groups, borderless problems of the environment, health, conflict, and fluid movement of goods, capital, and services are rendering the very foundation of state-centric IR outdated.<sup>12</sup>

To be sure, the IR sub-discipline has been adjusting its stance towards non-state actors and there is widespread unease about the relevance of state-heavy theories within its fold.<sup>13</sup> But the fundamental rethinking of the field augured by economic globalization necessitates novel conceptualization and restructuring of the curriculums and pedagogy of global studies. I am not merely quibbling over nomenclature between IR and 'Global Policy Studies' or simply 'Global Studies'. We should not underestimate the importance of language and concept in shaping mind-sets and *Weltanschauung*.

What if the subject matter is defined as Global Studies instead of IR, which is a derivative of political science? It would immediately force an interdisciplinary turn in the academic approach to foreign affairs,

<sup>12</sup> Lawson, Stephanie, *International Relations* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012), p. 158.

<sup>13</sup> Legro, Jeffrey, and Andrew Moravcsik, 'Is Anybody Still a Realist?', *International Security*, vol. 24, no. 2 (1999).

particularly by introducing faculty members and students to the worth of understanding global business strategies. Right now, the IR departments across India are oblivious to the value of corporate strategy and corporate decision-making in determining outcomes.

Admittedly, there is a longstanding specialization of international political economy (IPE) within the IR sub-discipline, but IPE itself is not enough to cover all the facets of corporate power and tactics on an intercontinental scale. If one has to do justice to global studies, it will have to incorporate business studies, especially areas like strategic management, mergers and acquisitions, corporate competition, and the tremendous sway of markets over social and political life. The silo mentality which has been a bane in the social sciences divides IR scholars from working closely with business studies peers, but the twinning of the two is essential to get a better handle over the current state of the world.

Multidisciplinary social science is mostly an aspiration in India, as is evidenced by the fact that IR/Political Science departments rarely have International Business specialists within their faculty rosters. To reiterate, IPE is not a substitute for core Business Studies faculty members within a global studies department or at least within a larger university where students enrolled in degree programmes in IR can take a number of elective courses in business departments. Some prominent Indian universities are handicapped by ideological capture that prevents exposure of faculty members and students to Business strategies, thereby keeping them in the dark about what is arguably more important today than classic geostrategic analysis of statecraft.

How can Indian universities claim to train young minds in the field of 'strategy' without course work and detailed curricular integration between the old IR and Business Studies?

While the severe shock dealt by the global economic crisis since 2008 has pushed the discipline of Economics to re-evaluate its fundamental premises and assumptions,<sup>14</sup> IR scholars in India have not yet awoken to the value of understanding, say, the boardroom manoeuvres of a Goldman Sachs or JP Morgan and how it impacts on war, revolutions or inter-state tensions. Academicians in the West have, as always, taken the lead in pondering why 'the discipline of IR has inherently and structurally been

<sup>14</sup> Gardiner, Beth 'Back to School: Economists Rethink Theories in Light of Global Crisis', *The Wall Street Journal* (17 June 2010).

unable to engage with, and render intelligible, the latest financial crisis and its consequences'.<sup>15</sup>

Indian scholars who teach and conduct research within India are notably absent in theorizing about the way the world is transforming before our eyes. There is a time gap between the global debates in the IR community and their transmission to Indian academia. Indian universities are mainly passive recipients of theoretical innovations that happen outside India and which seep in after a while.

Part of the blame for remaining trapped in a time warp, in theory, lies in the rigidity of the course curricula in global studies. In India's public universities, the syllabus for courses in IR and related themes is received down from centralized committees and expert groups that are glacially slow in staying updated with the fast-changing 'real world'. Although it is universally true that academia is 'one step behind actual developments in the fields it purports to study, Indian universities are aeons of steps behind. I was informed by a well-meaning academician in a leading public university that not even a few lines or lectures within a prescribed syllabus for a course can be altered or recalibrated without securing permissions from higher ups within the administrative hierarchy, who are least bothered about introducing new courses in keeping with the altering world situation.

Suppose I were a globally conscious teacher in an Indian university who wants to offer a course on maritime piracy or mass protest movements, given their upsurge in recent years, the hard truth is that I cannot do so until my proposal goes through various Byzantine layers of academic bureaucracy. By the time permission comes through, it is likely that global energies have moved on to some other pressing issue. Theoretical astuteness lies in assimilating new developments in the empirical world and testing whether these unexpected outcomes are accounted for in the existing paradigms or not. Indian universities are unable to attain such alacrity due to the overall slowness to adapt and innovate, a tendency that applies particularly to education in humanities and social sciences.

<sup>15</sup> Manokha, Ivan, and Mona Chalabi, 'The Latest Financial Crisis: IR Goes Bankrupt', *Paris: Sciences Po, Working Paper* (2011): p. 2; Robert Skidelsky, 'The Impact of the Global Economic Crisis on the Future of International Relations', *Einaudi Center's Foreign Policy Distinguished Speaker Series* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 2012).

Kanti Bajpai of the National University of Singapore has rightly pinpointed the abject neglect of theory at large as an Achilles Heel of Indian academic endeavour in global studies. Lacking social scientific training at the graduate level to link theory with empirics and vice-versa, Indian IR scholars who are products of the Indian 'system' do a lot of 'descriptive studies which are rich in detail but fail to distinguish between more or less likely explanations.'<sup>16</sup> Long literature reviews and tedious narratives about facts, events, diplomatic summits, or wars do not make sense from a social scientific perspective, but this is what passes for IR scholarship in Indian universities.

Apart from theoretical inadequacies, Indian universities have not paid due attention to methodological and epistemological aspects of research. I find among Indian academics engaged in global studies a widespread distaste or plain bewilderment about making bold generalizations and abstract correlations that have universal applicability. So then, anyone versed in world-class social science methodology would ask, what is the 'external validity' of such research that is too contextual and localised in its findings? Obviously, young Indian IR scholars have not been trained by their doctoral dissertation supervisors to think comparatively and cross-contextually.

The practice of dividing IR departments into area specializing sub-units or centres, and the absence of critical thought along the lines of 'what is this particular case an instance of?', have made a mockery of postgraduate studies in Indian universities. Instead of asking the most probing questions that would promote a distinctive Indian voice in global studies, Indian universities are simply building databases of case studies about India's foreign relations with different regions of the world (here too, the favourite subjects remain India's immediate neighbours) without deeper introspection about how India exists within a bigger global system and what acts of omission and commission tell us about the behaviour of such emerging powers.

A typical doctoral dissertation in India's so-called top universities churning out IR academicians would read somewhat as follows: 'Investigation into Relations between India and Afghanistan during the Period 1990 and 1998'. There is no hint of systemic analysis in such works, with many doubts about even the originality of these being submitted and passed for

<sup>16</sup> Bajpai, Kanti 'Obstacles to Good Work in Indian International Relations', *International Studies*, vol. 46, nos 1 and 2 (2009): p. 114.

award of advanced degrees. Needless to add, the conversion rate between doctoral theses on global studies being passed in Indian universities and their publication as books or journal articles in internationally peer reviewed and reputed outlets is abysmal.

Research is the cornerstone of quality in universities. The absence of sound social scientific bases for the conduct of research in global studies in India is the main reason why not a single Indian university figures in the top 100 in the field of Politics and International Studies under the QS World University Rankings. Jawaharlal Nehru University, which has an old and reputed School of International Studies, is rated as number 108 in this field, far behind fellow Asian institutions like University of Tokyo (number 9), Kyoto University (number 13), Peking University (number 22), Tsinghua University (number 23), Fudan University (number 25) and Korea University (number 47).<sup>17</sup>

Sadly, far from accepting the sinking standards in global studies as reflected in such neutral international rankings, Indian universities exist in a shell and cynically pooh pooh rankings as unreflective of their genuine contributions and greatness. A 'frog-in-the-well mentality', which I had cited earlier in this chapter, is not merely a function of personal or small group myopia but a system-level flaw in global studies administration within India.

What are the incentives that Indian universities provide to young scholars to publish their working internationally peer reviewed journals and books? Occasionally, through sheer individual brilliance and perseverance, one does see faculty members in Indian universities publishing globally and being cited for their original additions to the existing body of knowledge in global studies. But the average Indian IR scholar is uncompetitive vis-à-vis her counterparts in other emerging powers, not to mention those trained in advanced nations. As if the paucity of well-grounded theoretical and methodological skills were not already a deterrent, the way promotions and appraisals have been structured in Indian universities acts as a further disincentive to strive for excellence in research.

Ageism, a premium placed on seniority in terms of the number of years of service as opposed to the quality thereof, factionalism and groupism within faculty members, petty politicking for Deanships and

<sup>17</sup> QS, 'World University Rankings by Subject 2013—Politics & International Studies' (2013), URL: <http://www.topuniversities.com/university-rankings/university-subject-rankings/2013/politics> (last accessed on 29 July 2013).

Vice Chancellors, favouritism and nepotism are some manifestations of the dark underbelly of global studies departments in Indian universities. An entry level Assistant Professor knows that she is better off placating and cultivating the right relations with administrative powers rather than indulging in laborious and intense research leading to internationally cited publications. This anti-meritocratic regime where personal discretion and arbitrariness triumph is a far cry from the tough tenure system that prevails in many top universities of the world, where an assistant professor could lose her job if she does not publish in noteworthy journals or books in a specified band of time.

One only has to attend academic conferences on global studies themes, where papers are presented by India-trained scholars, to realize the futility of the output being churned out by most average universities. I have chaired a number of seminars around India and found to my dismay that the panellists lack basic articulation or a broader view of the application of their narrow topics. They simply throw the kitchen sink at a research question that is sometimes unspecified and use a few fancy phrases and references to make the work sound impressive. What would be the level of motivation of students of such scholars in their classrooms?

Whenever I address students of global studies in India, there is a palpable sense of uninspired ennui and self-doubt. The confidence that one sees in masters or PhD students in top universities abroad, driven by outstanding training and belief in meaningful careers after completion of studies, is absolutely missing. I often urge the social science students in my audiences to overcome their inferiority complexes and hold their chins up, but the everyday grinding realities of their dysfunctional departments and their pettiness is not inspiring.

Global studies is anyway at the bottom of the pecking order in Indian societal and media priorities, which are overwhelmingly domestic. The spark to take up degree education in foreign affairs is thus artificially suppressed by the parochialism and localism I have broached earlier in this chapter. But adding to the woes is rank leadership failure in departments of Political Science/IR to ignite the fire of learning and creativity among young scholars.

Why would the brightest and most diligent students come to take up graduate education in global studies if their teachers are already resigned to the lack of lucrative careers awaiting their wards after they finish their education? The absence of career counselling and professional development services in IR departments, and the ensuing default outlook of graduate

students that their only career hopes lie in academia or in government civil service, have diminished the utilitarian value of education in foreign affairs. Indian universities that are way behind their Asian and other international peers in rankings will need an infusion of fresh leadership that can generate realistic life chances for young entrants into the IR/global studies field.

Higher education must have an intrinsic and aesthetic value in terms of illuminating the mind,<sup>18</sup> but also a practical value that attracts the best applicants to take up studies. In India, global studies have drawn a blank on both these parameters because they are stuck in no man's land of being neither academically extraordinary nor vocationally efficient. What has not helped the cause of increasing the vocational attractiveness of foreign affairs education is the closed door of the Indian government to lateral entry by non-bureaucrats.

An air of derision, dismissiveness, and condescension prevails within India's Ministry of External Affairs towards academicians and foreign affairs commentators in the news media, who are belittled for their lack of 'inside knowledge' about 'what really happens' in diplomacy. The few academics who do get consulted or absorbed into India's national security and foreign policy apparatuses are handpicked not for contrariness or capacities to play Devil's Advocate but to be Yes Men who can provide intellectual justification or cover for the policies and strategies that have been decided in advance by the Foreign Service mandarins.

I have personally witnessed instances where senior Indian diplomats and their retired seniors have used credentialism to snub contrapuntals from outside government that dare to challenge the overall direction of India's foreign policy. Notwithstanding Prime Minister Modi's encouragement of new ideas, the Indian bureaucracy's non-receptive and tone deaf culture that is closed to learning is reinforced by obsequiousness among Indian academicians pursuing foreign affairs teaching and research to big names and influential figures in the foreign policy establishment. Whatever meagre research grants, overseas travel opportunities, and access to primary sources that Indian academics get is tied to the will of politicians and senior or retired diplomats, generating a patronage system that discredits merit and academic honesty or courage to call a spade a spade.

Bajpai has noted that, in India, 'Political Science/IR garnered less respect than the other social sciences and was dependent on state

<sup>18</sup> Gutting, Gary 'Why Do I Teach?' *The New York Times* (22 May 2013).

cooperation in a way that diminished its scholarly independence.<sup>19</sup> It is also a fact that India's strategic and foreign affairs think tanks, where many university academicians are active, are plagued by a Yes Man culture when it comes to critiquing the government's foreign policy blunders or failures. Even where the Ministry of External Affairs might seek independent assessments and critiques on specific policy issues, the bulk of the commentaries pouring out of Indian think tanks try to rationalize and vindicate existing government viewpoints instead of issuing systematic critiques.

Amitabh Mattoo at the University of Melbourne has correctly identified government interference as a main impediment to uplifting the quality of Indian think tanks. Observing that the Indian government is 'still suspicious of independent think tanks', he adds that 'there are a larger number of instruments, some blunt others insidious, through which various agencies of the government like to exercise control over the work they produce.'<sup>20</sup> Privately funded think tanks also face their own struggles in being able to offer quality policy relevant research that might be seen as biting the hand that feeds them. Indian universities which often express themselves via these strategic elite think tank platforms are thus unable to assert their own voice and unique lines on global affairs. They remain disseminators of government and corporate interests rather than shapers of the same.

## A GLOBAL STUDIES AGENDA FOR TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY INDIA

After pillorying the 'system' that afflicts global studies in Indian universities, it is incumbent upon us to offer realistic suggestions to reverse the declining quality and crisis that has befallen. The task of reform or renaissance is akin to cleaning up the Augean Stables and easier said than done. But some lessons stand out in sharp relief and can be implemented by visionaries who are pained to see the deteriorating quality in India's foreign affairs studies.

First, and this is unfortunately a copout from the angle of already existing institutions, India will need new universities that are drawn up from scratch with a different mission of generating world-class knowledge

<sup>19</sup> Bajpai, 'Obstacles to Good Work in Indian International Relations', p. 126.

<sup>20</sup> Mattoo, Amitabh 'Unthinking Think Tanks', *The New Indian Express* (5 February 2012).

in foreign affairs. Path dependency and inflexibility have corroded older universities so much that it is going to be a Sisyphean ordeal to get them to restructure any time soon. Meanwhile, India and its immersion into the world cannot wait for decades before world-class education in global affairs can emerge slowly from within the atrophied institutions.

The idea of global policy studies or just global studies, which was mooted in this chapter, can only be instituted where a new university or department is carved out with autonomy awarded to faculty members to brainstorm and sculpt something innovative and special. Given the limitations of locally trained social scientists, the faculty base itself has to draw from Indian scholars trained overseas as well as full-time foreign faculty members. It is not snootiness or elitism to contend that Indian universities badly need foreign staffers, but an acknowledgement of the realities of low quality research and non-original teaching that is ubiquitous in global affairs programmes across the country.

When the 'system' is clogged, it needs an inflow of fresh blood and human capital to act as vectors of change. The scholars who are freely critiquing the failures of the 'system' are either foreign-returned Indians or foreign scholars. Those who are diagnosing the malaise are the ones who can embark on treatment. Fears of Westernization of India's academic outlook on global affairs should not stand in the way of hiring qualified foreign faculty members on regular appointments. Drawing faculty from mainland China, Taiwan, South Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Japan can help provide balanced non-Western transfusion into India's ossifying and navel gazing global affairs academic community.

The second big alteration at the level of hiring faculty must come in globalizing the expertise base in Indian universities to overcome the apathy for distance which this chapter has highlighted. Departmental heads in Political Science/IR schools must consciously groom world-class talent specializing in geographically distant and thematically rare issue areas. The lack of world renowned scholars on Africa, Latin America, and emerging issues like cyber warfare and trade and currency politics should alert Indian university administrators to launch a worldwide headhunting exercise.

The inability of the public university compensation structure to attract the gurus and would-be icons in such fields should not deter private universities with more autonomous pay models to look for the best and get them to come to India. This is what global universities with strong global studies faculties do, that is, become magnets for pooling talent that

is mind-boggling by Indian standards. Indian universities, at least those which have the economic means, should aim to become hubs that house an ideologically diverse array of top notch academicians under one roof.

The third transformation which needs to happen at the faculty level is to push academicians specializing in their respective narrow fields to also grow as public intellectuals who publish and make appearances in the audio-visual media in India. At present, the visibility of Indian academics in public opinion formulation on global affairs is infinitesimal. The pundits commenting on foreign topics are mostly journalists or think tank wonks who may have flair with language and easy writing skills as opposed to academicians who are better informed but lack the abilities to write lighter articles that can educate the Indian public.

Editorial predilections to always look for an 'India peg', that is judge opinion articles or columns by whether or not their topics are directly connected to Indian interests, have caused a severe shortage in intelligent writing and commenting about distant regions and happenings. Academics with global consciousness can change this narrow definition of what constitutes 'world news' and increase awareness among lay readers of the Indian middle classes about matters far and wide. The pool of students wishing to take up graduate level studies in global affairs in Indian universities would go up automatically if academicians shape the public discourse and proffer more critical insights about international current events. To simply parrot the Government of India's line on some foreign problem as the best is to lull India's people into a false complacency.

The fourth change that Indian universities should undertake if they are to popularize global studies among the country's citizens is to move towards offering undergraduate level (Bachelor of Arts) degree programmes in global affairs. There is a discernible hunger among high school-leaving Indians to take up foreign studies as their concentration at the undergraduate level, but hardly any Indian university or affiliated college gives them this option. One might be able to do a BA in Political Science with one or two courses in IR embedded within them, but not a full-fledged BA in foreign affairs. This restricts the choice set and debilitates the pool of prospective candidates who can go on to do graduate school studies in global affairs, eventually leading to doctoral research.

As with any competitive sport, global affairs education can only compete and harvest the finest minds of a country if it catches them young. Indian high schools do have a social studies or global studies curriculum,

and the exposure of India's teenagers to the wider world due to the Internet and telecommunications breakthroughs also attune them to thinking about their place within not just the national rubric but a far wider global canvas. All they need is a well-designed bachelors' level degree programme that taps into their energies and channelizes them.

If one visits any American university, the sight of hundreds of undergraduates doing their 'majors' (concentration) in world politics does not raise eyebrows and is taken for granted. The enrolment in 'IR 101' type of courses in US undergraduate colleges is phenomenal because American universities give such options and nurture the interest of youth in foreign affairs. Established Indian universities are buffeted by needless controversies every time even incremental changes are made to curriculums, degree programmes, or their structuring,<sup>21</sup> leaving little confidence among reformers to propose drastic changes. But the key to nourishing a future generation of global studies specialists and social scientists is in introducing it at the bachelor's level. Those who miss the continuum between undergraduate and terminal degree education can only be left lamenting that the quality of incoming students into Masters and PhD programmes in foreign affairs is unsatisfactory.

Fifth, there is a dire need for a cultural shift in pedagogical techniques in the classroom in Indian universities. Encouraging students to ask questions, deconstruct received wisdom, and counter ideas of big names and cult figures whose books and lectures they hear is something almost taken for granted in established universities abroad. But these good practices are not followed in most Indian universities, especially in the social sciences, due to regimented relationships between faculty members and students.<sup>22</sup>

For too long, in the name of inherited culture, Indian universities have not empowered students to challenge their own professors without fear of unfair consequences. Imposing ideological or favoured theoretical leanings on students is a form of soft brainwashing that is especially hurtful in political science sub-disciplines because of the implications of knowledge for power holders. India's social sciences are far more liberal and freer

<sup>21</sup> Saxena, Vishakha, 'Waiting for the Cut-Off Lists? DU Controversies You Need to Know', *Hindustan Times* (27 May 2013).

<sup>22</sup> Indiresan, P.V. and Valson Thampu, 'Does Indian Education System Encourage Questioning?', *Business Standard* (29 October 2008).

than that in authoritarian China, but as the QS rankings cited earlier in this chapter demonstrate, relative independence has not propelled Indian universities above those from mainland China in teaching or research excellence in global studies.

Faculty-student ratios and relationships are pivotal in any agenda to re-energize global studies in India. Many able researchers have abandoned the core connections with students so much that the latter are rudderless and dispirited. As stated before in this chapter, it is not uncommon to see graduate students pursuing foreign affairs in India to feel that they have no viable career awaiting them. Unless the pedagogical bond is democratized and made less hierarchical, this drift will continue to rob global studies in India of the most talented students.

Lastly, no global studies programme in India can be world class if it is not densely connected with partner universities abroad. The global partnership element is often missing in Indian social science education due to lackadaisical approaches of department heads and faculty members who do not go out of their way to try and create more chances for students to go on semesters abroad, access long-distance learning through videoconferencing technology, or do double degree programmes involving tie-ups with foreign universities.

Given the budgetary limits to hiring foreign faculty members, web-based technological exchanges between universities are proving invaluable to bring wider international expertise to Indian classrooms. Foreign affairs faculties in India need dedicated staff members to enhance global collaborations that can facilitate these wonders. Misplaced faith in one's own faculty's alleged all-round abilities as well as gratuitous nationalistic sentiments that abhor exposing one's students and junior faculty members to foreign perspectives have held back foreign studies in Indian universities from leaping into the twenty-first century. In some cases, Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) do get signed on paper between Indian universities and foreign counterparts, but the jeremiad one often hears from the latter is that they remain pieces of paper that do not get easily activated due to lack of sustained interest on the Indian side or bureaucratically glacial pace of the average Indian university's response mechanisms.

I would like to conclude this chapter by recalling a couple of adages of Mahatma Gandhi.

'I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all lands to be blown about my house

as freely as possible.<sup>23</sup> The dictatorship of parochialism and localism has eaten into the contours of India's foreign affairs education system. To emancipate it is nothing short of launching a new freedom movement in the country that begins with imbuing global consciousness from the high school and undergraduate levels to doing joint collaborative research with foreign universities at the PhD and post-doctoral levels. Protectionist and pseudo claims that foreign universities would deluge India, deny access to the poor, poach on Indian faculty members in existing universities, and pursue a 'hidden agenda' to take over the country<sup>24</sup> are oblivious about China's success in attracting foreign institutions while retaining the core nationalism and independence that motivates its global studies system.<sup>25</sup>

India needs more Gandhian self-confidence and less naysaying meant to protect turfs and fiefdoms that have arisen in departments where some individuals are anxious about losing their unaccountable and privileged sinecures with the advent of world class competition.

The second Gandhian adage which should guide the agenda for a Global Studies revolution in India is the famous 'talisman' of the Mahatma about recalling the face of the poorest person and asking whether the step one must take 'is going to be of any use to him [her]'.<sup>26</sup> Indian university administrators and departmental heads who have some room for innovation and fresh endeavours within their might should recall the faces of the youth of the country who are literally starving for high quality education in foreign affairs that is not only intellectually stimulating but also rewarding as a worthwhile career choice.

If those who have the means and the authority to strive for serious reforms do not abdicate their responsibilities to the coming generations and work strategically to convert India from an educational laggard to a superpower, the future of global studies in the country will look a lot less circumspect.

<sup>23</sup> Mohandas Karmachand Gandhi, 'No Culture Isolation for Me', *Young India* (1 June 1921).

<sup>24</sup> Kumar, Anoop and R. Ganesan, 'Foreign Universities in India-Ethical Issues in New Scenario', *IOSR Journal of Business and Management*, vol. 8, no. 3 (2013).

<sup>25</sup> For China as a model of internationalization of higher education collaboration, see Mike Willis, 'How Chinese Universities and Foreign Universities Cooperate in an International Education Market: The Development and Application of a Four-Tiered Sino Foreign Higher Education Cooperation Model', *Griffith University ANZMAC 2000 Conference Paper* (2000).

<sup>26</sup> Cited in Panter-Brick, Simone. *Gandhi and Nationalism: The Path to Indian Independence* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2012), p. 25.