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EDUCATIONAL DIPLOMACY: THE INDIAN AND CHINESE EXPERIENCES

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INTRODUCTION

Over the years, the global flow of students for tertiary education has proliferated. Students have been going abroad probably since the advent of a reliable transportation system in the world, which gained even more traction with the widespread air travel. The trend, however, has become more magnified in the last decade with students from middle income groups leaving for abroad to study. This has in part to do with availability of Education loans and in part with heightened awareness about the benefits of studying abroad. According to the data by UNESCO, China followed by India, Germany, South Korea, Vietnam, France and USA are the countries with most students studying abroad (UNESCO, 2017). The most common destinations for these students are USA, UK, China, Australia and France.

Personal growth and intercultural exposure are touted to be major reasons for students and their parents alike, to opt for an education abroad. Students have even been documented to have had a greater interest in studying and studies due to the exposure abroad. For students from developing countries (going to developed countries), study abroad is a reliable way towards subsequent immigration to the country. Moreover, during their stint abroad, the students get to immerse in the professional system of the country through internships or work attachments. This further makes them more employable in the country.

While we continue to think that most of the benefits of studying abroad accrue only to students or indirectly their parents, a less intuitive yet importantly, there are economic and political impacts too. The USA has been the most popular destination from students all over the world - from developing and developed countries alike. US Universities have hijacked the 'Best Universities' list in almost every domain with at least 6-7 universities represented in the top 10, while the remaining are found in Europe. This hegemony was recently challenged by a rise of interest in the developing world and the competitiveness of their universities. China is a leader, followed by India although India is far behind. The Chinese government's desperate and massive investments in the education sector have led them to proclaim that they would be

hosting about half a million foreign students by 2020 (GA, 2018). Some believe it is a coincident while others suspect a meticulous plan on behalf of the Chinese to attracting students who have been deterred to apply to US universities owing to the xenophobic nature of the Trump administration. As the GA report estimates, the administration sought to cut the cultural exchange budget by nearly 75% in FY 2019. This has deeply concerned US authorities and officials. This points at the nexus of important economic and political impacts of inbound international students on the host economy.

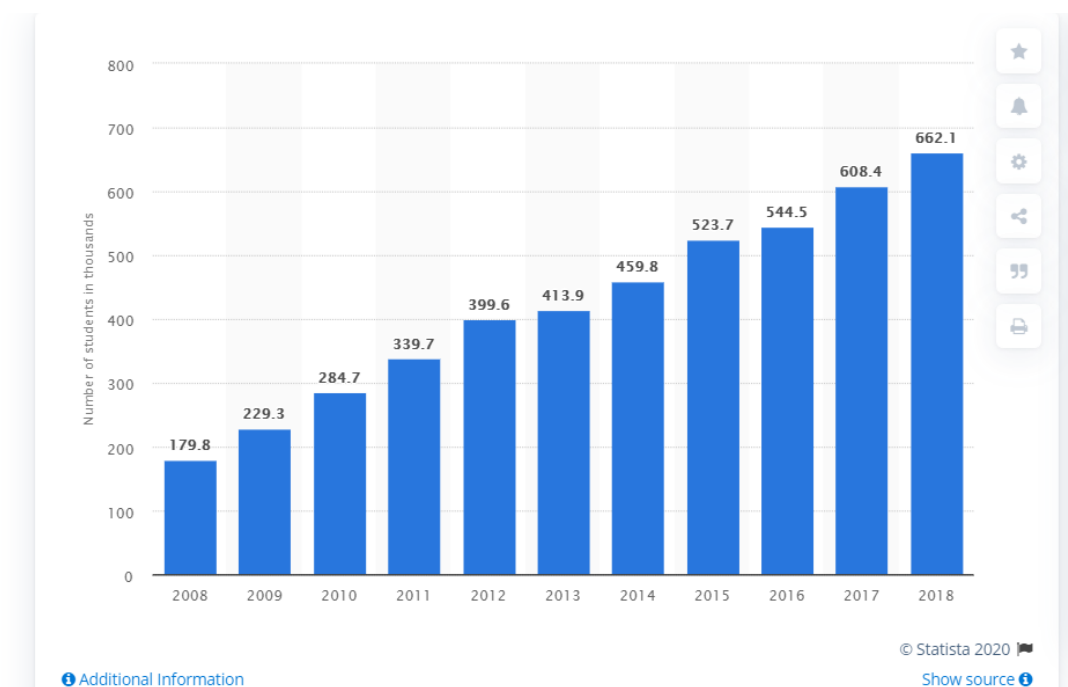


Fig. 1: Number of students from China going abroad for study from 2008 to 2018

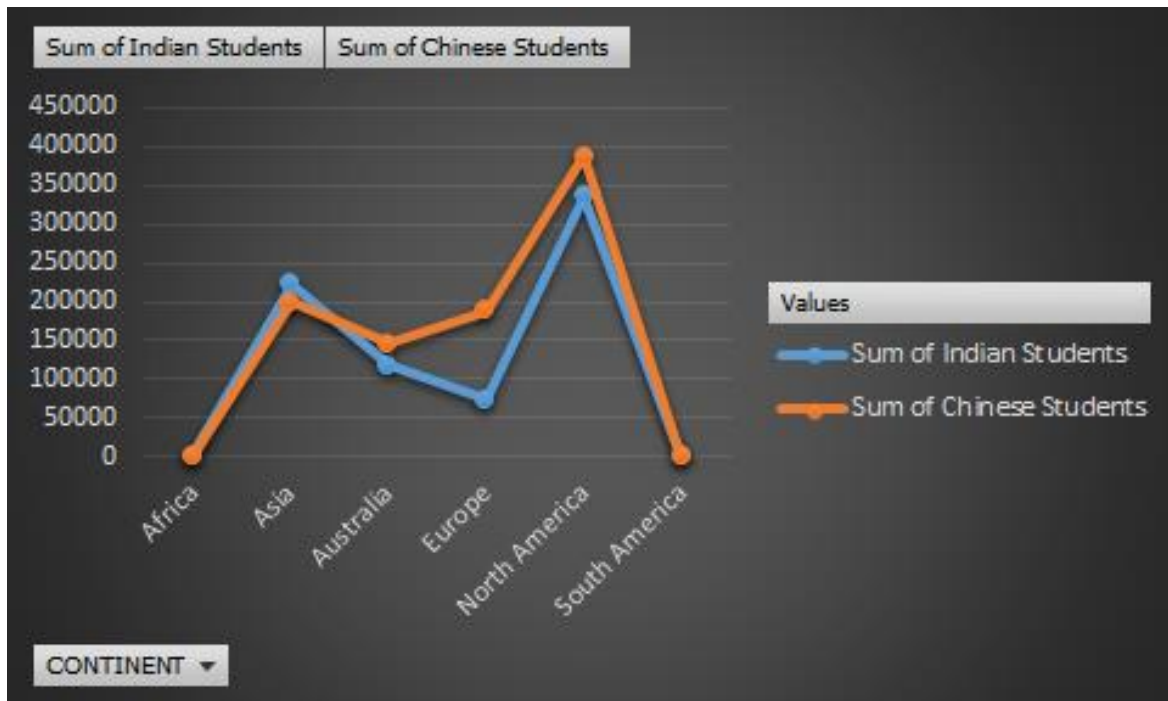


Fig. 2: Number of students from India and China going abroad in 2018 (UNESCO, 2017)

➤ **ORIGINS OF INTERSECTION BETWEEN EDUCATION AND FOREIGN POLICY**

Newsom D. (1996) in his paper *Foreign Policy and Academia* brilliantly highlights the intersection and incongruity of those in the political arena - dubbed as practitioners - and academia. Newsom D says, “*The worlds of the professor and the policymaker meet on many occasions, yet they remain fundamentally different*”. Many professors and their research do not go beyond University classrooms, while others become advocates of their opinions/research through attaining positions at government organizations or merely writing op eds for daily nationals. Not just professors, students too can play a part in the foreign policy formulation.

In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, Congress and President Bush emphasized on the United States’ need “*to know the world better*” (Johnson & Mulholland, 2006). With a belief that American students studying abroad would actively contribute towards US’s national security and foreign policy, NAFSA (National Association of Foreign Student advisors, now Association of International Educators) established a study abroad program that aimed to send a million students abroad by 2016 (Johnson & Mulholland, 2006). Overtime, many countries have sought to embark on a similar project either covertly or overtly as the US.

He cites that scholars are more likely to be critics of the policies, rather than allies. The reasons, he elaborates, are manifold. First, scholars are primarily “observers” meaning that they have

more time in understanding the issue at hand and could communicate “*with a wide range of people*”. While officials may sometimes be restricted in politics and thereby, their assessment of the matter at hand. Second, attributing limitations of scholarship, Newsom mentions that most of the scholarly work in the area of foreign policy is retrospective in nature - which, naturally, doesn’t suit the emergent nature of issues. Third, what may be limiting officials from properly leveraging on the scholarship is the inaccessibility of the former. Scholarly articles, sometimes are rigid in their structures and exaggerated in their use of jargons that makes their interpretation difficult.

The inherent differences between academia and practitioners are further explained by George L. A. (1994) in his paper *The Two Cultures of Academia and Policy-making: Bridging the Gap*, where he dubs the two - scholars’ theory and practitioners’ conduct of foreign policy - as “*two cultures*”. He further explains that the two groups “...*generally define their interest in the subject of international relations differently and...for all these reasons, they have difficulty communicating with each other*”. This has exacerbated the reluctance of scholars’ participation in policy formulation. As Newsom noted, the scholars are sometimes not included in the process because of their “outsider” status in confidential matters pertaining to national interest. Moreover, if their advice is not accepted, they may become open critics of the same and therefore, not indulge in future dialogues.

The gulf, however, has been reducing between the two with academics finding a place in government agencies through think tanks and policy practitioners finding a place in academia. George has found the role of “policy specialists” as overcoming the difference between academics and officials since they are primarily in the government setting yet tapping on the resources that the scholars have to offer. The points of convergence, according to George, are the field of strategic studies, international law among others.

Many scholars have provided conflict management routes by a call to “*bridge the gap*” (George L.A., 1994; Newsom., 1996). The focus remains on the relevance of scholarly material in the policy sphere. Scholars must understand the knowledge requirements by a practitioner to articulate their theory better, while the latter is responsible for this assistance. George L.A. points at the need for the policy specialists to take on this task owing to their access to scholars and practitioners alike.

1. CHINESE EDUCATION DIPLOMACY

In 2019 a total of 4.8 million foreign students enrolled in different Chinese institutions. Just 0.5 million of them had opted to study in China in 2000. Inbound and outbound academic migration is not just limited to students, but also include teachers, laboratory technicians and researchers who wish to make progress in the global education scenario. Through its multibillion-dollar One Belt and One Road (OBOR) initiative, China is already seeing major investment in the education sector. It has made international collaborations with prestigious universities in the Australia, UK / EU and USA. Notwithstanding millions of investments in the education sector, however, stringent censorship and government regulations provide their students with less academic freedom, prompting foreign universities to close their distant foreign campuses in China (2019).

For example, Times Higher Education (THE), reported that 234 international institutions and programs rolled out of China last summer because of the restrictive environment and strange surveillance protocols. The US has also cautioned about the potential threat faced by Chinese espionage, the prevalence of Chinese culture & language and its increasing influence in America. In one of his speeches, US president Donald Trump called Chinese students and researchers “spies who occupied America.” However some assume, that this hostility is in response to the current trade barriers between the US and China, and the next in-line government will remove visa limits on student mobility and allow Chinese students to study in the US. This will eventually yield good outcomes, and with the implementation of endorsing and 'pro-China' student policies the situation will change in favour of China. It is difficult to guess what measures the incumbent US administration will take, but if the Chinese side shows any provocation on the educational diplomacy front, it can cost them a substantial decline in the number of foreign students and a great loss to its perceived dream of making China a one-stop destination for education.

Strict visa policies and restrictions on Chinese students will lead a decline in their population in the US, UK / EU and Australia, but on the other hand it will build incentives for OBOR countries, including Pakistan, to make their presence and increase student exchange programs with China. Such opportunities will initiate substantial domestic and regional economic upswing and will create a local workforce to cater for grass-root development. Unlike Japanese, who embraced American culture as a hard-power tool after World War II, China could use soft-power to enter the global education market. In its 2016 report, UNESCO reproached that

“700,000 Chinese students are a major tool for soft power integration and untapped potential that it (China) could use at any time in the future.”

Being an emerging power, China keeps all its diplomatic channels open and aims to build on every economic opportunity like education. China Scholarship Council (CSC) plays a vital role in portraying China as a preferred destination for research. In addition, CSC helps Chinese students study abroad with the aim of developing a positive identity and establishing a solid diplomatic network via peer-to-peer interactions. To achieve this goal, China has gained power over its students' enrolment level at international universities. Additionally, it has made significant progress in attracting foreign students to its region. While language is the major barrier for international students, the short language courses and Confucius institutions have bridged this gap provide full facilities for international students. For example, 38 percent international students in Australia, 34 percent in the US, and 41 percent in the UK / EU are from China. Universities in these countries are struggling to cope with their budgetary requirements and cover their budgets by paying external tuition fees; however, the Chinese are able to use soft-power strategies to improve their student outflow and protect diplomatic fronts. On the other hand, the influx of Chinese students has risen vividly; this could be counted as another milestone for this emerging economic giant.

The new China is expected to push for student-to - student diplomacy. For this to be formulated in reality, good contact between students at home and at the host is necessary. It is important for China to include non-state players, alleviate language gaps, revise censorship rules and produce more student leaders in order to defuse Western imperialism and achieve dominance in global cultural diplomacy. If the number of Chinese foreign students around the globe grows, they become an increasingly prominent group and thus the focus of intense discussion about the possible effect of a wide body of Chinese students on academic performance, campus life and university income around the globe (Paradise, 2012).

The Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China has been active on the international education front in recent years. Government body high-level officials have partnered with global world leaders, ministers of education and ambassadors, chancellors and presidents of American institutions, executives of major companies, heads of international fellowship programmes, and others to enhance international collaboration and trade of education.

Other events included signing memoranda of agreements with international governments and companies on issues such as science, technological transfer, and staff preparation, as well as holding a groundbreaking ceremony between U.S. and Chinese partners to create a new

university in Shanghai. Another way to talk about these practices is in terms of diplomatic schooling. They are part of the Chinese government's initiative to leverage international education activities — such as sending Chinese students overseas, increasing foreign enrollment in Chinese universities, setting up foreign branch campuses in China, and promoting international academic collaboration — to accomplish policy goals. One of the key goals is to turn China into a knowledge intensive and innovation-driven society.

Diplomacy on education isn't new. In earlier decades of the "reform and open up" era beginning in 1978, internationalization initiatives were already taking place. However, it has been ramping up in recent years and becoming closely tied to indigenous technology goals. One explanation for this is that the ideology of "innovation culture" was only formalized in 2006. A second reason is that China became a member of the World Trade Organization in 2001, which created obligations for it in the field of "Educational Services," one of the sectors used by the WTO in the classification system for services to which China committed. Nevertheless, these commitments may not be overly burdensome, since they are largely consistent with China's domestic policy priorities and restrictions on market access and national sector care. For example, in the area of market access, one restriction mentioned is that "joint schools must be formed, with foreign majority ownership allowed," a restriction which applies to "commercial presence" or foreign operations in a host country (Peterson, 2014).

Another important trend is that student flows have been rising between China and the globe. The number of Chinese students studying abroad in 2010 was 284,700, which was an improvement from the previous year's 229,300 and a mere 860 in 1978. In addition, the number of students returning to China in 2010 was 134,800, a significant figure since the Chinese mostly live in their host countries after graduation, a fact that has prompted the Chinese government to encourage Chinese overseas to return home as part of its talent push. In China, also, the number of foreign students has increased. By 2020, the Chinese government is planning to provide 500,000 foreign students in China, a target that could be accomplished with more US students. Under the US-announced 100,000 Strong Initiative President Barack Obama, plans are under way to raise the number of Americans studying in China to 100,000 by 2014, with financial assistance from a range of outlets including private companies and the Chinese government. 910 Americans studied in China during the academic year 2009-2010. There are also other things China has been undertaking as part of its diplomacy on international education. Another practice with soft power results in the hundreds of the Confucius Institutes around the world has been teaching Chinese language and culture. International diplomats in

China have been among those taking language lessons in a program operated by the Confucius Institute headquarters itself. Hard-powered operations are the numerous science and development agreements China has signed with foreign nations, with universities and scientific institutes participating in many cases

➤ **CHINESE STUDENTS AS SOFT POWER**

An article by Bislev, 2017, argued that the link between Chinese international students and their soft power was oversimplified, requiring detailed analysis in fact. Chinese international students have become an increasingly recognizable phenomenon around the world, and subsequently interest in these students has grown among universities, scholars, and policy makers, who also see foreign students as a means of expanded soft power. The paper examines Chinese international students ' actual overseas experience and argues that the connection between international students and soft power is highly complicated, and that these students do not necessarily constitute soft power resources.

Most governments make deliberate attempts to improve their soft power capabilities through public diplomacy or people-to - people diplomacy through engaging with international publics. Since the founding of the first Confucius Institutes in 2004 and the attempts to reach non-Chinese markets through major international sports competitions, English-language TV channels and other ways, China is no different and has expanded its efforts in recent years.

Foreign students are used not only by the Chinese Government but also by developing countries as a means of soft power. Concrete reports of the soft-power effect of studying abroad, whether on students or countries obtaining (or both), are rare however. Existing studies tend to be based on polls that attempt to determine whether a stay overseas has made the students friendlier towards their host country with a restricted debate about whether or not a more positive attitude ultimately converts into soft power. Therefore, a more complex view of the role of foreign students as soft-power tools – be it for the sending or receiving nations – is needed (Bislev, 2017).

Global Chinese students have become a significant presence in tertiary education around the globe. Therefore interest in these students has increased. Universities have an economic interest in the income created by welcoming them and helping to establish a mechanism for the effective incorporation of Chinese students into the general student organisation. Investigators explored nearly every part of the foreign interaction of these graduates, from the initial decision-making process to the actual life-changing consequences of their time abroad. In fact, host and China policy makers regard them as a possible outlet of soft power. In this article the

author challenged the basic presumption that either the sending or the host nation would necessarily produce enhanced soft power for foreign students. Most Western literature deals with foreign students as a means of soft power for the host country, but Chinese students overseas are obviously claimed by both the Chinese government and the host communities as instruments of soft power. This is confused by the theoretical vagueness of the soft power definition to address the problem of whether foreign students should be used as a type of soft power. When we use the broad concept of soft power as merely the "force of persuasion" and the basic calculation of soft power as an enhanced disposition towards a given country, then the straight answer is yes, foreign students are a soft-power tool. Surveys suggest improved favorable feelings against the home nation during a stay abroad. However, we see evidence that both Chinese students in the West and Western students in China see themselves as representing their home countries, thereby performing the suggested position as student ambassadors more or less enthusiastically (Bislev, 2017).

➤ **CHINESE 'EDUCATION AID' TO AFRICA**

Educational assistance is always embedded in a complex historical background and is involved in changing intervention logic.' Throughout the post-colonial period through the modern age, it is longitudinally situated within history and horizontally associated with the positions of developed Western nations and 43 foreign organisations. Help to education is also an economic and political problem, rather than just a matter of education. The World Bank, as it presents itself, has been helping advance schooling in developed countries since 1963, and currently is the world's largest single source of support for international education. Africa is one of the most important regions in need of assistance for the World Bank. In 2007 the bank announced that "Africa is a concern for the international community and the World Bank" (World Bank, 2007). The Bank provided Africa with 20-25 percent of foreign aid (Ridker, 1994), including monetary support, as well as the interrelated platform, initiative and policy dialogue. In the field of international affairs, education cooperation between China and Africa is, to some degree, a concern. In this sense, education is included in the study of global political economy and foreign affairs because it is considered one of the controlling factors in 60-country relations. Therefore, without any minimal knowledge of China's view of international affairs one cannot discuss this educational collaboration. Therefore, understanding the Chinese context is significant, as there is a strong connection between China's economic growth experience and its perception of the role of education. The foreign policy of China has developed immensely from the inception of the PRC up to today. In this time, the shifting pre-

Cold War ties between the two superpowers and alliance with the third world immensely influenced China's national strategy as an important factor for diplomacy. The opening-up policy has helped China develop ties with the Western world, and helped China join the global market. The goal of modernization has motivated China to harmonize with allies around the world and to consider education as a core growth driver. China's flexible ideologies and practical policies have, in a few decades, made its behavior as a kind of pragmatism understandable. Chinese contemporary philosophy for shaping its international affairs is still borrowed from Marxism at its most fundamental, and China obviously has a modern interpretation of Marxism. This view does not see the universe in two opposing sections, socialism and capitalism, typical of classical Marxism. We also claim that the two sections are the owners of the means of production and the suppliers of labor to the owners, but they are unaware that the way to fix it is to struggle and revolt. Cooperation has become one of the key words in contemporary Chinese politics, as Liberalism always emphasizes.

Describing the history of the Chinese way of dealing with other countries over the last century is important. Especially in the last 30 years after the 1978 opening-up and reform policies, as it will help us explore the 'donor logic' of China in its relationship with Africa. Our key goal, to see how China interprets 'service' and educational assistance, needs us to examine first of all how China comprehends relations with different countries, and how China sees the role of education in the world. Therefore, we need a historical and critical study of China's foreign policy.

Chinese overseas policy changed in line with the changing political leadership. To complete a picture of the growth of China itself, it is important to provide a brief description of the domestic political history of China and the contributions of particular individuals to the growth of the region. From the time of Mao Zedong through to the fourth generation of leadership of Wen Jiabao and Hu Jintao, China has undergone numerous changes in its growth theories. As outlined by Gabriel (2006: 160), "Mao Zedong's philosophy was based on class struggle and conflict, while Deng Xiaoping's ideology was focused on the modernist view of technologically induced transcendence and innovation." The third wave of leadership, represented by the 'Three Assistants' of Jiang Zemin, is a model for 'modernizing' the communist party by integrating the pragmatism of Deng, ideas of Marxism, and the current global climate. Under this program, there is also a shift from the earlier prominence on political language to a more realistic, cooperative voice with regard to ties between China and Africa. Thus, China inevitably is interlinked with global capitalism, and is learning from developed countries' experience to some extent. But China still does not want to sacrifice the 'Chinese

cultural features' and, however, wants to escape the stagnation that the other communist states are suffering.

Since 1978 China has undergone a evolving foreign policy from the creation of the PRC to rapid economic growth. Harding (1984: 179) delineated four facets of China's foreign relations: “(1) China's degree of engagement with the rest of the world; (2) China's cooperation with each of the two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union; (3) China's foreign-policy cultural, military and political resources; and (4) China's international objectives.”

In addition to managing its relations with the West, its Asian neighbors and the Soviet Union, China continued to see the Third World (Asian, African, and Latin American countries) as an integral part of its foreign policy. Thus, Chinese philosophy has long claimed that the downtrodden nations' 'masses' hold the key to the stability of the international community.

Education is a vital component for Chinese growth at home and abroad. A deeper look at the internal and external importance of Chinese education system, it can be seen that education is seen not only as a key tool in the age of information economy to improve national competitiveness and a better culture, but also as a key tool for cultural exchange, enhancing the Chinese picture, and spreading Chinese human capital worldwide. The relationship between China and Africa has a long tradition starting with the establishment of the PRC, when ties were influenced by a clear theory of anti-imperialism, to the more recent emphasis on the reciprocal economic trade. In this modern context, educational collaboration requires a growth in the sharing of cultural and human capital. Chinese 'aid' is becoming more focused on higher education and vocational training. Cooperation between China and Africa has been improved since the Cold War and the subsequent structural changes. China's Ministry of Education toured about 20 African countries which increased the number of African students in China. 238 teachers and 5660 students from 43 countries toured more than 30 African countries in all educational assistance programs. In fact, at this point the scope of collaboration was applied to the Master and Doctoral level scholarships. It was notable that the Chinese ministries in Africa conducted training courses from the end of the nineties and included the fields of school management, agriculture, technical technology, medical development and more (PKUCAS, 2005: 4).

A major component of Chinese aid is training and assisting foreign countries. China conducted 2500 training courses for 150 countries (African countries and other developing countries and areas) until the end of 2006, and 80,000 people were educated in more than 150 subjects including economics, administration, agriculture, law, and education. The teaching led to more

than 150 Chinese universities, research centers and vocational training establishments (Department of Support for Foreign Countries, Ministry of Commerce, 26/07/2007). Training provides opportunities for studying Chinese culture and learning the Chinese developmental experience as a special way of educating people in practical fields and in short term sectors; this has successfully fostered friendly relations between China and other developed countries.

Nevertheless, China's underlying philosophy is that it does not see itself as a lender, but instead that it insists that "you are supported not so that you can 'catch up' with us, but so that we can trade, share and grow something together" (Yuan, 2012). The author also says it is crucial that it is not 'educational assistance' but 'aid by education.' We can see from the first argument that education is an essential tool in the wider context of the 'win-win' partnership between China and Africa and it is also beneficial for China itself. For China, educational aid is not aimed directly at building hegemony, but is rather aimed directly at improving education in Africa or at gaining stronger bilateral ties, especially trade. China's theory interprets 'knowledge' to a broader context within which China and Africa exchange existing perspectives and become closely connected.

2. INDIAN EDUCATION DIPLOMACY: A COMPARISON

➤ A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

To begin with a background on the Indian diplomacy is the most logical step forward. During the early years of independence, Jawaharlal Nehru had largely dominated Indian foreign policy. Perhaps the most significant — and underexplored — contribution Nehru made to India's external relations was its forming of the governmental mechanisms and the workers from which the independent foreign policy of India will be enforced. The formation of the Indian Foreign Service (IFS) arose from 1946–1949 as one of the transformative bureaucratic difficulties of transitioning from a colonial government to a new one. The establishment of the IFS included both bureaucratic reform and the appointment of officers to staff the diplomatic, consular and commercial posts of India's autonomous government abroad, as well as pushing what would later become the home Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MEA). The essence of this hiring process was of the utmost significance, as new hires would decide how India was viewed and regarded outside the world. Early Foreign Service officers will be the first on the world stage to demonstrate a new, sovereign and esteem-winning India. Given the elitist, anglicized existence of the Force, however, the lack of traditional preparation and the varied technical and educational backgrounds of recruits created a fractured organization in the early years.⁵⁵ For

this cause, Nehru spent a great deal of time and energy overseeing the Ministry in the early years, and before recruiting systematization greatly engaged in leading India's offshoots. If India wanted to play a specific global purpose, early Indian Foreign Service officers saw themselves as the key enablers of the future of their country, strategically placed within both their domestic and global context. This emerging class had put Indian thinking and culture into interaction with European literature, philosophy and science, creating a fresh and influential convergence (Sullivan, 2014).

A critical examination of the Indian Foreign Service calls for a historical analysis of how the IFS came to be what it is today. It was in late 1946 that Nehru first announced plans to create an Indian foreign and diplomatic service, while in charge of external affairs in the recently installed Interim Government of India. Although the criteria for selection was not formalized for months, Eventually, the credentials and promotion pathways that marked selection in the IFS led to a particular Foreign Service officer's 'form'. They were elite, English-speaking, 'anglicized and urbane' (Sullivan, 2014). Initial recruits were taken from established central services, mainly the Indian Civil Service (ICS), while others came from the Armed Forces, and yet others were so-called 'blue bloods' from the princely states which came by direct application or other informal routes. Others were selected from the business and the professions by fair exams. Officers from the ICS had frequently been trained in Oxford or Cambridge, and those from the Armed Forces or the ruling families of the princely states had traveled through British educational and military institutions either in India or in Britain. As a result, IFS officers recruited at this early stage were 'essentially elitist and profoundly influenced by British social, cultural institutions'. Many of the applicants chosen by competitive examinations frequently 'imbibed their senior manners and quickly found themselves an elite group, a step above the IAS and other services' (Sullivan, 2014). This produced a degree of extreme homogeneity among the IFS officers. For several decades, the preservation of this narrowly defined community has been predominantly Indian foreign policy and diplomatic imagination: the lack of the historical salience of foreign policy issues within the broader Indian political culture has meant that members of this community have effectively become the primary producers and consumers of India's foreign policy discourse. This meant that the British ideals lay the foundation for IFS officers' social and professional conduct and articulation. Therefore, India's early diplomatic leaders were politically, economically, and scientifically placed at the transition from India to the (Western) world. Additionally, they were able to work closely with Nehru, or at least next to him, drawing on his strength and reputation.

Institutionalizing aspects of an Indian diplomatic mindset provides vital clues in understanding some of Indian foreign policy's normative drivers today. As Sullivan (2014) concludes in her article, “Perceptions of Indian diplomats as ‘self-righteous, moralistic, and preachy’, and as displaying ‘Cultural arrogance’ and a ‘peculiarly chauvinistic world-view’, continue to persist today”.

➤ **EDUCATION IN INDIA AFTER INDEPENDENCE**

Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first prime minister, recognized that an important prerequisite for India to achieve its potential and become a self-reliant nation was education. He gave considerable significance to the institutions of higher education and science. Nehru and his Minister for Education and Culture, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, were deeply cognizant of India's capacity for soft power. Nehru recognized also the importance of education and preparation as a diplomatic tool. In 1949 a program (Government of India) was launched for awarding scholarships to foreign students, especially from developed countries. India emerged as an important higher education and training destination for the emerging English-speaking countries. Nehru took a personal interest in the welfare of foreign students, particularly African students.

Population growth and increased literacy contributed to an unprecedented rise in India's demand for higher education. That resulted in a histrionic rise in the number of universities and colleges across the country. The wonderful demand has led to the establishment by private promoters of many educational institutions, in particular engineering and medical colleges. This resulted in significant increased gaps in the consistency and performance of the various organizations. The rapid growth reduced the standard of humanities and liberal arts education. Just a few Indian organizations followed rising international standards. The educational reforms were not given sufficient attention, especially in terms of daily syllabus revision. Many Indian universities were seeing violence, too. Uneven standards made the level of Indian professional education doubtful in foreign countries and many countries slowly stopped accepting Indian students. The Indian method of schooling was inward-looking and insular to changes. Thanks to the extreme demand for access to successful universities, higher education internationalization has been ignored. For Indian universities the recruiting of international students was not a concern (Sharma, 2012).

In the 1990s, India underwent a noteworthy changeover with the implementation of globalization policies and trade liberalization. “Rising income levels and simple foreign

exchange availability have allowed a large number of Indian students to enroll in international universities.” India has emerged from international institutions as the primary destination for student-recruiting missions. It is reported that Indian students spend over \$4 billion per annum on tuition fee alone. The rapid economic growth gave India and ray of hope, and the nation came to be regarded as an emerging power, second only to China. The government and organisations such as the University Grants Commission (UGC) and the Association of Indian Universities (AIU) have begun to pay heed to higher education internationalization and draw foreign students to India.

➤ **INDIA-AFRICA INITIATIVE**

Inside the Africa-India Forum Summit I and II, the State has taken many steps to strengthen ties with Africa. Capacity building and scholarships for Agriculture and Science and Technology (C.V. Raman Fellowships) have received specific attention. At the Africa India Forum Summit II announced an expansion in the number of grants. IGNOU is running distance education programmes. India has also agreed to set up 21 capacity-building institutions across different sectors. Many of these programs come under ITEC (Sharma, 2012).

➤ **INDIA’S SOFT POWER**

India has a long history of trying to use public diplomacy and other soft power tools to achieve its foreign policy goals. Since Independence, India has spent significant energy in high-level dialogues, academic and cultural interactions and conventions of the parties concerned, aiming to persuade all communities and governments through the use of open diplomacy and moral suasion. India's new public diplomacy builds on that tradition to some extent, but it also departs in three key ways from past practice in India. First, India's modern public diplomacy is aggressively finding new audiences within India (notably, politically engaged youth at home), in the West (Indian diaspora communities abroad), and in the developing world (key opinion formers in the immediate area of India or resource-rich states in the global south). Second, Indian officials are trying to make India's foreign-policy process more open and democratic by engaging in dialog with communities outside of the political and diplomatic elite in New Delhi. Third, the campaign aims to use digital technologies to meet its varied target markets, rather than conventional approaches (Hall, n.d.).

The article by Ian Hall (n.d.) India's new public diplomacy is partly a response to recent efforts to build and leverage soft power by other Asian states — especially China. The initiative also

stems partly from the realization that India's reputation in its "near abroad" region is not as good as it might be, and partly reflects a new elite enthusiasm for technologically driven solutions to political challenges. India is investing in technology because it does not want to be left behind for soft power in the "arms race" and because some policymakers truly believe in soft power. However, the problem is that the existing evidence of the effectiveness of public diplomacy in general, and especially of new public diplomacy, is mixed. India's explicit objective in Africa is to build soft power that can be leveraged for political and economic advantage, in part to help it gain access to raw materials to fuel India's economic growth.⁵⁸ To that end, India has not only donated funds, but has established high-profile, high-tech assistance programmes. The most notable is the Pan-African e-Network, a joint project launched in 2009 with the African Union (AU), designed to develop the telecommunications infrastructure needed to enable tele-education and telemedicine. The e-Network will link African universities and hospitals to their Indian counterparts, costing India over Rs. 5.4 billion (\$115 million), enabling African students to study for Indian Faculty degrees and allow Africans to have online medical consultations with Indian doctors. More broadly, the e-network is intended to form the basis for other forms of internet-based cooperation between African states, the AU and India. India, aware of its underutilized soft power assets, its "near abroad" image problem, various Chinese efforts, and the opportunities new social media could offer, has made a significant effort to reform its public diplomacy. However, it remains to be seen whether that impetus pays the expected dividend for India. It is notoriously difficult to translate soft power into an obvious diplomatic advantage. For all of Bollywood, biryani, and Bangalore's appeal to overseas Indians and foreigners, these assets, along with India's renewed commitment to public diplomacy, have done little to shift India's foreign policy international public opinion. Evidence from the survey suggests that foreign opinion on India is mixed and – perhaps more important – has not changed significantly, even as the nation has emerged as a major global player (Hall, n.d.).

3. ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT IN THE INDIAN MODEL

In the Indian situation, as elsewhere in Asia, China's growth is one of the major reasons behind the rush to develop capability in public diplomacy. The Chinese "charm offensive" has created tremendous tension in India and has sparked calls by New Delhi and interested observers for a similar initiative. A number of Indian and international analysts have claimed that, despite India possessing a stronger "name" than China – mostly thanks to the former's democratic politics, Bollywood films, and the information technology (IT) industry – Indian diplomats have done

very little in the past to drive the advantage forward, leaving the field to the stronger equipped, better coordinated Chinese.

Heavily borrowing from J.C.Sharma's 2012 article, some improvements in the Indian educational diplomacy are suggested. First, India needs to rethink its standing as a destination for higher education. This entails an 'internationalization of Indian education system'. In pursuit, the Indian universities must focus on improving the quality of research. The governments - both at State and Centre levels - must ensure that the universities have the top-notch facilities to attract international students. While it may not be viably applicable to all the universities in the country, a select few must be selected. Further, they must be encouraged to have more collaboration and partnerships with overseas universities. This may attract 'exchange program' students - a phenomenon which may prelude arrivals of full-time international students. Second, the governments must also work in tandem with business groups to leverage on their experience in education and compensate them through tax rebates. Third, students from Indian diaspora abroad could well be attracted to study in India. Some courses may be designed as such. Fourth, promotion of internship culture is really important to give the students - both international and domestic - a practical experience before they graduate. The governments at different levels must offer apprenticeship or internship programmes to undergraduates or graduate students during the course of their studies.

This is on the domestic front. On the international front, there must be a paradigmatic shift in the Indian diplomacy. Much like India's approach to the promotion of Indian democracy all over the world, the Indian representatives must just as well represent and promote education diplomacy.

CONCLUSION

In simple words, one might conclude that although India is getting there, China is far ahead of India in terms of diplomacy. At the same time, India is reinvestigating and reinvesting in its public and educational diplomacy and research seems to point at its success. Education is an integral part of the soft-power diplomacy that needs attention in India. India has almost all the things necessary - English speakers, vibrant culture, diversity - to host international students in the country. The only thing lacking is a clear vision and implementation.

India needs to rethink and reestablish itself as an education hub for international students - majorly from the Southeast and South Asia. it needs to ensure that the infrastructure is up to the mark, research quality is improved, internship culture is promoted - to attract the foreign students into India - first as exchange program students and eventually, as full-time students.

Much like China, India must actively seek collaboration and sign Memoranda of Understanding and Association with external educational institutions. The Indian Embassies outside India could also serve as projectors of Indian Culture abroad. For example, the French embassy in New Delhi and possibly in other parts of the country and the world become a good institution to learn French language at. Through cultural and social events, the High Commissions of India abroad must promote and at the least - create awareness about India and her cultural and educational programs for the people of the country.

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