

Internationalisation of Indian Higher Education through Yoga

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Abstract—Though Yoga is strictly neither a commodity or a brand, the way education as already been commodified and branded for market and the way Yoga is being taught and learnt in most countries, it may be not be completely wrong to label it as such. It is one of the areas where India has both absolute and comparative advantage as a prerequisite for international trade. Yoga is one of the few Indian ‘brands’ that is globally popular and has ever growing demand, amply proven by the number of co-sponsors in the UN General Assembly backing the resolution to declare a day for Yoga and the number of nations actually celebrating it.

If India enters the educational space of teaching Yoga to international students, which it does already in an unstructured way, it may address the concern of purists and some educationists that the trend of internationalisation is driven only by commercial interests and the universities are not leading internationalisation for the benefit of students and promote international collaborative research. This would also essentially be a pillar for India’s soft power, which would be very peaceful and in complete contrast to other economically developed nations that use higher education for manipulating and influencing foreign relations.

The best option for India would be to choose Yoga as its trump card. Would it succeed? Perhaps, the odds are favourable as this would not just be innovative, but be frugal as well. Further, India could supply continuously for the ever growing global demand and be a natural leader. The way forward for the policy makers is to bring Yoga under the university education system in a big way.