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The Evolving Landscape of Educational and Career Opportunities between India and Japan

Debanjan Ghosh

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Abstract

India and Japan are the lands of new opportunities in terms of higher education, technical studies, research, and finding a suitable job. The paper provides a comprehensive exploration of the educational and professional exchange between these two nations, examining historical foundations, structural frameworks, curriculum strategies, and the pursuit of access, quality, and accountability. Searching into the nuances of educational, cultural, historical, and socio-economic contexts, the research sheds light on challenges faced by both nations and presents innovative practices. This comparative analysis offers valuable insights for educators, researchers, and policymakers seeking a deeper understanding of education systems, the growth of career opportunities, and the need for educational and professional exchanges in diverse cultural and economic contexts.

Key Words: *India, Japan, Japanese language, education, exchange, career, job.*

Introduction

Friendship between India and Japan has a long history rooted in spiritual affinity and strong cultural and civilizational ties. The Indo-Japan artistic exchange in the modern time was initiated with the arrival of Tenshin Kakuzo Okakura in India. He is considered to be one of the most interesting figures in Japanese intellectual history. Okakura made his way to India in 1902, with a Buddhist priest, Shitoku Hori, who was the first foreign student of Santiniketan. In 1905, a Japanese national, Jinnosuke Sano, came to Santiniketan at the invitation of Rabindranath Tagore to teach Judoo and Japanese Language. He was the first Japanese Language teacher in India. After the independence of India Prof. Kazuo Azuma initiated to establish a strong foundation of Japanese language education in India. These kind of every single glorious event contributed to the present day's fruitful relationship between the two nations in a wide range of areas of cooperation.

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1. Educational exchange

Cooperation in the field of education is being conducted through partnerships between education and research institutions, student and teacher exchange, government scholarships, promotion of Japanese language education in India.

According to a recent survey by the Japan Foundation, there are total number of 323 institutions offering Japanese language curriculum in our country. Under which, 52 are universities, colleges and graduate schools. There are 225 private foreign language schools conducting Japanese courses. Others are primary, lower secondary and upper secondary schools.

1.1 Japanese Language in school curriculum

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) of India already introduced Japanese language at the secondary and senior secondary levels from class 6 onwards since 2006. The main reasons why Japanese should be taught in Indian schools are :

1. It would help in furthering cross-cultural understanding between Asian countries and further expanding to the global area.
2. Japan could become one of the new destinations for Indian students in pursuit of higher education.
3. It would increase and improve the employability of students.
4. It would give the much needed impetus to the increasing economic and cultural ties with Japan.

1.2 Academic partnerships

Japan is a country that attracts worldwide attention in terms of science, technology, arts and culture. Nowadays international students including Indians take the opportunity to study in its top class education environment.

There are 665 academic and research partnerships, including student exchanges, between more than 138 universities and institutes of Japan and around 227 universities and institutes of India.

The partnerships range from liberal arts to management, and business studies to international studies. Apart from academic partnerships, several Indian institutions have started “India-Japan Centre” related to research and study. Similarly, several Japanese institutions have started research centres in collaboration with India or focus on India. Student exchange programs, especially short term, have enabled Indian students to visit and experience Japan. Similarly, Japanese students have been coming to Indian universities for various courses including Hindi and Bengali languages. Various departments of Buddhist studies of Japanese universities also offer papers on Sanskrit, Pali, Indian Buddhism and Indian Philosophy as part of their curriculum.

1.3 Scholarships

1.3.1 MEXT

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) of Japan has been inviting international students including Indians to study in Japan since 1954. The scholarships are offered in the field of Social Sciences, Humanities, Economics, Business Administration, Natural Sciences, Engineering, Agricultural Studies, Medicine, Nursing and many other subjects for undergraduate and research students.

1.3.2 Young Leader's Program

The Young Leader's Program under MEXT aims to contribute to cultivate future national leaders in Asian and other countries, moreover, to contribute to establish friendly relationships among various countries and to improve policy planning activities.

In addition, there are several organizations in Japan that offer scholarships for international students.

1.1.3 Other scholarships

1. MONBUKAGAKUSHO HONORS scholarship for privately financed international students has been provided by Japan Student Services Organization (JASSO).
2. Local Governments and Local international associations in Japan provide scholarships to students living in their district as well as those attending institutes in their district.
3. Private foundations scholarships are provided by private companies or organizations.
4. Scholarships for the applicants residing abroad: Although most of the scholarships under this category are available after coming to Japan, several local governments, local international associations, and private foundations accept applications from overseas.
5. The Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Program seeks to enhance internationalisation in Japan by encouraging mutual understanding between the people of Japan and those of other nations through the enrichment of foreign language education and promotion of international exchange at local level. The Program began in 1987 with cooperation from governments of participating countries. Under this program Assistant Language Teachers are placed mainly in local boards of education and elementary, junior high and senior high schools.

2. Professional exchange

Japan has many excellent companies that have high technology and are eager to expand their business to India. These are not only limited to big companies but also include small enterprises. One can develop his/her career through the experience in various Japanese companies, from a traditional

company to a vigorous start-up. There are so many companies which want to hire “High-skilled foreign professionals” too.

Now, the number of Japanese companies registered in India is 1400 with manufacturing firms. These Japanese companies have 4901 business establishments in total. On the other hand, more than 100 Indian companies are working in Japan at present.

To enhance their business by acquiring human resources with specialized skills, the Japanese companies have established 35 Japan-India Institute of Manufacturing (JIM) in India and as well as 11 Japanese Endowed Courses (JEC) in Indian Engineering Colleges.

The main reasons behind hiring Indian students for Japanese companies are: To stimulate the workplace by increasing diversity within the company and to cultivate and expand overseas business in general.

According to a recent survey (2021) done by the Immigration Services Agency of Japan, the top 10 occupations for Indian students are : 1. Translation and interpretation, 2. Marketing research, 3. International trade, 4. Non-executive level management, 5. Information and communication technology, 6. Corporate sales, 7. Public relations and advertising, 8. Technology development, 9. Accounting and 10. Care giver.

2.1 Importance of Japanese Language

An important point is to remember that, the Japanese companies expect a minimum level of Japanese language skills from Indian job seekers. One should be able to communicate at a minimal level in Japanese in a limited amount of business settings. In this scenario, one should qualify at least N3 level of Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) or J4 level of Business Japanese Test (BJT) before applying for a job.

Before starting to job hunt in Japan:

1. Try to understand the uniqueness of job hunting in Japan and how the process is different from India.
2. And, make sure that, what companies look for in Indian candidates is their “Japanese ability” and “communication skills”. Japanese language ability is essential in order to explain yourself properly at interviews.

2.2 Career opportunities

Recently Government of India and Japan initiated to cooperate under “Technical Intern Training Program” (TITP) and “Specified Skilled Worker” (SSW) initiative of Japan. TITP was commenced in Japan in 1993, to contribute to developing countries by accepting people from these countries through

on the job training. India commenced its operations under this program in 2018.

2.2.1 Technical Intern Training Program (TITP)

TITP aims to empower the Indian youth by providing them with career advancement opportunities. Technical interns, after receiving training in India, are sent to Japan for three to five years. The major job categories including 81 in total under this Program are : 1. Agriculture, 2. Fishery, 3. Construction, 4. Food manufacturing, 5. Textile, 6. Machinery and Metals, 7. Airport ground handling, and 8. Others.

2.2.2 Specified Skilled Worker (SSW)

TITP offers various benefits to the interns such as, opportunity to work as a Specified Skilled Worker (SSW) in Japan after completing three years of TITP successfully. Specified Skilled Worker (SSW) is new residency status introduced by the Government of Japan in 2019. The Government of India and Japan jointly implemented SSW in 2021. After completing the training under TITP and SSW in Japan, the interns are expected to return to their home country and utilize the skills acquired in Japan.

Conclusion

The relationship between India and Japan has been developing appreciably in recent years. Besides strengthening of the educational and economic ties, cooperative relations are progressing at the Government level, while many exchanges are taking place at the private level. As two Asian democracies, India and Japan are important partners for mutual development. We believe that increasing people to people exchanges and deepening mutual understanding will help us maintain this excellent relationship and elevate it to a higher level in future.

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Bio Profile of the Author:

The Author is a Resource Person of Japanese Language at Rabindra Bharati University and as well as a Japanese Language Teacher, based at the International Institute of Language and Culture of Kolkata, of which he is the Director. His main interest is on Indo-Japan cultural relation through Bengal and cultural heritage of Bengal. He performs Tagore songs in Bengali and as well as in Japanese. He was specially invited for the program entitled "Special Training Program for Young Teachers of the Japanese Language from South Asia" at the Japan Foundation Japanese Language Institute, Urawa, Japan in 2009. He is currently involved on a chronological study of Rabindranath Tagore's Literature translated into Japanese Language.

Email: debanjanghai.kolkata@gmail.com