

India-UK - Young Professionals Scheme

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Context- The governments of India and the U.K. have recently marked Pravasi Bharatiya Divas on January 9, 2023 by initiating the Young Professionals Scheme.

Key Highlights

- The Young Professionals Scheme was conceived as part of an India-U.K Migration and Mobility MoU which was signed in May 2021, announced in November at the G20 summit in Bali.
- The Young Professionals Scheme scheme will permit degree-holding citizens aged between 18 and 30 to live and work in each other's countries for a period of two years.
- They would be able to either work, study, or visit, for a period of two years.
- The scheme will run for three years initially.
- It allows for exchange visas for up to 3,000 individuals per year.
- It isn't even necessary for an applicant to have a job in hand when he/she applies for the visa.
- Hence, the successful candidates could look for a job, educational or cultural opportunity once they arrived in their host country. Or they could just visit.

Challenges:

- The signing of the agreement belies more complex issues around the movement of persons across borders.

- Part of the Migration and Mobility agreement of 2021 requires the return of illegal migrants to their home countries.

Migration and Mobility agreement of 2021

- The 'Migration and Mobility Partnership' agreement was signed between India and UK on 4 May 2021.
- Through this agreement, young, professional Indian, and British citizens from the ages of 18 to 30 will be able to live and work in both countries for a maximum period of two years.

Aim:

- One of the aims of this agreement is to enable the UK as well as Indian nationals to strengthen their skills that they can implement in their countries of nationality.
- It aims to address the issues of illegal migration from India to the UK by accelerating the removal of migrants who do not have the right to be here.

Significance:

- Both countries have a series of immigration and homeland security challenges.
- This agreement means that there will be constant communication between the two governments in order to allow them to stay on top of these issues.

India-UK Relations

- UK-India relationship is rooted in India's colonial history with the British and the relationship shared by both countries also after India's independence.
- The bilateral relationship between two countries was upgraded to a strategic partnership in 2004.

Political:

- Both economies share a modern partnership which was upgraded to a strategic partnership in 2004.
- The UK supports India's proposal for permanent membership of the UNSC and is also an significant interlocutor for India on global platforms.

Economic Engagements:

- **Trade:**
 - UK is one of the India's major trading partners and as per trade statistics of MoC&I, India's trade with the UK in 2017-2018 was US \$14.497 billion.
- **Investment:**
 - UK is the 4th largest inward investor in India, after Mauritius, Singapore and Japan with an equity investment of US \$26.09 billion (April 2000-June 2018), accounting for around 7% of all foreign direct investment into India.
 - Also India continued to be the third largest investor in the UK and emerged as the second largest international job creator with Indian companies having created

over 110,000 jobs in the UK.

Defence:

- In 2015, the two countries agreed to elevate their Defence relationship by establishing capability partnerships in certain strategic areas.
- The institutionalized dialogue to discuss defense cooperation, a Defence Consultative Group Meeting, is held annually at Defence Secretary level.
- Ajeya Warrior (army-to-army biennial exercise), the Konakan (joint navy-to-navy annual exercise) and the Indradhanush (joint air-to-air exercise) also take place between India and UK.

Education:

- Over the last 10 years, the relationship has grown substantially with the introduction of bilateral mechanisms such as the India-UK Education Forum, UK-India Education and Research Initiative (UKIERI), Joint Working Group on Education, Newton-Bhabha Fund and Scholarship schemes etc

Science and Technology:

- Joint investment in UK-India research has raised from less than £1 million in 2008 to over £200 million.
- A India-UK Clean Energy R&D Centre with a focus on solar energy storage and a collaborative R&D programme in energy efficient building materials were initiated.
- New research partnerships worth £80 million including a new Joint Strategic group on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) with a joint investment of up to £13 million have been established.

Cultural Linkages:

- Cultural linkages between India and UK are deep and extensive, arising out of shared history between the two countries.
- Also there has been a gradual mainstreaming of Indian culture and absorption of Indian cuisine, cinema, languages, religion, philosophy, performing arts, etc.
- 2017 was celebrated as the India-UK year of Culture in order to mark the 70th anniversary of Indian independence.

Indian Diaspora:

- The Indian Diaspora in the UK is one of the largest ethnic minority groups in the country.
- As per the 2011 census, about 1.5 million people of Indian origin live in the UK equating to almost 1.8 percent of the population and contribute 6% of the country's GDP.

Roadmap 2030:

- The "Roadmap 2030" for India-UK future relations was launched during India-UK Virtual Summit.

- It was adopted for
 - Revitalised and dynamic connections between people;
 - Re-energised trade, investment and technological collaboration that improves the lives and livelihoods of the citizens;
 - Enhanced defence and security cooperation that brings a more secure Indian Ocean Region and Indo-Pacific and
 - India-UK leadership in climate, clean energy and health that acts as a global force for good.