

# Brain Drain to Brain Gain

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## Abstract

India has been losing its students and professionals to other countries for a long time. They go to these countries because they want jobs and a chance to do good research. The problem is not that people are leaving. The problem is how we can make the most of it. We want the people from India who live in other countries to bring back the things they have learned. We want them to bring back money to invest, ideas and the people they have met. If we can do this then the fact that people are leaving India will actually be a thing, for our country. India will get to use the skills and knowledge of people who live all around the world.

## 1. The Failed Policy: National Youth Policy 2014, India

### Background

The National Youth Policy (2014) was launched by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India with the vision of empowering youth aged 15 to 29 years, who constituted approximately 27 percent of India's population at the time. The policy sought to achieve this through five priority areas: education, employment and skill development, entrepreneurship, health and sports, and youth participation in governance.

### Implementing Authority

- Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India

### Measurable Evidence of Underperformance

Despite the ambition, the policy failed to address India's rapidly evolving youth challenges:

#### 1. Unemployment Crisis

- The youth unemployment rate (ages 15–29) stood at 10.2 percent in 2023–24 according to India's Periodic
- For youth aged 15–24, the unemployment rate reached 15.47 percent in 2023 (World Bank data).

#### 2. NEET Population (Not in Employment, Education, or Training)

- Approximately 33 percent of Indian youth aged 15–29 were NEET as of 2021.
- Among females, the NEET rate was 51.7 percent, compared to 15.4 percent for males (International Labour Organization and ThePrint, 2023).

#### 3. Escalating Brain Drain

- Over 1.3 million Indians renounced their citizenship between 2014 and 2023 (Ministry of External Affairs, India).
- An estimated 60,000 to 75,000 highly educated Indians (doctors, engineers, researchers) emigrate annually (ResearchGate, 2023).

- India has the largest diaspora in the world, with over 35 million people of Indian origin residing abroad (World Bank, 2020).

**4. Lack of Monitoring Mechanisms**

- The National Youth Policy 2014 had no in-built metrics, targets, or annual public dashboards to monitor progress.
- The absence of coordination between central and state governments led to fragmented implementation.

**2. Root-Cause Analysis: Why the Policy Failed**

Domain	Root Cause
architecture of policies	In addition to lacking legally binding mechanisms, the policy was not connected with other national initiatives like Startup India, Skill India, or the National Education Policy.
Mismatch in Stakeholders	There were no official feedback loops or opportunities for co-creation, and young people were viewed as passive recipients.
Observation and Responsibility	The policy framework lacked fiscal commitments, impact audits, and performance metrics.
Worldwide Blindspot	The brain drain crisis, international skill mobility trends, and India's youth diaspora abroad were all utterly disregarded by the policy.
Inclusion and equity	Priorities for design and implementation did not include women, youth from underrepresented communities, or youth living in rural areas.

**3. Reimagined Solution: The National Brain Gain Mission (NBGM)**

**Vision**

The National Brain Gain Mission (NBGM) is a worldwide initiative based in India and led by young people. It sees India’s demographic advantage as a key global asset. Rather than trying to stop people from leaving the country, it seeks to turn brain drain into brain circulation by bringing knowledge, money, and innovation back to India.

**Key Components of the National Brain Gain Mission**

**1. Global Talent Return Agreements (GTRAs)**

- Bilateral agreements with countries like Germany, Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom.
- Embed return pathways in post-study work visas.
- Provide incentives such as startup grants, fellowships, or public sector jobs to attract returning talent.
- These ideas draw inspiration from programs like South Korea’s “Brain Return Program” and Germany’s “Returning Experts Programme.”

## 2. India Youth Innovation Diaspora Network (IYIDN)

- A platform for Indian-origin youth studying or working abroad.
- It helps with co-funding, mentorship, and remote collaboration with Indian innovators.
- This initiative is backed by Indian embassies and innovation councils around the world.

## 3. Reverse Migration Hubs (RMHs)

- Innovation and entrepreneurship clusters in Tier 2 and Tier 3 Indian cities like Indore, Bhubaneswar, and Kochi.
- These hubs provide returnees with incubation space, government fellowships, housing support, and academic positions.
- They are linked to the Aspirational Districts program to promote equal regional development.

## 4. Youth Civic Innovation Labs

- State-run public innovation labs are co-managed by youth and government officials.
- They host hackathons, policy prototyping challenges, and field-testing initiatives designed by young citizens.

## 5. National Youth Brain Index (YBI)

- This is a real-time public dashboard that tracks youth migration patterns, returnee impact, employment outcomes, and innovation performance.
- It is updated annually and used to shape mid-course policy changes.

## 6. The ReRoot Passport

- This is a unique policy tool that offers:
- Non-citizen privileges for Indian-origin global youth, even if they've renounced citizenship  
*The ability to:*
- Vote in youth innovation councils
- Access tax-free return fellowships
- Earn points for contributing ideas, not just money

**Returning to India becomes a badge of brilliance, not a last resort.**

## 7. Impact Projection

By 2030, the Indian Recall Protocol aims to:

- Achieve a tenfold increase in high-skill youth return migration
- Create 35 new Homecoming Labs in Tier-2 and rural cities
- Engage over 100,000 diaspora members in national mentorship networks
- Unlock over ₹18,000 crore in diaspora-led startup and research investments
- Position India as the top destination for impact-driven youth innovation in the Global South

**NYP 2014 says: “India’s youth are the engine of the nation’s growth.”**

**IRP says : Engines need fuel, not farewell letters. You can’t be an engine if your country exports your horsepower.**

***If NYP 2014 was Version 1.0, this is 7.0, coded by those who lived through its failure.***

India’s youth are not just a demographic dividend; they are a global force. The National Youth Policy 2014 failed because it lacked integration, ambition, and international relevance. The National Brain Gain Mission replaces passivity with participation, and isolation with global collaboration. By transforming brain drain into brain circulation, this reimagined policy offers a scalable, inclusive, and future-ready model that serves India and the world.