

category,” and making fun of them are usual discriminatory practices. Their mannerisms, accents, and dressing patterns are subject to ridicule on campus. Fear of discrimination leads SCs and STs to form identity-based peer groups, which further alienates them from the mainstream.

Although there are institutional mechanisms to promote diversity and protect students from discrimination, many of these arrangements do not function effectively. This is primarily due to a lack of sensitivity on the part of faculty members and academic administrators to issues related to diversity and discrimination. Discriminatory practices, no doubt, alienate students from disadvantaged groups and result in social exclusion. Students are left with a feeling of not being welcome and campuses remain non-inclusive. All these issues pose major challenges to realizing individual potential and achieving inclusive excellence.

CONCLUSION

It can be argued that there is a wide gap between policies for higher education expansion and institutional capacity to respond to increasing student diversity. The classification of diversity into different stages, and the identification of problems at each stage help specify areas of intervention and strategies to develop inclusive campuses in India. Institutional leaders and managers need to understand the dynamics of growing student diversity and recognize diversity as an asset rather than a liability to develop socially inclusive campuses in India.

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The Contradictions of Private Higher Education Expansion in India

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The debate on the relative merits of public and private educational institutions has a long history in India. During the last two decades, there have been many interesting parallels between the growth of these two sectors in the country.

Currently, more than 25 percent of elementary and secondary schools in India are in the private sector. Their

share has been growing steadily during the last decade. For many reasons, including quality of teaching and learning, better resources, medium of instruction in English, punctuality, etc., many middle-class Indian parents prefer private schools over government schools for their children.

When it comes to college and university-level education, although various trends regarding the growth of institutions are almost identical (as stated above), there is a marked difference with regard to students' choice in securing admission to institutions. A majority of students and parents still prefer government and government-aided private institutions to their purely private/unaided counterparts.

India has an immensely complex and often confusing higher education system. There are different types of institutions such as central universities, state universities, the Open University, private universities, deemed universities (institutions that are declared by Central Government under Section 3 of the University Grants Commission Act, 1956), and others that are also empowered to award degrees. In addition, there are affiliated and constituent undergraduate institutions of central and state universities, called colleges. Colleges can offer degree programs, but are not authorized to confer degrees on their own.

THE GROWING ROLE OF PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS AND SOME FAULTY GENERALIZATIONS

The private unaided sector has had an important role in the massive expansion of Indian higher education in terms of enrollments and institutions. According to the latest official statistics, there are 777 universities in India. Of these, around 261 are private universities. Among the 38,498 mainly undergraduate colleges, more than 77 percent are in the private sector. The massive expansion of professional higher educational institutions in India during the last two decades has also significantly contributed to this growth. Almost 20 percent of the total enrollment in higher education in India is in the professional disciplines, with engineering and technology being the most popular fields.

Since the present gross enrollment ratio (GER) in higher education in India is only 28 percent (calculated for the 18–22 age group), the demand–supply gap will increase and the role of private higher education institutions is going to be very important moving forward.

Recently, Pritam Singh, the former director of the prestigious public Indian Institute of Management–Lucknow, made an important observation about the state of private business schools in India: “While certain private institutes have managed to break away from the stereotypes attached and emerged as quality Institutes, there are still several problems plaguing the private sector today. The most important one is that owners of private colleges consider them

to be businesses rather than educational institutes. More importance is put on infrastructure rather than research work and the quality of faculty is bad. Quality faculty is not willing to take up such jobs because such institutes don't pay well or give their teachers autonomy and freedom for research."

This observation is also relevant in the context of the growth of private universities and private unaided colleges. The report of the ministry of human resource development's Tandon Committee in 2009 highlighted the following observations about many private deemed universities:

- Research was neglected;
- Additional fees for admission were collected, in violation of the norms of regulatory agencies, which had an adverse impact on access and equity;
- Family members were appointed as the head of the trust or as chancellors and vested with executive functions, which would ultimately compromise the autonomy of the institutions;
- Universities were named after a living founder/trustee, a practice contrary to all ethical and cultural norms and highly unusual.

There are notable exceptions: for instance, institutions like Birla Institute of Technology and Science, Azim Premji University, Manipal University, and a few others contribute to the quality of the Indian private higher education sector. These institutions stand out mainly because of their relevant curriculum, infrastructure, industry partnership, and the quality of their faculty.

Private institutions enjoy considerable academic and administrative autonomy compared to their public counterparts. However, it is a fact that only a few of them apply adequate importance to studies and research in the social sciences and humanities. Some prominent private universities are able to offer internationally competitive salaries to their faculty and attract the best talents from premier government institutions in the country and from abroad. Most of the prominent private institutions are far ahead of many government institutions in building and maintaining international and industrial partnerships, ensuring job placements, offering relevant curriculum, etc.

IMPACT ON STUDENTS' CHOICE

Despite growing numbers of private universities and unaided colleges, students still prefer public universities and government-aided institutions to private institutions, as shown by the increase in private coaching institutions in various parts of the country, which help students secure admission into prestigious public institutions. More than 80 percent

of graduate-level research students in India are in public institutions. The main advantages of publicly funded colleges and universities are affordable tuition fees and living costs, a liberal campus atmosphere, campus diversity, and relatively strong academic programs. Since there is a huge demand-supply gap to get into prestigious public institutions such as the Indian Institutes of Technology, prominent central universities like Jawaharlal Nehru University, research institutions sponsored by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, and a few others, competition is very keen.

The main reason for the preference for public institutions is that the vast majority of private universities and unaided colleges are commercially oriented. This is clearly reflected in their course offer, mainly aimed at responding to the demands of the domestic and international labour market, and in the fees they charge. Most of these institutions invest a lot of money in marketing and advertisement to attract students. The absence of democratically elected associations in most private institutions make students and faculty vulnerable to exploitation in various forms. While both government and private institutions are affected by a shortage of quality faculty, lack of accountability to key stakeholders is a feature generally attributed to a majority of private institutions.

Private institutions enjoy considerable academic and administrative autonomy compared to their public counterparts.

CONCLUSION

The private higher education sector in India has explored new paths for growth and development over the last two decades. However, the sector needs more investment from generous philanthropists rather than from commercially-oriented actors who view education as a commodity. At the same time, it is also important to note that the classification of colleges and universities into categories such as *excellent*, *good*, *average*, *mediocre*, *weak* is applicable to both public and private institutions. Publicly funded colleges and universities, especially those located in second-tier cities and small towns, need to pay more attention to improving their infrastructure and to the quality of teaching and learning processes. Both public and private sector institutions have relative strengths and weaknesses and, therefore, can learn from each other in terms of affordability, faculty retention,

academic and administrative autonomy, internationalization, freedom of expression, faculty and student diversity, job placement, infrastructural facilities, and admissions processes, among other areas.

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The Cultural Mission of Premier Universities in East Asia

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A new set of university rankings strengthens the notion that East Asia is fast becoming the next higher education superpower. With its unique traditions, East Asia attempts to indigenize the Western concept of a university that has dominated the world for centuries. Higher education systems in East Asia have arduously explored an alternative model to combine Western traditions with their own. Such an experiment has significant theoretical and practical implications. Yet, coming to terms with East Asia's higher education development has turned out to be far more difficult than previously thought. This article reports findings from a recent study supported by the Hong Kong Research Grants Council, entitled "Integrating Chinese and Western Higher Education Traditions: A Comparative Policy Analysis of the Quest for World-class Universities in Mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore" (751313H).

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AND THEIR ASSESSMENT

East Asian higher education systems have been fast improving in both quality and quantity. A modern higher education system has been established throughout the region. East Asia has become the world's third largest zone of higher education, science, and innovation. While Japan has long been a world-class powerhouse in science and technology, the growth of research in China, Korea, and Singapore is also impressive—and Taiwan is not far behind. At the institutional level, universities are rigorously setting global quality research as their performance standard. Such developments look even more remarkable when compared with other non-Western societies.

However, when assessing future development, one may be more skeptical. To some, East Asian universities

are reaching the most exciting phase of their development, leaping ahead to join the distinguished league of the world's leading universities. To others, although East Asian universities have made tremendous strides in terms of volume and quality of research output, they generally still lag behind the best universities in the West. By and large, the notion of "world-class" status in East Asia has been more imitative than creative. Financial and other resources, combined with some innovation strategies, can only bring you so far. A kind of "glass ceiling" will be reached soon.

Studies of higher education reforms have been overwhelmed by powerful economic and political influences. A cultural perspective that gives weight to the impact of traditions on contemporary development has been lacking. It is interesting to note that both optimists and pessimists have cited East Asia's traditional culture in their argumentation. It is equally interesting to note that extreme views are usually expressed by external observers: for researchers within the region, both gains and losses appear to be more real. Yet, they have also failed to theorize how their universities differ from those in Western countries. This is despite their evident pride in the idea that East Asian universities are not willing to assume that Western models define excellence.

A NARROWING GAP

Traditional higher learning in East Asia was concerned with worldly affairs. Pragmatic moral and political concerns were favored over metaphysical speculation, with a central focus on statecraft and ethics rather than logic. Ancient East Asian higher learning institutions were established to serve the rulers, in sharp contrast with medieval universities in Europe. At the turn of last century, East Asian societies started to institutionalize modern higher education based on Western experience, as part of their wider social transformations in a context of national "salvation" and eastward movement of Western learning. From the outset, fundamental differences between East Asian and Western values have led to continuous conflicts and laid out troubles for the future.

East Asia's unique cultural roots and heritages have greatly constrained the functioning of core Western values that underlie the concept of university. The coexistence of two powerful value systems that are not compatible with each other has proven to be the greatest challenge for East Asian higher education development. The Western concept has been adopted only for its practicality. There have been frequent attempts to indigenize the Western idea of a university and various societies have employed different approaches, but little has been achieved. This explains why achievements in science and technology are so much greater than in the social sciences and humanities. This is precisely the bottleneck of East Asia's higher education de-