

Classroom as a Site of Learning: A Sociological Study of a University in India

Sahana Sen¹ and Nagaraju Gundemeda²

*¹Department of Sociology, School of Social Sciences, University of Hyderabad,
Central University, 500046, Hyderabad, India
Department of Sociology, University of Johannesburg, Johannesburg, South Africa
Telephone: +91- 040-23133250 E-mail: sahana.sen1@gmail.com*

*²Department of Sociology, School of Social Sciences, University of Hyderabad,
Central University, 500046, Hyderabad, India
Department of Sociology, University of Johannesburg, Johannesburg, South Africa
Telephone: +91-040-23133263 E-mail: ngss@uohyd.ernet.in*

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ABSTRACT Higher education gained critical importance in the developing countries in the post-colonial era. The young adults of India attach utmost value to higher education in order to attain social mobility. However, a critical appraisal of the reports on the current status of education in India reveals wide disparity in learning abilities and achievement. The current paper based on an empirical study, conducted at a central university in India, seeks to examine the patterns of learning in the university and secondly to map out the meanings, challenges faced by the students from diverse social, economic and linguistic backgrounds in the learning context. The study found that, in this university the professors use multiple means of teaching and learning mechanisms such as classroom lectures, assignments, presentations, e-resources etc. to encourage the students to acquire knowledge from multiple sources. It is observed that students are faced with multiple trials and tribulations owing to the dichotomy existing between course demands and their achievements, the curricula and the social, cultural, economic or symbolic capital associated with their backgrounds. The study argues that the methods of learning worked as a means of exclusion. The students from first generation suffer from multiple forms of learning violence which works in favour of students who hail from elite and middle classes and exclude the students from the lower classes. The study proposes that higher education institutions must play a proactive role towards inclusive learning.