

Abstract

Redressing the Apartheid Legacy of Social Exclusion: Social Equity, Redress and Admission to Higher Education in Democratic South Africa

In South Africa social inequalities characterised all spheres of social life, as a product of the systemic exclusion of blacks and women under colonialism and apartheid. The higher education system was no exception. Social, political and economic discrimination and inequalities of a class, race, gender, institutional and spatial nature profoundly shaped, and continue to shape, South African higher education.

Given this, South Africa's new democratic government committed itself in 1994 to transforming higher education as well as the inherited apartheid social and economic structure and institutionalising a new social order. Necessarily, social equity and redress for historically disadvantaged social groups in higher education has loomed large in policy discourse. The paper:

1. Briefly analyses the colonial and apartheid legacy in so far as the provision of higher education and the participation of black South Africans are concerned.
2. Advances propositions on the erosion of the apartheid legacy in higher education and realising social equity and redress for students from historically disadvantaged social groups.
3. Describes the approach to social equity and admissions under democracy and its outcomes to date.
4. Identifies the critical challenges that confront the state and higher education institutions if constitutional and legislated values and goals with respect to social equity and redress are to be realised.

Bio

Dr. Saleem Badat is Vice Chancellor of Rhodes University. Between 1999 and 2006 he was the first head of the higher education policy advisory body to the Minister of Education. He holds a PhD in Sociology from the University of York. His research interests in higher education include policy making, institutional change, social inclusion and exclusion, and student politics.