The present crisis of respecting the viewpoints of diverse groups in the higher education system in India questions the idea of freedom. The examples such as 'the barricading of Jawaharlal Nehru University's (JNU), Freedom Square' sometime back showed that freedom to protest and offer resistance to the despotic policies are not only discouraged but are embarrassing to the university administration. However, this decision to barricade the freedom square has been taken back recently. The program of present discussion is not about ambivalence on the part of individual or institutions but about the importance of freedom and diversity in universities. The point of contention here is about the academic liberty and right of students to demonstrate non-violently is taken in a negative light by the university administration which may be contrary to their liberal values and world-class stature. The JNU's freedom square is a space acting as a token where students and staffs come to the mutual understanding about the issues in hand through democratic dialogue process. This process can't be ignored as it is essential part of the universities from the time primordial. The question is "why universities has to lose its idea when it comes to administration?" Since administration is also part of the idea of university, therefore the core values of the university applies to the administration too. At least, in understanding that the culture of protest is synonymous with the coming of the idea of nation. The political intrusion can't be denied because politics is part of the culture whether it is institutional culture or the national culture, however, the meaning of protest should not be held as complaint but more properly as dissent, a critical approach to see something in collectivity. The evidence is ample in number to show that protest is just not an act of dissent in the university campus but has a landmark role in the society and in the scientific disciplines.

The barricading of the physical space is not discrete in its presence, but it has an associated collective memory and which describes the core value of the university. The Machiavellian move to snatch this space from memory has eroded the meaning of being a world class university in the real sense. The social space in the history of university meant for dialogue, freedom, collectivities and solidarity which are essential to the idea of the university which has been taken down in the neoliberal age posing its Orwellian stance. The age of freedom should not be considered similar to the age of competition.
The neoliberal idea to have competitive structure depicts its capitalistic manifesto from which the history has struggled. Jawaharlal Nehru University is unique among other universities regarding providing a model where diversity and dissents are valued. The recent move and the other incidents in the past (for example, the missing of Najeeb), have intended an undesirable picture to the actual spirit of being the world class university having global representation. However, it is no doubt that the current move of different universities in India to feel as belonging to the world-class university is welcoming decision. World class in the present time mindset may also cater to the neoliberal benchmark of being competitive on the criteria set to be world class. Though neoliberal looks like pro freedom enterprise and being competitive and earn as per the demand, it has created huge competition among the Universities and institutions leading to inequalities and educational divides. Currently, world class university may resonate political values such as the revival of culture and religion under the threat of westernization or rejection of polarization and imbibe global values about all categories of students.

The culture of student–teacher relationship becomes problematic when it ends up in uncritical deference and internalized. It suppresses the culture of dissent and any move on the part of students or staff to the question, led to the hostility rather than integration of viewpoints. In the current time, to be world-class is a need for universities, though, the idea of the university as space, for example, ‘Plato’s Academy’ or Aristotle’s ‘The Lyceum’ were the space for debates and critical dialogue. University stands a combined effort to fulfill its mission by mobilizing collective action towards the goal through dialogue and empowerment of people from the diverse community comprising Dalit, gendered, and other minority views. Views are meant to offer critical stance to the equally valued viewpoint, and university plays an important role in bringing the common understanding offering the new worldview, in the voices represented by the future leader. The contest for making university world class without developing a consciousness for dialogue and the inclusion of divergent worldviews, probably end up making a category error in the Rylean analogy.

According to Altbach (2011), "Universities can demonstrate "world-class" thinking and policy development in the sense that they employ state-of-the-art solutions to pressing challenges of the twenty-first century." (P. 1). Two main glitches at the broader level are, 1) keeping the structure of the institution at par with the systems on the global scale to attain the goal of excellence and learning and 2) to resolve its everyday challenges of attracting students, increasing the revenue, recruitment of excellent faculty, new departments, etc. However, there are complexities within the visible problems, which the idea of current world-class universities missed out. For example, there are some questions, which need to be answered clearly with evidence, such as, 1) what is the place of minority students in the agenda of university striving for becoming world class? 2) In what way the social psychological aspects such stereotypes and prejudices handled? 3) In what way university fulfills the students’ aspiration who are coming from the diverse background?, and 4) Is universities formal plans and procedure are sensible enough to cater to the need of different students and their everyday psychological struggle?

The new governments move in the last two decades to transform the present university stature into a world class, didn’t clarify the meaning of world class from the sociocultural perspective. Does the definition of world-class exist at the level of policy makers or it connects both global with the local? The target of the universities and institutions to shape its structure as per the global gages miss out the insiders’ perspectives. In this context, universities and institutions reduced its functioning to the appropriation of upper-middle-class value system by fitting to their need regarding technology upgradations, westernized setting of the classroom and library, English work culture, etc. However, this infrastructural and academic upgradation seems to function better with its local and diversified set up such as freedom to use native language, more locally acknowledged book in vernacular languages, the ethical committee who look after students and staff necessary rights, the inclusion of students and faculties from a disadvantaged background etc. The representation of localized context may not deprive universities of the international context but become more inclusive by giving broader insight into the culture and institution. Sometimes the resistance of the student to accept the logic provided by the authority to change introduced in the institutions is also a change in its kind. It happened in the Rohit Vemula’s case, where authority vehemently followed the government stance, in politicizing his suicide as individually driven, though blatantly opposed by the progressive students, in the universities across the country. In this lieu, the individual and institutional relation either is reduced to personal autonomy or has never expanded at the level of meaningful interaction.

The urge of many universities to become world-class institution has been limited to the organization’s emphasis on public-private partnership, hiring international or foreign educated faculty for better research output, etc. The university’s academic leadership capability to address the social psychological experiences of the students and staffs is also an important precursor. However, Johnstone (2011) expressed his dissatisfaction with the limited role of educational leader as authoritative and influential, and he/she also expressed concern with the insurmountable challenges which universities are going to face in the future. In the case of India, Universities have faced enough of these characteristics of educational leaders and change got entangled into the circularities of theories. As Durrheim (2014) explicated the Foucault’s (1980) notion of social change as counter knowledge where change should happen at the level of socio-political, economic and institutional level.
Feel of the world-class university doesn’t limit to world-class research and scholars, autonomy and competitive excellence but it also comes with the feeling of diversity and its cultural representations. However, still, the problem persists. The aim of some universities to be world-class driven by the limited aspects of diversity. The myth of heterogeneity in few world-class universities and institutions in India doesn’t fit with the idea of the university and doesn’t make university eligible to be world-class in the right sense. University seems to be an idea of homogeneity out of heterogeneity where inequality diminishes not the diversity. It provides space and freedom to express and think, to differ and imbibe the feeling of pride as being in group. The task of a world-class university in the neoliberal age is to be conscious of its idea of emergence and provide empowerment to the people of the diverse community by producing vibrant academic culture. Thus apart from the criteria operationalized in the current university system, it is imperative for universities to impart critical consciousness to the students and staff and connected to the social issues producing global leaders. The idea of the university itself pertains to be world-class, where thinking and rationalizing matters under its broader aim of liberal education and mental cultivation as imagined by John Henry Newman.

The recent case of JNU showed that counter-knowledge to the real concept of nation and diversity had been countered back in a regimental way. However, the current leadership occupying the official position failed to represent the identity of the students. In the university system, one has the right to express his/her viewpoints, criticisms and opinion. Universities are a critical social space where the view of everyone matters or should matter.

References


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