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# Equal Access to Education

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# Equal Access to Education

The purpose of our research study and presentation is to identify key factors in access to education in three regions of the world. We did a literature review, looking into access to education in China, India, and the United States (urban) education systems in order to understand the barriers within each educational system. We chose these three countries based upon their illiteracy rates and prominence as world powers. The Chinese educational system has been seen as an exemplary model of education, with the majority of students excelling in their work. India is a prominent global economic leader, yet struggles with a large illiteracy rate. The United States also has great disparities in access to education. Though education is available and mandated, urban schools lack funding and qualified teachers. We have researched academic and professional journals, books, and personal testimonies in order to present accurate and thorough research on access to education in each of these areas.

## USA

The United States ranks 17<sup>th</sup> in the world for proficient education systems, with 7,000 students dropping out of school everyday. Around 60% of urban high school students graduate. Nationally, the average is 78%.

So why is our urban education system lacking? We found two major reasons, amongst many, and decided to research those more thoroughly. First, we looked into “drop out factories”, which is a nickname for inner-city schools who graduate less than 60% of their seniors. 32% of minority students attend “dropout factories” compared to 8% of white students.

Another prominent issue in our urban schools is the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002. This act was meant to keep schools accountable for what they are teaching children through standardized testing.



## India

Current statistics state that 37% of all illiterate adults in the world live in India. This means that 1 out of every 3 Indian citizens is illiterate. The population group that is most deprived of education accessibility our members of the caste system – the lowest social class.

In 2009 the caste system was abolished and a new system was instituted in order to educate this group of the population. The Right to Education Act passed and mandated compulsory school attendance for all children regardless of socio-economic level. It also required teachers to pass all students regardless of their academic performance. Because of this, students are inadequately prepared for higher education and as a result are unable to improve their status in society. In this way they have yet to attain equality.



## China

By 2010, 120 million Chinese citizens obtained a college degree. In 2010, illiteracy rates had dropped to 4.08 percent, down 2.64 percentage points from the 2000 figure.

China's educational and political system is seen as one of the most successful in the current world. China's motivators for education include government funding, aimed mainly at the underprivileged, rural areas. Subsidies for boarding and tuition remission assist children in rural areas with compulsory school costs. Most resources are located in the larger cities. Another motivator for education is the emphasis parents place on education.

Currently, the number of college-educated Chinese students on the mainland has doubled in the past decade.

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