

## Summary

### *“Making the 'Smartness' Brand Accessible: Fortifying the Merit Quotient in Indian Higher Education System”*

by Shreya Atrey

The paper examines the access to higher education in India by querying the contours of *individual merit*. The central argument avers that, by excluding certain types of intelligences from the bracket of what is called “meritorious”, we deny individuals and groups from effectively participating in higher education. It is also explored whether the conceptual paradigm of ‘merit’ includes within its ambit certain group characteristics which become characteristically relevant in a candidate’s profile who seeks admission into institutions of higher education. By *standardizing* the notion of ‘merit’ we stifle the Constitutional promise of extending equality of opportunity to all citizens *in fact*, if not *in law*. There is value in redefining our conceptions of ‘merit’ so as to encourage *diversity* in student body, which is an educational good in itself. Importantly, “multiple intelligences” must be regarded as relevant when constructing methods of selection to institutions of higher education.