

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

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Diversity and inclusion matters a lot to me because of my own background (born in a farming community in a remote Indian village with no school). I believe everyone is capable of achieving everything, all they need is resource and support. Therefore, I firmly believe that all institutions in a democracy, including universities should strive to build community of individuals with diverse backgrounds and life experiences, free of discrimination based on racial and ethnic origin, gender identity, sexual orientation, social economic status or religious belief.

In the past, when I was working as an assistant professor in International Institute of Information Technology (IIIT) Bhubanesware, I participated in teaching workshops, organised by the student body of IIIT, to teach the children of migrant workers, working as a construction worker in IIIT. In addition, every year when I visit my village in summer, I teach physics, mathematics, and basic computer literacy course to all the children, coming from economically underdeveloped community, working in agricultural field in evenings. However, I lack funds to buy computers for everyone and therefore, I have been recently trying to encouraging people to donate their computers. My long term goal is to lower the gap of digital divide and make the children from economically underdeveloped community literate in computer education and employable in computer industry to break the cycle of poverty. I am committed to promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in my lab by hiring students from diverse backgrounds. I also intend to invite students from underdeveloped and developing countries to the University of British Columbia to given them exposure to a world class research facilities.

I am also a staunch supporter of a robust and transparent democracy, and one of my future goal is to end the first-past-the-post (FPTP) voting method in India by challenging the Election Commission of India in the Indian Supreme Court. FPTP is an unsatisfactory method to elect the winner of an election and it is actively exploited by the political parties in India (sometimes, a party with even 33% votes wins the state election). Therefore, elections in India is no longer about the voters but about strategic manipulation. Consequently, in recent elections, many voters are boycotting the elections and not casting their ballots.