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P A P E R

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# Education and the Asian Surge

A Comparison of the  
Education Systems in  
India and China

Charles A. Goldman, Krishna B. Kumar, Ying Liu

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## Summary

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China and India have faced similar conditions and challenges in education during their rapid industrial and social transformation. The two countries started building their national education systems under comparable conditions in the late 1940s. However, different policies, strategies, and historical circumstances have led them through different routes. China has outperformed India in primary and secondary education along a broad spectrum of access, quality, and delivery indicators. India, on the other hand, enjoys a competitive edge over China in higher education. Recently, India has begun catching up with China in K–12 education, while China has already overtaken India in terms of the college enrollment and number of graduates. The respective successes and challenges of the Chinese and Indian education systems offer valuable lessons for both countries and for the rest of the developing world.