



ASHOKA  
UNIVERSITY

INCLUSION,



& BELONGING REPORT

2021-22

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Message from the Vice-Chancellor	03	<b>Gender diversity</b>	<b>20</b>
Message from the Chairman	04	Gender representation	21
Vision statement	05	Women at Ashoka	22
I&D timeline	06	Women in the sciences	23
Strategic priorities	07	<b>Cultural diversity</b>	<b>24</b>
I&D Committee recommendations	08	Geographical and cultural diversity	25
Diversity dashboard	09	<b>Learning and support</b>	<b>27</b>
Undergraduate diversity	10	Office of Learning Support	28
Young India Fellowship	11	Breaking barriers	30
Enhancing outreach	12	Letter from a mother	31
Academic Bridge Programme	13	Providing essential support	32
<b>Socio-economic diversity</b>	<b>14</b>	Office of Student Affairs	34
Inclusion through financial aid	15	Peer support	35
Empowering students	16	<b>Social impact</b>	<b>36</b>
Scholarship donor speak	17	Impacting communities	37
Empowering students	18	Worker Welfare	38
Annual Fund supporter	19	A sense of belonging	39

# MESSAGE FROM THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

## Malabika Sarkar

Vice-Chancellor

*A walk through the campus of Ashoka University gives a clear indication of this University's commitment to the values of inclusion and diversity. Students, faculty and researchers of different nationalities, from villages, towns and cities across India, and from diverse economic backgrounds have come together to form a vibrant academic community. The University is mindful of gender ratio and the multiple facets of gender identity. Generous financial support, understanding and facilities for those physically challenged or in need of mental health support are amongst multiple initiatives that the University has taken to encourage and foster an enabling environment.*

*The life of the University, its fundamental activities of teaching/learning and research, are supported by a dedicated team of administrators, staff and workers. The same principles of inclusion and diversity amongst them have brought in regional diversity and diversity of languages and cultures.*

*Ashoka's Committee on Inclusion and Diversity works systematically to support, sensitise and encourage this spirit of belonging and respect for each other.*



# MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

## Ashish Dhawan

Founder and Chairman, Board of Trustees

*Diversity and inclusion are integral to Ashoka's goals and values. Since its inception, the University has striven to foster an environment where each individual is treated with equality, respect, and dignity.*

*Our Inclusion, Diversity & Belonging report is a way to acknowledge this endeavour. Each team and department at the University adopts an approach to diversity and inclusion that recognises and values the richness of thought and experience.*

*In June 2021, for the first time, an interim diversity committee was set up by the Vice-Chancellor. The committee interacted with the various stakeholders at the University on how we can be even more inclusive. Some of their recommendations have been listed in the report. We have also recently constituted a formal committee headed by Pro Vice-Chancellor Venkat Eshwara. We will share more on that as the year progresses.*

*By acting upon those recommendations, and through other initiatives, we hope to create a culture in which individual identities and backgrounds are valued and encouraged. It is imperative that every student, faculty, and staff member feels a sense of belonging in order to discover their full potential.*



# VISION STATEMENT

## Venkat Eshwara

Pro Vice-Chancellor  
Development, Placements and Alumni Relations  
Chair, Inclusion & Diversity Committee

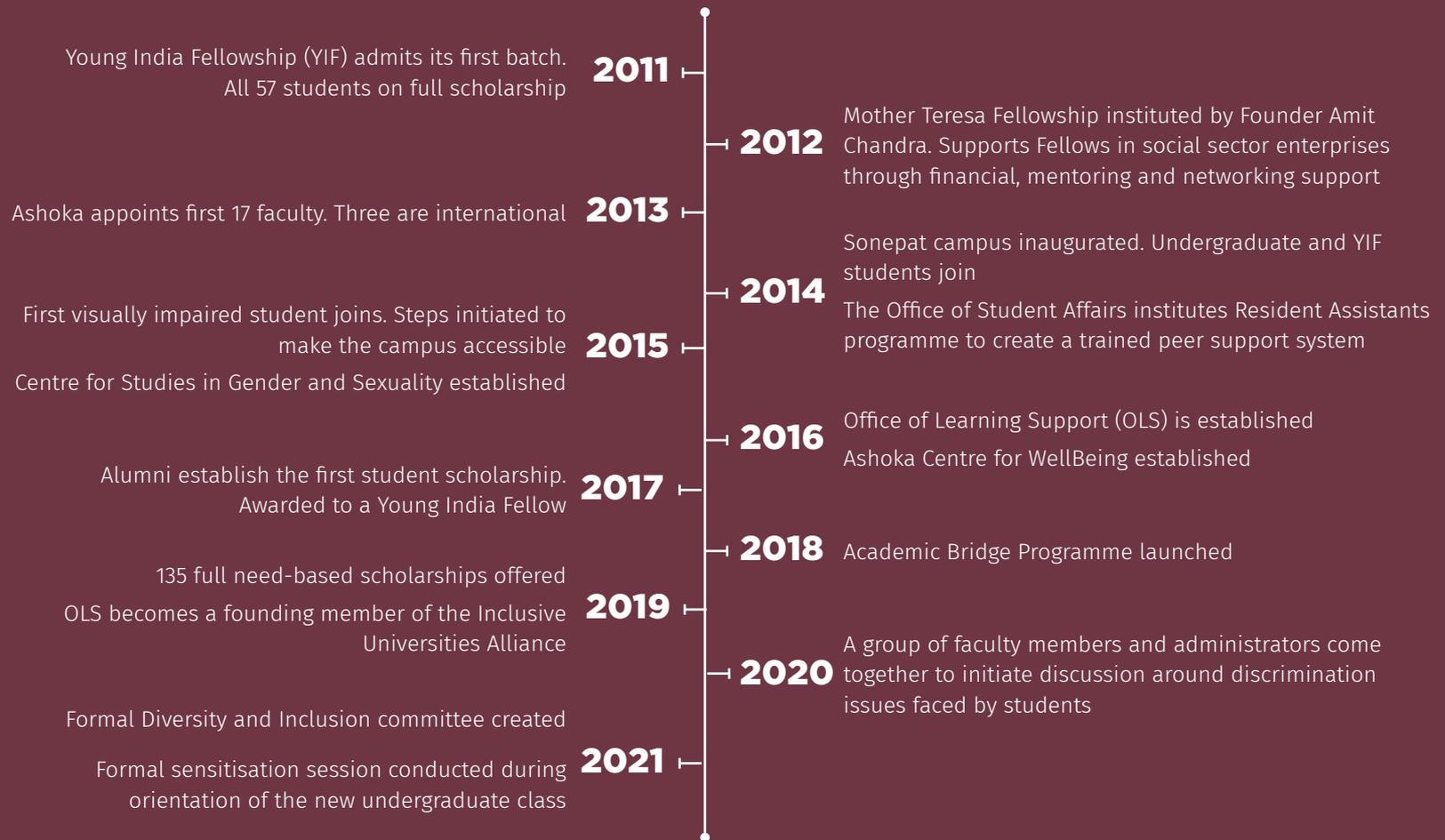
---

*At Ashoka, we aim to foster an environment that supports the personal and intellectual growth of all members of the community. We want to build a climate of respect and advance a culture of belonging, where opportunities are accessible to all. It is our belief that embracing diversity is crucial to our progress, and our sustained commitment to these values is critical to Ashoka's mission of building an institution of teaching and research excellence.*



# INCLUSION & DIVERSITY

## TIMELINE



# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AT A GLANCE



## Inclusion of first-generation and middle-income students

### Initiatives undertaken

- ▶ Creating an Annual Fund, a pool for scholarships, to support first-generation and low-income students
- ▶ Academic Bridge Programme for students from the incoming undergraduate class, who need special assistance with academic writing and reading
- ▶ Providing laptops and free data access to low-income students

- ▶ Continue to provide full scholarships to students from underprivileged backgrounds
- ▶ Exploring ideas to provide greater transparency of financial aid slabs to encourage middle-income students to apply



## Student diversity

- ▶ Making a concerted effort in crafting the incoming class through a holistic admissions process. Students from exceptional circumstances are handpicked based on a variety of parameters

- ▶ Providing support and academic accommodations in the admissions process keeping in mind specific gender needs of students



## Accessibility

- ▶ Making the application portal and website accessible to students with visual and hearing impairment, and dyslexia
- ▶ Modifying infrastructure like rooms, residential spaces, transport vehicles, and campus for students with specific needs eg: wheelchairs or visual impairment

- ▶ Envision and implement a sports policy for students with special needs
- ▶ To integrate infrastructural accessibility at the new campus at the design stage



## Resources for the community

- ▶ Support through the Ashoka Centre for WellBeing for mental health issues, Internal Complaints Committee to address prevention, and redressal of sexual harassment, Anti-ragging Committee, and many more

- ▶ Setting up a grievance office to cater to all stakeholders
- ▶ Setting up support systems for individuals who are exploring their gender (gender non-confirming and gender non-binary persons)
- ▶ Prioritise women as sports coaches/instructors to encourage participation



## Sensitisation

- ▶ Allowing students to self-describe their gender identity and mention their preferred pronouns on the application form
- ▶ Sensitising and broadening conversations on LGBTQIA+ issues for staff

- ▶ Sensitisation of faculty to be inclusive in their teaching methodology
- ▶ Sensitisation of all stakeholders to deal with trans, gender non-confirming, and gender non-binary students

# I&D COMMITTEE

## RECOMMENDATIONS

An interim diversity committee established by the Vice-Chancellor in 2021 examined various issues of inclusion, diversity and belonging. It made the following recommendations for both immediate and long-term impact for the University and for all stakeholders.

### **Orientation of new students and employees**

Conduct at least one session that focuses on

- ▶ Understanding Ashoka values relating to diversity and inclusion
- ▶ Understanding the composition of all constituents in the Ashoka community
- ▶ Setting expectations of a code of engagement, presence and communication that is respectful, empathetic, and supportive of all members

### **Office for diversity and inclusion**

Establish a formal office that examines issues and concerns of any discrimination

- ▶ Address concerns around discrimination and offer guidance and conflict resolution
- ▶ Institute a Diversity and Inclusion Committee (DIC), which has representation from all stakeholders, to address complaints and adjudicate/mediate on specific cases
- ▶ Establish an international office which is open to all international stakeholders
- ▶ Collaborate with various Ashoka stakeholders (departments, centres, offices, and alumni), along with external stakeholders, to host workshops, events, and diversity related conversations
- ▶ Facilitate student-volunteer led conversations to specifically spread awareness within the student body

### **Hiring**

Intentional and proactive hiring of administrative staff and faculty members from diverse and underrepresented identity groups

# DIVERSITY DASHBOARD



Ashoka is committed to supporting a diverse and inclusive campus community which celebrates differences in thought and opinion.

**2,540**

Students

**25**

Countries

**28**

States

**265**

Indian towns and cities

**6%**

International students

**11**

Countries (faculty)

**18**

Languages spoken on campus

# UNDERGRADUATE (UG)

## DIVERSITY



In academic year 2021-22, Ashoka welcomed its largest and most diverse undergraduate class with 690 students. There are over 1,860 undergraduate students.

Seven per cent of applications for the incoming class were submitted by first-generation students. There was a rise of 15.5 per cent in applications from tier II and III cities.

**5,840**

applications received  
12% increase over last year\*

**59%**

applications from non-metros\*

**57%**

women, 42% men, 1% others\*\*

**48%**

of all UG students on financial aid

**23%**

students on full financial aid\*\*\*  
22% last year

**₹3.15 lakh**

average need-based scholarship  
in 2021-22\*

*\*for undergraduate class of 2024  
metros include Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, and Chennai*

*\*\*includes Transgender, Genderfluid, Gender Non-Binary, Gender Non-Confirming, Gender Queer persons*

*\*\*\*tuition and above*

# YOUNG INDIA FELLOWSHIP

The Young India Fellowship (YIF) is a year-long postgraduate diploma in liberal studies. The breadth of offerings in the programme has resulted in a rare diversity in the batch. Applicants come from different academic and geographical backgrounds, and professional spheres ranging from consultancy to medicine.

	2020-21	2021-22
<b>Class size</b>	188	198
<b>Gender identification</b>		
Women	54%	65%
Men	46%	33.5%
Others	0%	1.5%
<b>Geographical representation</b>		
Countries	2	3
Indian cities	93	85
Percent of students from metros (tier I)*	38%	35%
Percent of students from tier II and III cities	62%	65%
<b>Academic background</b>		
Graduates	43%	37%
Postgraduates	13%	18%
<b>Financial aid</b>		
Percentage of the batch on financial aid	51%	52%
Percentage of the batch on full aid	6%	4%
Percentage of students with family income under Rs 5 lakh per annum	25%	24%

\*Tier I - New Delhi (excluding Gurugram and Noida), Mumbai, Chennai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Ahmedabad, and Pune

# ENHANCING OUTREACH

The Office of Outreach engaged with over 980 schools across 185 cities and 27 states in 2021-22.

There was an increased focus on low-income, foundation, and government schools. Counsellors engaged with students in tier II and III cities and created awareness about financial aid, and career options. Cities included Kanpur, Shillong, Pondicherry, Dimapur, Ooty and Coimbatore.

The office has also built a student ambassador programme. Students share their experience to encourage other young people to apply to Ashoka.



**49**  
low-income or foundation schools

**2,022**  
schools submitted applications

**13%**  
increase in undergraduate applications

**15.5%**  
increase in applications from tier II and III cities

**45**  
student ambassadors

*“Outreach efforts at Ashoka are directed towards ensuring equal access and opportunity to students from all walks of life.*

*In the previous academic year, we engaged with close to 50 schools that offer education to lower socio-economic groups including Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas, Telangana Social Welfare Schools, Vidyagyan, Avasara Academy, SOBHA Icon, and many others. This reflects in Ashoka’s inclusive campus community.”*

**Vikram Bawa**  
Senior Director, Office of Outreach

# ACADEMIC BRIDGE PROGRAMME

ABP is conducted for students from the incoming undergraduate batch, who need special assistance, to adapt to the University's academic culture. The class includes low-income students, first-generation college goers, those from non-English speaking backgrounds, and international students. Apart from English grammar and vocabulary, it introduces students to critical thinking, research methodology, and some aspects of academic writing.

ABP is hosted by the Office of Admissions in collaboration with various other teams.

August 2021 marked the fourth year of the programme. Thirty-eight students participated this year. More than half were first-generation college goers.

**Till date, 176 students have benefitted from the programme**



## Afsaar Maniyar

Undergraduate 2024  
Pune, Maharashtra

Afsaar is the first person in his family to attend college. His parents were unable to complete high school. Afsaar studied in a government school where rote learning was the norm and absenteeism was common among teachers. He realised that his transition to university wasn't going to be an easy task.

*"I was unfamiliar with a system where you had to write on your own, without relying on the internet. I also felt apprehensive about interacting with students from private schools who were more fluent in English.*

*The ABP has been transformative. With fewer students, I found it much easier to speak up in class. Slowly, I had the confidence to interact with people from different backgrounds."*

## Kopal Agarwal

Project Head, Academic Bridge Programme, Office of Admissions

*"ABP aims at equipping students with necessary skills for a collegiate setting. In addition to offering reading and writing support, the programme has helped navigate online education. The need for this has become more pronounced since the pandemic.*

*We believe we have been able to enrich the experience of students by familiarising them with various resources and help centres at the University."*



**SOCIO-ECONOMIC DIVERSITY**

# INCLUSION THROUGH FINANCIAL AID



Ashoka is committed to making a high-quality education accessible to deserving students, irrespective of their socio-economic backgrounds. This is possible through our robust need-based financial aid programme. Around 20 per cent students in every undergraduate batch are on full scholarships (tuition and above).

Our recently launched Annual Fund for scholarships will help us offset the cost of students' tuition and living expenses. This will enable us to support a more diverse student body.

***In the last 11 years, the University has provided Rs 328 crore in need-based scholarships to more than 3,700 students***

**₹77.5 crore**

awarded in academic year 2021-22

₹60 crore last year

**49%**

students on need-based financial aid

**47%**

undergraduate class of 2024 on financial aid

**202**

full scholarships awarded this academic year to all students\*

**6%**

first-generation college goers\*\*

**8%**

schools represented are NGO/foundation schools

*\*includes tuition, residence, meals, and benefits like stipend, stationery allowance, etc.*

*\*\*undergraduate class of 2024*

# EMPOWERING STUDENTS

## Monu Jangra

Undergraduate 2024  
Jind, Haryana

---

Monu is the first college goer in her family. Her parents ensured that she did not get married early on like many other girls in her community.

Monu, who had not travelled far from her hometown, has now made friends with students from Jharkhand, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, and Afghanistan.

*"I had applied to Ashoka, but wasn't sure how I would get by. We spoke Haryanvi at home and the medium of instruction in school was Hindi.*

*The tutors at the Centre for Writing and Communication were very supportive. We worked on my language skills through games and stories which made learning fun."*



# SCHOLARSHIP DONOR

## Mahesh Kumar

MD & CEO  
SBI Life Insurance

---

*“As the world around us evolves, a holistic education that focuses on the overall growth of a child is of utmost importance to address the rapidly changing academic, social, psychological and emotional development needs. With Ashoka University being a truly transformational initiative, it focuses on the holistic development of students through liberal arts. It is a matter of great privilege for us to be associated with Ashoka, to pioneer the cause of liberal education in the country. The stellar job being done under our partnership towards nation building and ushering transformation is most gratifying. This initiative is our small attempt towards the upliftment of underprivileged students. Nothing brings us more happiness than addressing the issue of education for marginalised segments of society”.*



# EMPOWERING STUDENTS

## Asish Singh

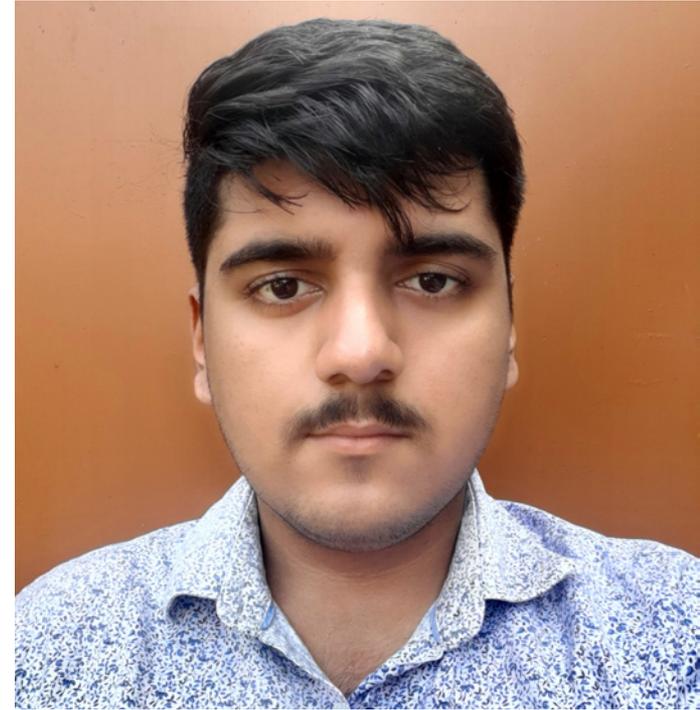
Undergraduate 2024  
Kolkata, West Bengal

---

Asish's parents came from an underprivileged background. His father worked hard to ensure that his son attended college, even though he couldn't complete his own school education. Asish is passionate about public policy and hopes to work with the World Bank or the IMF.

*“Financial constraints tend to stifle the risk appetite of a student, leading him to take only the path of academics because it apparently ensures employment. This ignorance is also multiplied by the lack of exposure to opportunities, again dictated by financial scarcity.*

*The financial aid has eliminated this concern from my mind. I look forward to making the best of the many opportunities that Ashoka offers.”*



# ANNUAL FUND SUPPORTER

## George Mattackal

President

CGI Asia Pacific Global Delivery Centers of Excellence

---

*“At CGI we believe that a diverse workforce will deliver greater innovation for the communities where we work and live. We are actively engaged in creating and sustaining talent by collaborating with institutions to improve access to quality education for deserving students and create a talented workforce founded upon diversity, equity, and inclusion.*

*Through our association with Ashoka University we aim to empower individuals from underrepresented groups to bring forward their thought leadership and innovation regardless of their background.”*





**GENDER DIVERSITY**

# GENDER

## REPRESENTATION

We are committed to creating a safe and welcoming space for all members of the community and increasing the representation of people who identify with various genders. The University has a growing LGBTQIA+ community.

The Centre for Studies in Gender and Sexuality is committed to studying the many intersections at which we encounter questions of gender, sexuality, identity, pleasure, and inequality.



**57%**  
women

-----  
**17**  
trans students in UG 2024  
5 in UG 2020

*“Ashoka University has been a trans affirming space for me and continues to try to evolve and learn from the rapidly growing body of LGBTQIA students. The committee to formulate policy for transgender students, of which I am a part, is hoping to put out a comprehensive policy that makes this a gender-affirming space, in terms of housing, safe bathroom access, and support through transitioning in an academic space.”*

**Bittu (Kaveri Rajaraman Indira)**

Associate Professor, Biology and Psychology

# WOMEN AT ASHOKA

## Yajushi Khurana

Ashoka Scholars Programme 2021  
New Delhi



Yajushi is part of Ashoka's first batch of science graduates and a first-generation graduate. She is pursuing a PhD in Computational Biology offered jointly by Carnegie Mellon and University of Pittsburgh. She is working on problems in cancer cell biology, mechanobiology, and immunology.

*"I hope to enter the industrial research sector and help develop tools in medical and biological sciences that can help humans.*

*I hope young girls like me can dream about pursuing science. I'm very sure that Ashoka's financial aid programme will give more women like me the opportunity to pursue their dreams."*

**50%**  
women in the workforce  
46% last year

**43%**  
women in faculty  
40% last year

**63%**  
women in leadership positions

**59%**  
women students in the sciences

**44%**  
of women students on financial aid

# WOMEN IN THE SCIENCES



Women leaders in science are needed as role models. Ashoka not only has a stellar group of women scientists in faculty, it is fast becoming a preferred institute for science education.

Since the launch of the sciences programme in 2017, Ashoka has had more women students than men. A majority come from small towns and districts like Sri Ganganagar, Kamrup, Araria, West Kameng, Ramanagara, Jind, and Baghpat.

**59%**

science students are women

**20%**

women received full tuition support or more

**4**

women from the first physics batch are pursuing higher education on full scholarship\*

**58%**

science faculty are women

*Sciences include Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Computer Science, Mathematics, and Psychology*

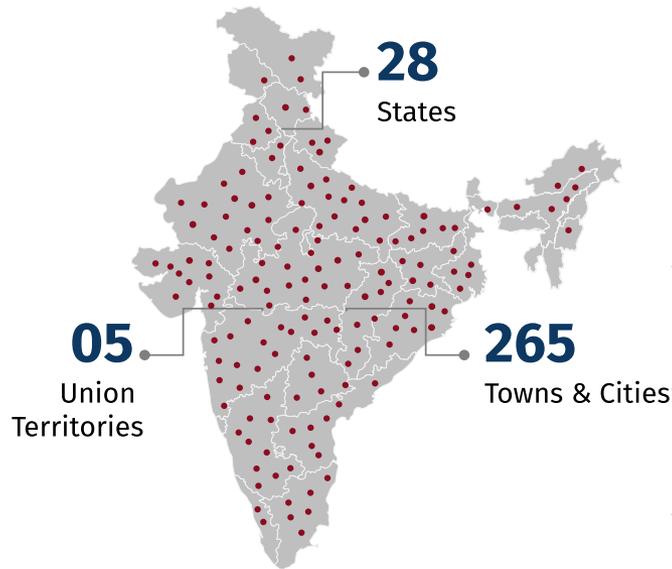
*\*Total number of graduating students was 12*



**CULTURAL DIVERSITY**

# GEOGRAPHICAL AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Ashoka's commitment to cultural inclusiveness is more than just numbers. It represents a way of thinking, understanding, and celebrating a respect for various cultures and beliefs. Having students and faculty from different geographies contributes richly to the social fabric of the University.



**6%**  
international students  
Students from  
**25**  
countries  
Faculty from  
**10**  
countries  
**35%**  
of incoming UG class  
from tier II and III cities



## Etsehiwot Bekele

Undergraduate 2023  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

*"International students are one of the reasons why Ashoka is not just an Indian university, but a global one. Most of the students here are curious and driven and are doing things that are way beyond their ages. I fit into Ashoka's environment because my aspirations and goals have always been to do the hard things – to solve problems I see around me in the most efficient way possible."*



## Padma Rigzin

Young India Fellowship 2022  
Kargyam, Ladakh

*"Studying in a diverse campus like Ashoka and meeting people of different cultural backgrounds has increased my awareness. I have built a greater understanding of diverse viewpoints, particularly in areas like feminism, leadership, and politics. Ashoka has provided me with a safe space to engage in different conversations and gives me the courage to be vulnerable and talk about what I think and feel."*



*Diversity and inclusion in the classroom is fundamentally about respecting and valuing students and their contributions. Students come to Ashoka with such wide-ranging life experiences, interests, talents, and passions. As an international faculty member, and as someone trained in a different field, I try to respond to the students' interests while also exposing them to texts and approaches that they may not have encountered before.*

*Mainly, I seek to create a learning community where the students have space to learn from each other, while also pushing into areas that are new to them.*

## **Mali Skotheim**

Assistant Professor of English

---



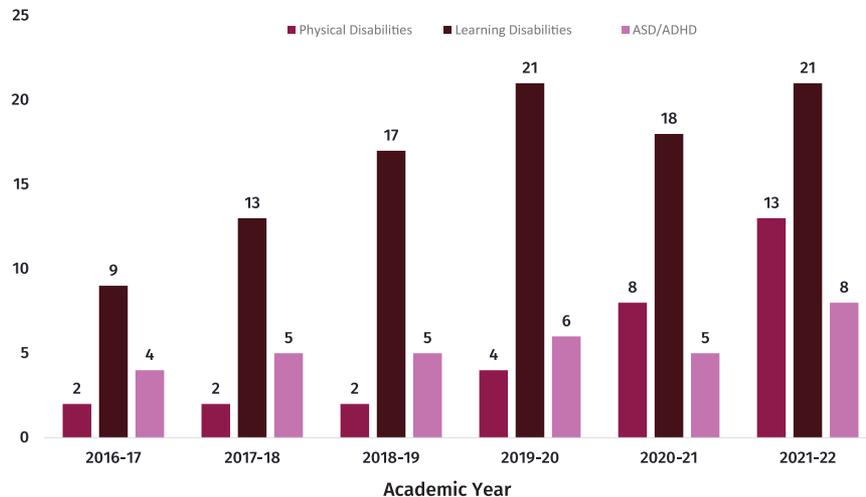
**LEARNING AND SUPPORT**

# OFFICE OF LEARNING SUPPORT

The Office of Learning Support (OLS) supports Ashoka's mission of assisting students with physical and learning disabilities. In the last five years, it has expanded its support to those facing challenges related to executive functioning and academics.

OLS has played a key role in catering to the specific infrastructural accessibility needs of new students with physical disabilities. This includes amending rooms, residence halls, and the campus space.

## Seventy-one students have benefitted since 2016



ASD: Autism Spectrum Disorder  
ADHD: Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Undergraduate students are supported for a period of 3-4 years



**Chandana Singh**  
Lawyer and Special Educator  
Founder, Ashoka University

*“OLS was conceptualised to fill a gap at the university level to support learning challenges. I am delighted that in such a short period of time, it has helped hundreds of students in their higher education journey. It has lived up to the vision, and is a beacon of excellence in its field.”*

*The recent conference on the Dyslexic Mind attracted luminaries across the field. The feedback received has further established the centre as a pioneer for positive change and inclusion in India.”*

# OFFICE OF LEARNING SUPPORT

## Reena Gupta

Director  
Office of Learning Support



*The OLS started its journey five years back with a dream of a well-resourced world-class support system for students with invisible disabilities. Today we see students with all kinds of disabilities applying and becoming an integral part of the diversity at Ashoka.*

*They contribute towards building a truly global university with its heart at the right place. This has turned out to be an extremely rewarding journey that's worth every effort for any institution that believes in equity and inclusivity.*

### **Constantly improving accessibility on campus**

Modifying infrastructure like rooms, residential spaces, transport vehicles, and campus for students with specific needs eg: wheelchairs or visual impairment

### **Academic learning support**

Converted books into LaTeX, paid tactile graphs, and manual intervention for proofreading each converted text, for visually impaired students

### **Assistive technology tools**

Audiobooks and speech-to-text tools have been provided to students with learning needs like dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia, and autism

### **Assistive technology room**

Established a dedicated room for assistive technology equipment. State-of-the-art tools will help students with print disabilities, such as visual impairment and dyslexia, and convert academic content into accessible formats

### **Digital accessibility**

Making the University's website accessible to students with visual and hearing impairment, and dyslexia

### **Conference on Dyslexia**

Organised the first-ever conference on the inclusion of students with dyslexia in higher education institutions in India

# BREAKING BARRIERS



**Ayush Prakash**

Undergraduate 2024  
Bhagalpur, Bihar

*“When I began applying to universities, I was very confused and didn’t have much information about infrastructure, support systems, etc. Given my visual impairment, I applied to several places to enquire about the support they offered. That’s where Ashoka’s admissions team and OLS were quick to respond. They assisted me every step along the way, answering all my questions. I was certain that this is the university I wanted to attend.”*



**Bhavya Soni**

Undergraduate 2023  
Gurgaon, Haryana

*“Last year, I was torn between choosing one of the most renowned public universities in India and Ashoka University for my undergraduate studies. A year later, I’m glad to say I chose the latter. Academics at Ashoka has been beyond insightful, primarily owing to some phenomenal professors who have mentored me and the great degree of flexibility we often get regarding assigned research questions and topics. As a wheelchair user on a residential campus, I appreciate the efficiency and efforts of the Office of Learning Support in providing any necessary infrastructural accommodations. It is one-of-its-kind amongst Indian universities.”*

# LETTER FROM A MOTHER



## **Upasana Ravikannan**

Undergraduate 2024  
Chennai, Tamil Nadu

*My daughter Upasana was diagnosed with cerebral palsy as an infant and uses a wheelchair. She was always academically driven, and also performed well in extracurricular activities. Upasana has also founded GoPaadhai, a not-for-profit which provides educational resources to underprivileged students.*

*When it was time for university, we wanted an educational institute which would understand her special needs and support her. We considered moving to Canada, but the cost was prohibitive.*

*We heard of Ashoka through their counsellor who had visited her school, and a family friend's son, who was studying there, supported our decision. Upasana wants to major in psychology, and Ashoka was proactive, helping us through the admissions process. OLS and the Office of Admissions reached out to us with solutions for our concerns, assuring us that accommodations would be made for Upasana. They guided us towards assistive technology tools to help her become independent with her writing work before joining, which proved very helpful.*

*In her first semester, OLS provided academic accommodations like extra time for finishing exams and assignments. Subscription to a speech-to-text/text-to-speech software, to facilitate note-taking and writing assignments, was also provided. Regular calls were scheduled to monitor Upasana's academic progress.*

*Right now, Upasana is attending her classes online, but we plan to move to Sonepat from Chennai in the summer of 2022. We intend to rent an apartment close to the University and will stay here for the duration of her undergraduate programme. The OLS team is creating a detailed plan for our relocation.*

*I am glad we chose Ashoka.*

**Aparna Ravikannan**

# PROVIDING ESSENTIAL SUPPORT

## CENTRE FOR WRITING AND COMMUNICATION (CWC)

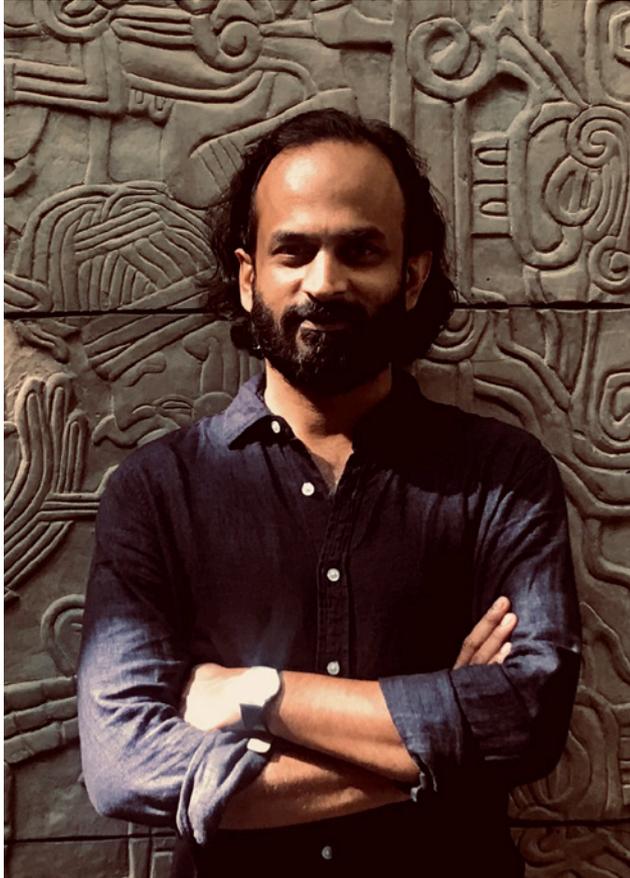
CWC works closely with the academic community at Ashoka to develop critical thinking, writing, and communication skills. It provides pedagogical support across disciplines through in-class lectures, workshops, and one-on-one sessions. It has also developed a year-long English language support programme, which is critical to Ashoka's inclusion and diversity objectives.



## ASHOKA CENTRE FOR WELLBEING (ACWB)

ACWB offers counselling and psychological support in a confidential and non-judgemental space. It is the first centre of its kind in India. Operating with a mindset of well-being, instead of diagnosis, the focus is on the preventive, clinical, and promotional aspects of mental well-being. In addition to offering support for individuals facing mental health issues, it prioritises preventing the onset of mental health problems by promoting behaviour change.

The team provided individual counselling sessions and telephone assistance during the pandemic. It conducted group sessions with students where concerns around career prospects and future uncertainties came up. In special cases, referrals and financial support for specialists' consultation were facilitated for students on full financial aid.



*Student mental health is one of the most urgent questions in India. Medicalisation is not the only solution, and the answers are not simple. In my class on the Anthropology of Mental Health, we explore ideas of mental health and illness in different parts of the world. Students are in the process of beginning an online journal on mental health issues, which will include their own self-reflections on forms of distress that they or close family members and friends have been through.*

*This course has been in close conversation with the ACWB, which has a deeply resonant wellness-based approach. We look forward to making Ashoka a space of further innovation in the realm of mental health research.*

## **Bhrigupati Singh**

Associate Professor and Seminar Coordinator,  
Sociology and Anthropology

---

# OFFICE OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

**Deboshruti Roychowdhury**  
Dean of Student Affairs



*Ashoka is committed to fostering an inclusive, welcoming and intellectually challenging environment for all its students. We are making progress toward achieving academic excellence in a community that is truly inclusive and representative of society. We do this also knowing that a community rich in diversity expands the range of knowledge, experiences, and viewpoints that are critical for creating innovative solutions to the pressing challenges facing us in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.*

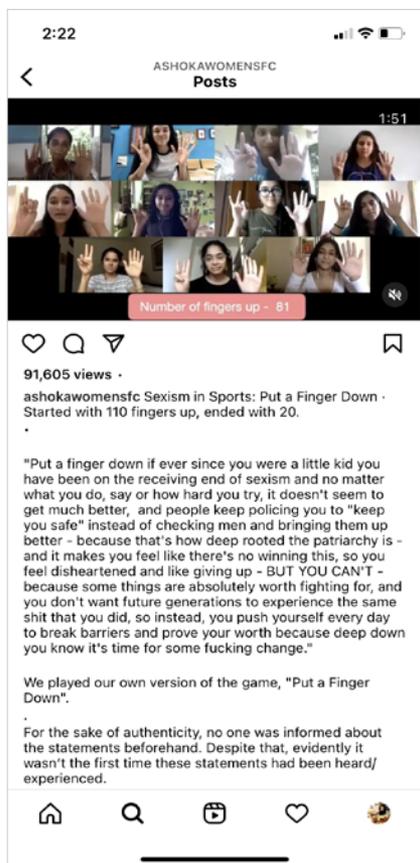
*The OSA creates opportunities for students to engage in critical experiences around diversity, equity, identity and social justice while supporting their individual and group needs.*

- ▶ The Office of Student Affairs (OSA) supported students facing socio-economic challenges by facilitating their accommodation on campus on an exceptional basis despite the pandemic
- ▶ Students on exceptional financial aid who could not be allowed back on campus were provided with monetary support for data-related requirements to complete their coursework
- ▶ OSA built a diverse cultural experience for students. From traditional folk music from Rajasthan to puppetry from Tamil Nadu, the Office curated experiences for students to engage with the heritage of different communities
- ▶ The Resident Assistantship has become an aspirational leadership role, drawing students from across the socio-cultural spectrum. It has allowed students from diverse identities to represent and influence institutional culture. They also act as role models for students

# PEER SUPPORT

Ashoka students are involved in several peer groups.

Many support the University's mission, vision, and values around creating a diverse and inclusive campus.



## Ashoka University International Students Association

Is a group for international students to meet fellow students from all around the world. It organises several events such as UBUNTU, a cultural exchange festival, food fests, and welcoming freshers. It also assists students with their visa applications, bank accounts etc.

## The NorthEast Collective

Provides a space for members who are from the Northeast or have roots there. They organise events to promote appreciation of culture, history, and diversity of the region. They spread awareness about the socio-political realities of its various parts.

## Ashoka Women's Football Team

Promotes gender equality through women's football at the University. A video created by the team on Sexism in Sports went viral on social media, garnering over 91,000 views.

## Ashoka University Queer Collective

Fosters community engagement and facilitates conversations about gender and sexuality, while celebrating queerness. The aim is to build solidarity and visibility for and amongst the queers on campus.

## The Feminist Collective

Aims to create a safe, inclusive, and feminist space on campus. It is committed to raising awareness and bringing about change with respect to gendered issues on campus.

## Kintsugi

Raises awareness about issues surrounding mental health, enables peer support, and provides a space to release stress, thereby building an environment towards a healthier community.

## Sandhi

Creates a space to foster engagement with the various languages spoken on campus, making it more inclusive for students from different regions.



**SOCIAL IMPACT**

# IMPACTING COMMUNITIES



Various student initiatives facilitate a broad variety of engagement efforts in our local and neighbouring communities. This drives sustainable growth and development.

## **Neev**

Neev, the community engagement club, aims to build a strong foundation for the children of Asawarpur village adjacent to the Ashoka campus. It imparts English language, theatre, and dance skills through play days every Friday. The club also organises annual fairs at the village.

## **Ruhi**

Ruhi focuses on the University's support staff, enabling the student body to teach them the basics of English. It also plans to hold workshops relating to menstrual health and hygiene.

## **Enactus**

Enactus Ashoka aims to develop the next generation of entrepreneurial leaders and social innovators. Through its initiative, Project Lakeer, underprivileged women make handcrafted diaries of recycled paper from the University. This provides them with vocational and soft skills to enhance their economic opportunity, increasing their family income by as much as 150 per cent.

# WORKER WELFARE



Outsourced services like maintenance and engineering, security, housekeeping, pest control, transport, dining, horticulture, and infirmary are managed by various specialised agencies. Over 451 outsourced workers provide these services. Ashoka considers the outsourced workers as an integral part of the family.

During the pandemic Ashoka extended support to all outsourced staff in several ways.

- ▶ Provided all medical support to the staff and their families. This included infirmary support, hospital appointments, investigations, treatment, and medicines
- ▶ Housed COVID positive workers on the Campus Isolation and Quarantine Centre and took care of them
- ▶ Provided packaged meals and dry rations to several outsourced staff and their families in case of various illnesses
- ▶ COVID testing camps held frequently to prevent infection spread. Everyone was tested once in three weeks
- ▶ COVID vaccination drive organised. This includes on-campus vaccination and transportation to the nearest vaccination centre
- ▶ Events and celebrations such as International Women's Day celebration, birthdays, cricket tournaments, and rewards and recognition programme organised

# A SENSE OF BELONGING



**Poonam Devi**

Housekeeping Staff

*I have been working with Ashoka for over five years. The people (seniors, staff and students) at the University treat me like family. They have stood by us in times of need. When I have needed help for at home or at the University, they extended support to me at an individual and institutional level.*

*I want to keep working at Ashoka. I hope the love and respect continues.*



**Narayan**

Housekeeping Staff

*Ashoka has helped me grow and develop my skills over the years. I am particularly grateful to the support extended to my family during the lockdown. If the management continues to support us, my fellow workers and I will continue to be able to provide our best to the University for a long time.*

*No other university provides the kind of facilities and financial support like Ashoka does.*



Delhi: Office No. 2, Green Avenue, Pocket D-3, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi 110 070

Campus: Plot No. 2, Rajiv Gandhi Education City, P. O. Rai, Sonapat, Haryana 131 029

Ashoka University follows an equal opportunity policy with regard to admission and employment. All applications are considered in the same manner, regardless of an individual's gender, caste, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status or citizenship. Admission and employment are on merit. Financial aid to students is based on the university's assessment of the individual's financial needs. We have a zero tolerance policy towards discrimination, violence, and intolerance of any kind.

[www.ashoka.edu.in](http://www.ashoka.edu.in)