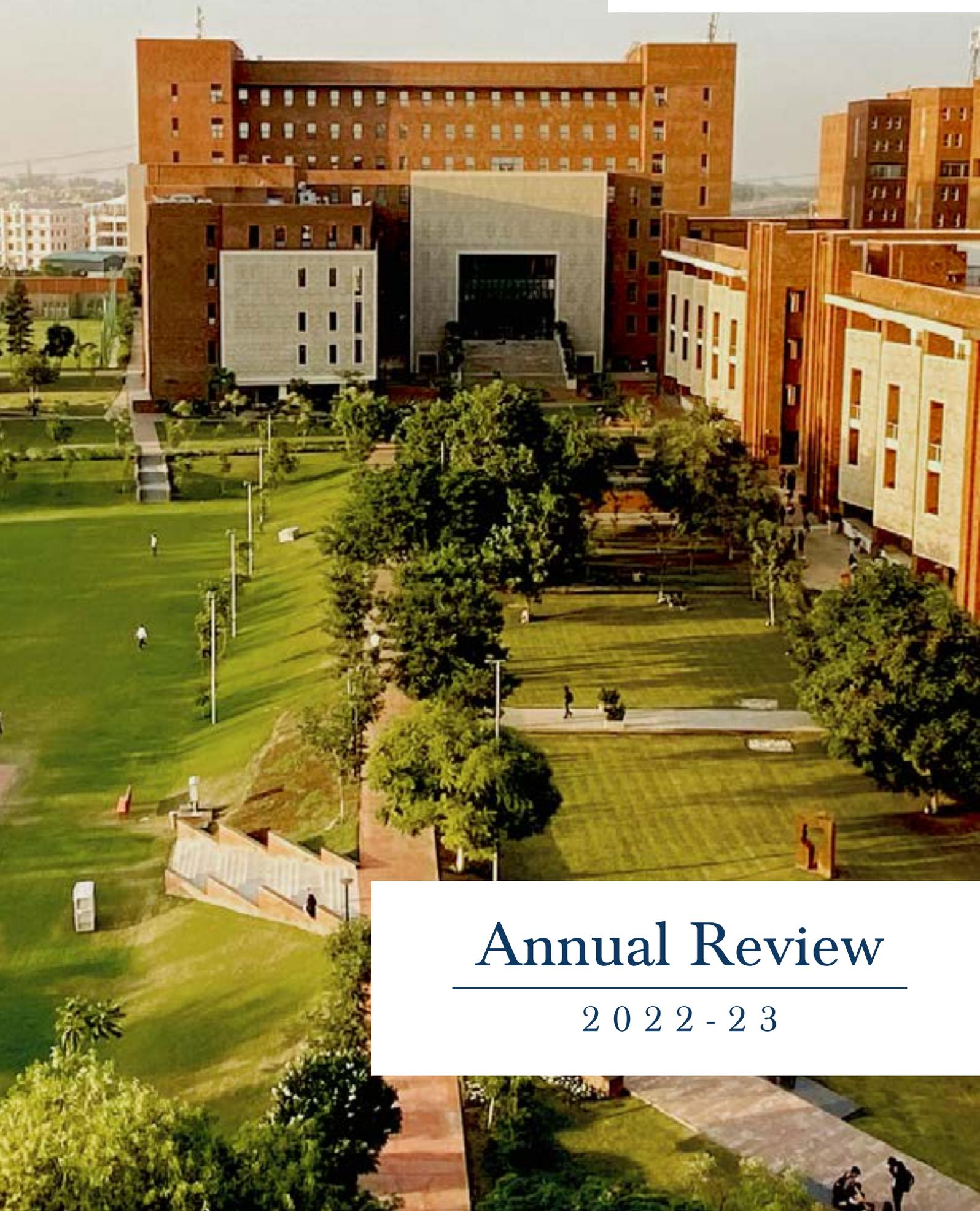




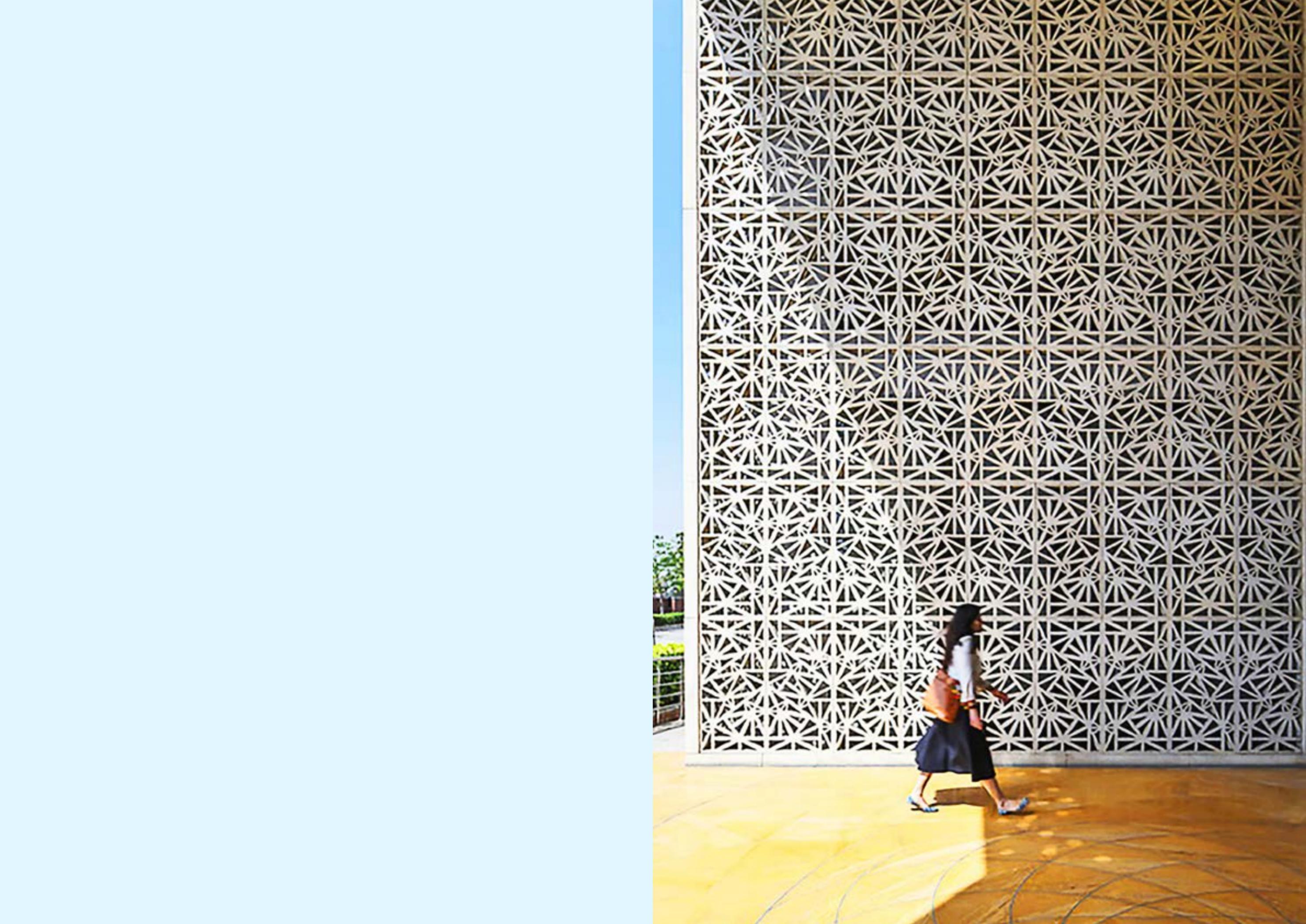
ASHOKA  
UNIVERSITY



# Annual Review

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2022-23





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# LETTER FROM THE CHANCELLOR

**Dear members of the Ashoka family,**

I am delighted to introduce to you the Annual Report of the University for 2022-23. This year has been witness to certain important changes. Most importantly, Ashoka from January 1, 2023, has a new Vice-Chancellor, Dr Somak Raychaudhury, one of India's leading astrophysicists. Dr Raychaudhury was selected through a very rigorous selection process which lasted nearly 18 months. The selection committee was chaired by Amit Chandra and had some members of the Board of Trustees, all the academic Deans, some eminent faculty members and the undersigned as its members. We are privileged to have as the Vice-Chancellor a scholar of Dr Raychaudhury's eminence and versatility. I take this opportunity to once again welcome him to Ashoka.

This is also the right forum to record our gratitude to the previous Vice-Chancellor, Professor Malabika Sarkar who led the University, as you are all aware, through very difficult and tumultuous times. It is difficult to put down in a few words Malabika Sarkar's contribution to the making and the growth of Ashoka. More is her due, more than all can pay. It is indeed our good fortune that Professor Sarkar remained associated with Ashoka as the Principal Academic Advisor till September 2023.

A change has also occurred at another level. Ashish Dhawan stepped down as the Chairman of the Board of Trustees (BoT) and Pramath Raj Sinha stepped into his shoes. Ashish remains the Founder Chairman of the BoT. His continuing contribution to Ashoka is immeasurable.

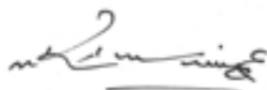
Ashoka stands in the cusp of a major transition. The University has already earned its laurels as a premier teaching University. While maintaining and growing this tradition, we want to move to make Ashoka a top research university. The combination of top class teaching and top grade research will make Ashoka one of the leading universities in India and in the world. This is a challenging transition. We seek your vital presence and support in the fulfilment of this collective dream of ours.

There is one more important challenge before Ashoka. In a country like India, if Ashoka is to fulfil its vision and deliver on its mission, we have to be more inclusive by reaching out to the underprivileged and disadvantaged sections of society. This can be done only through greater financial aid and by increased outreach. Ashoka has a robust financial aid programme. This needs to be enhanced which can only happen through your greater involvement and support.

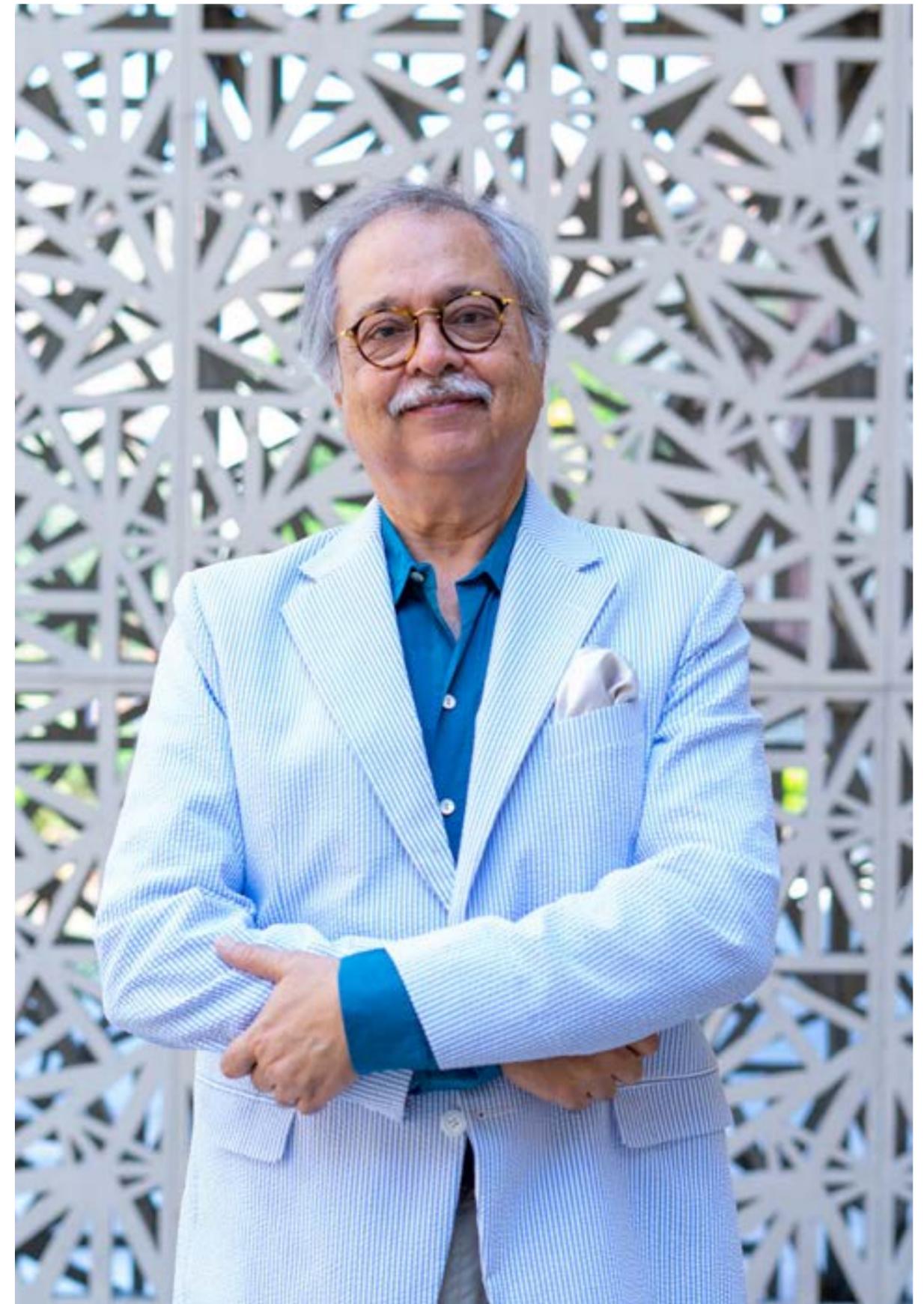
Thus the journey continues. Ashoka, as I keep repeating, will perpetually be a work in progress.

With warm regards

Yours sincerely



**RUDRANGSHU MUKHERJEE**



# LETTER FROM THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

**Dear members of the Ashoka community,**

It is a privilege to have the opportunity to present the Annual Report for 2022-23 to all our colleagues, friends and well-wishers of the University. This is the first time I do so, as I joined as the Vice-Chancellor earlier this year.

I have the privilege of continuing the legacy of my predecessor Professor Malabika Sarkar, whose outstanding efforts during this crucial period of the growth of this University, in her roles as Academic Advisor and Vice-Chancellor, pioneered widely admired initiatives, outstanding research and teaching opportunities for students and academics.

Coming out of a period of difficulty over a couple of years, this was the first year that all activities were renewed on campus. Classes were held in person and students could make full use of the laboratories and sports facilities on campus. We were also able to welcome many distinguished guests to campus, and were honoured to host Ruth Harris, Professor of Modern History at the University of Oxford, for the annual Ashoka Inspire Lecture. In a unique initiative, the University also invited back the Classes of 2020 and 2021 for a formal Convocation event, since their graduation ceremonies had been held online. It was a great opportunity for the returning students to renew their bonds with faculty, friends and University at large.

The Convocation ceremonies for the Graduate and Undergraduate Classes of 2023 were held earlier this year, and the occasion was graced by eminent chief guests and keynote speakers. Professor Sujatha Ramadorai (Canada Research Chair, Department of Mathematics, University of British Columbia) is a recipient of the Bhatnagar Award, ICTP Ramanujan Prize, Krieger Nelson Prize and the Padma Shri. Professor Padmanabhan Balaram served first as faculty and then as Director of the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru. He is the recipient of several awards and honours, including the Padma Shri and Padma Bhushan.

As Ashoka enters the tenth year of its existence, this unique institution has already firmly established itself as a bold and innovative institution which has pioneered the kind of interdisciplinary education that the New Education Policy (NEP) has now recommended for all higher education institutions of India. This year, the University became the first of a handful of universities to adopt the 4-year UG programme under the NEP. We are very well prepared for this transition, and also for transforming our master's and PhD programmes to suit the new template, which will soon be adopted by the rest of the country.



At the current time, our 2,529 students are drawn from 21 countries, and within India, from 28 states, and 287 towns and cities. We have close to 150 permanent faculty, and another 90 visiting faculty. Students enrolled at Ashoka University can choose their Major from a total of 21 pure or interdisciplinary options. Students can also pick Minors from among 18 disciplines on offer.

Moving forward, our challenge now is to build upon the already established credentials of the University in multi-disciplinary liberal arts education, with special emphasis on critical thinking, breadth of vision and making innovative connections between areas of knowledge. We are now including the core scientific disciplines into this tapestry, and also putting special emphasis on postgraduate pedagogy and research for both our faculty and our students.

I am delighted to report that we now have more than 125 PhD scholars, and graduated our very first PhD student in May 2023. Research is also carried out at some of the most innovative Centres of Excellence at Ashoka. This year, we launched four new Centres - the Ashoka Centre for a People-Centric Energy Transition; The Isaac Centre for Public Policy and Good Governance; Centre for Data Science and Analytics; and Centre for Digitalisation, Artificial intelligence and Society. Ashoka faculty have won many notable awards in the past year for their research and for their books, including the prestigious Guggenheim Fellowship, the James Tait Black Prize, and many others. The number of sponsored research projects has increased by almost 50 per cent over the past year. This year Ashoka became one of the 12 leading universities to be awarded a research grant by the Department of Science and Technology's 'Promotion of University Research and Scientific Excellence' (PURSE) programme.

The University is expanding in size as well. In addition to the 25 acres on which the current campus is situated, we have now acquired the surrounding land that will turn us into an almost 100-acre campus. With the Trivedi School of Biosciences already being built, the Science area is to follow. We will go on to build housing for faculty and an additional 4,000 UG and PG students.

The real report of a University's activities is presented in the accomplishments of its students. Over the last year, Ashoka has seen a 25 per cent increase in the recruiters coming to campus, as they recognised our students for their unique skills. Over 350 Ashoka alumni are in the top institutions in the world- over 110 are pursuing PhDs in various fields from universities such as Yale, Columbia, Harvard and Oxford, and many are post-docs or hold faculty positions. More alumni are in top business schools around the world - Harvard, Yale, Wharton, INSEAD. Ashoka students have been recipients of the most prestigious scholarships and Fellowships and, to name a few, we now have three Rhodes scholars, two Inlaks and 17 Fulbright Scholars among our alumni. An Ashoka student also became the first and only Indian to get the McCall MacBain Scholarship at McGill University.

In closing, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to each member of the Ashoka University community—our dedicated founders, faculty, staff, and administrators who have tirelessly supported and guided us on this transformative journey. I also extend heartfelt thanks to our students, who have made us proud with their achievements, and their parents and families who have provided unwavering love and encouragement.

*Somak Raychaudhury*

**SOMAK RAYCHAUDHURY**

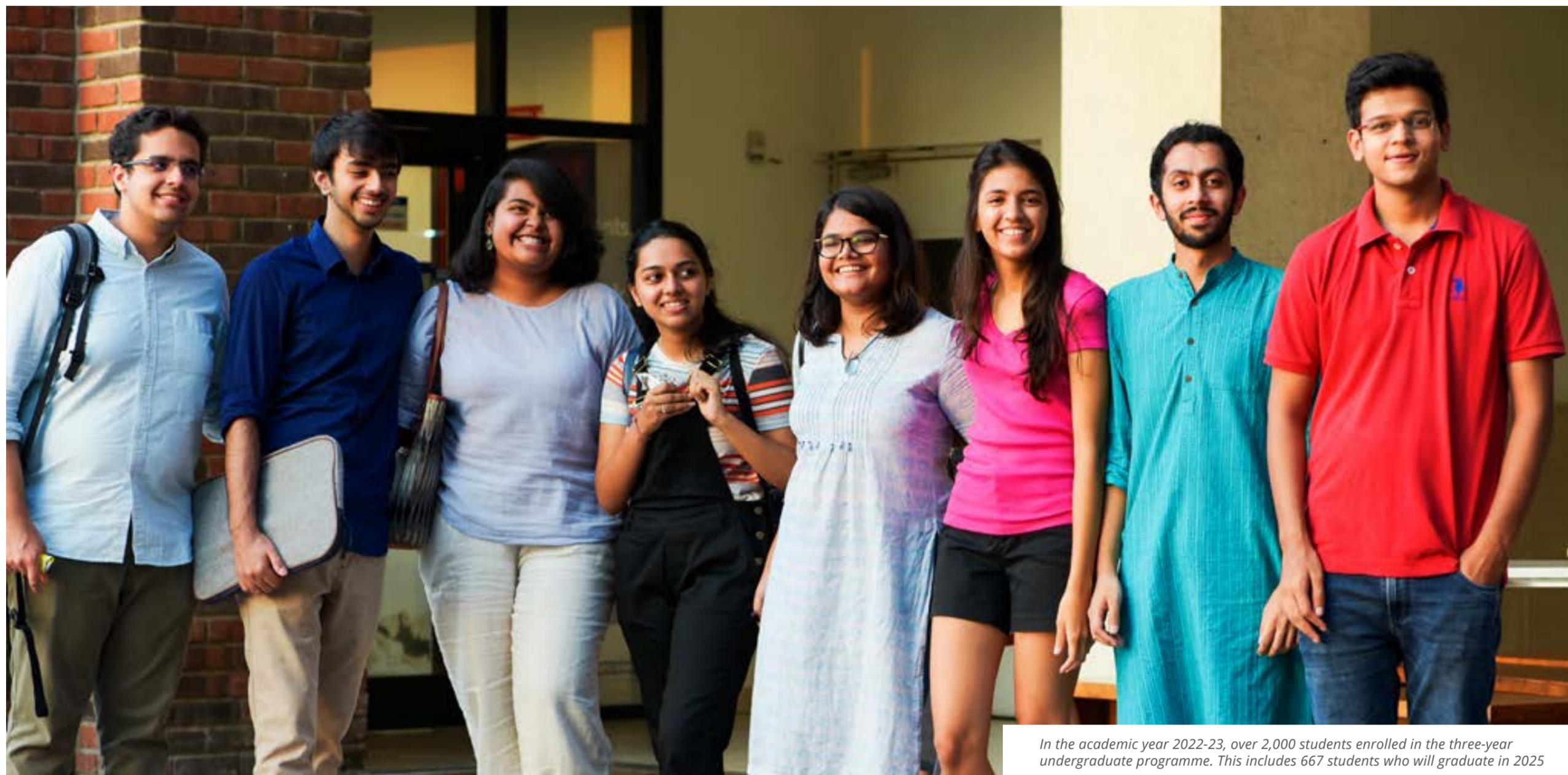


# THE UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMME



Ashoka is India's first university to offer an integrated multi and interdisciplinary Liberal Arts and Sciences programme. The undergraduate (UG) programme was introduced in August 2014. In the first year, majors in nine disciplines were offered. These included Sociology and Anthropology, Economics, English, History, Philosophy, Political Science, Psychology, Mathematics and Computer Science. Ashoka's Sciences programme – with Physics and Biology – was launched in 2017. Chemistry was introduced as a pure major in the academic year 2019-20.

One of the distinctive features of the UG programme is the foundation courses that precede the selection of majors and minors. These provide insights into different styles of thinking and are typically interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary in nature.



In the academic year 2022-23, over 2,000 students enrolled in the three-year undergraduate programme. This includes 667 students who will graduate in 2025

## Highlights

The UG programme offers 12 pure majors and 11 interdisciplinary majors. Ashoka also offers minors in all pure majors and nine additional minors. Students can choose from a range of co-curriculars across visual arts, performing arts and languages. They also study nine mandatory foundation courses in the first year including *Critical Thinking*, *Literature and the World*, *Mathematical Thinking* and *Principles of Science*, among others.

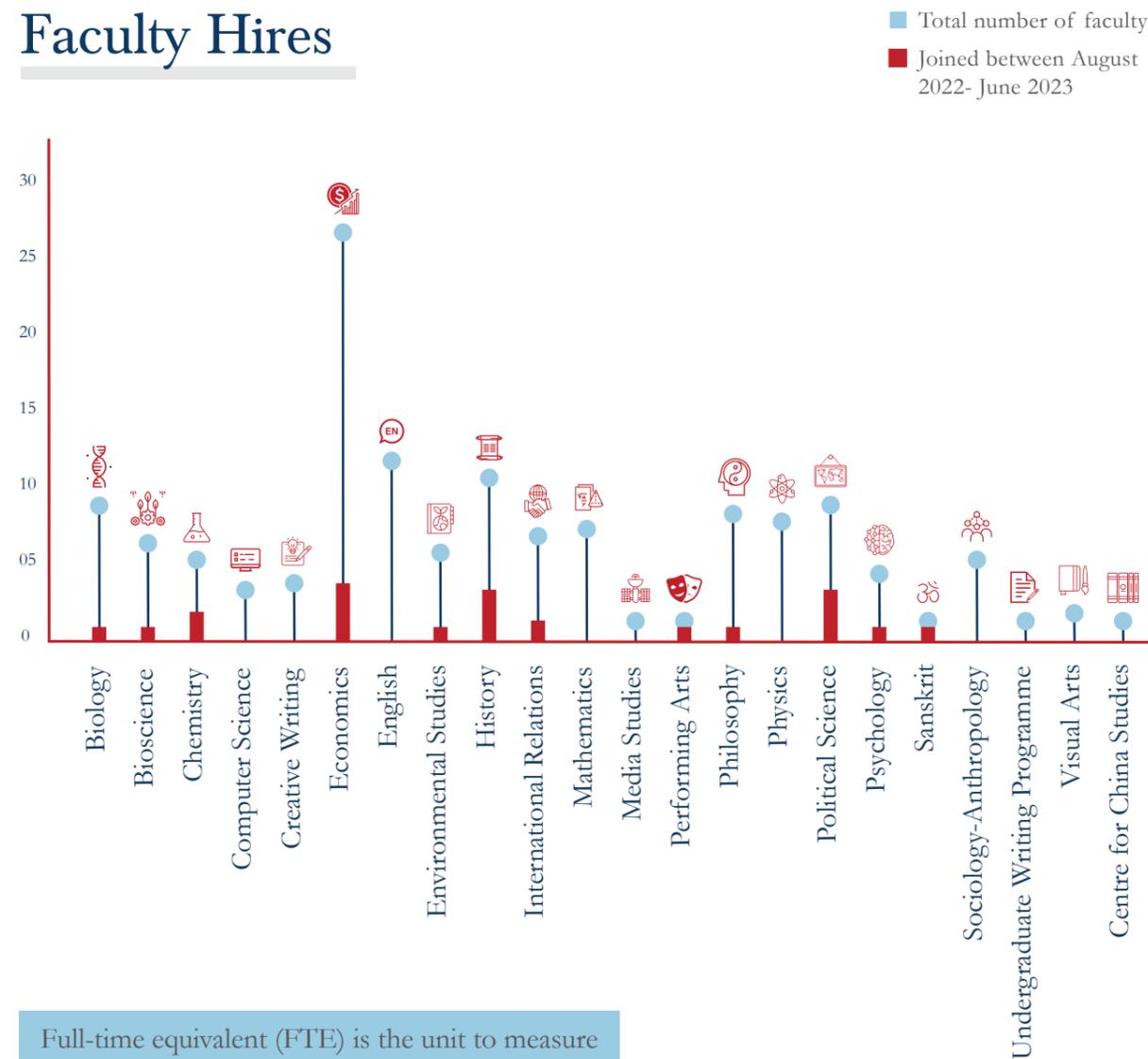
# Faculty

Ashoka's mission of providing quality and holistic education to its students has ensured that the University continues to broaden its faculty base to offer new fields of study. There are close to 150 full-time faculty and 90 visiting faculty. In 2022-23, 20 new scholars joined Ashoka.



Professor Nayanjot Lahiri teaching a class on Ancient History

# Faculty Hires



Full-time equivalent (FTE) is the unit to measure full-time employees at an organisation

- \* Faculty members who teach only one semester per year are counted as 0.5 FTE
- \*\* Faculty members with joint appointments are counted as 0.5 FTE per department
- \*\*\* Figures take into account resignations during the year

Both the Sciences and Social Sciences departments witnessed significant expansion. In the last academic year, Seema Alavi (PhD, University of Cambridge) joined the History department. Professor Alavi is a distinguished scholar of military, religious and medical cultures in early modern South Asia. Sourav Pal (PhD, University of Calcutta), former Director of Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER) Kolkata, joined the Chemistry department as permanent faculty. Navtej Johar, a distinguished dancer, choreographer and yoga exponent, joined the permanent faculty of the Performing Arts department. Additionally, eight assistant professors were promoted after their work had been rigorously assessed by experts in their respective fields.

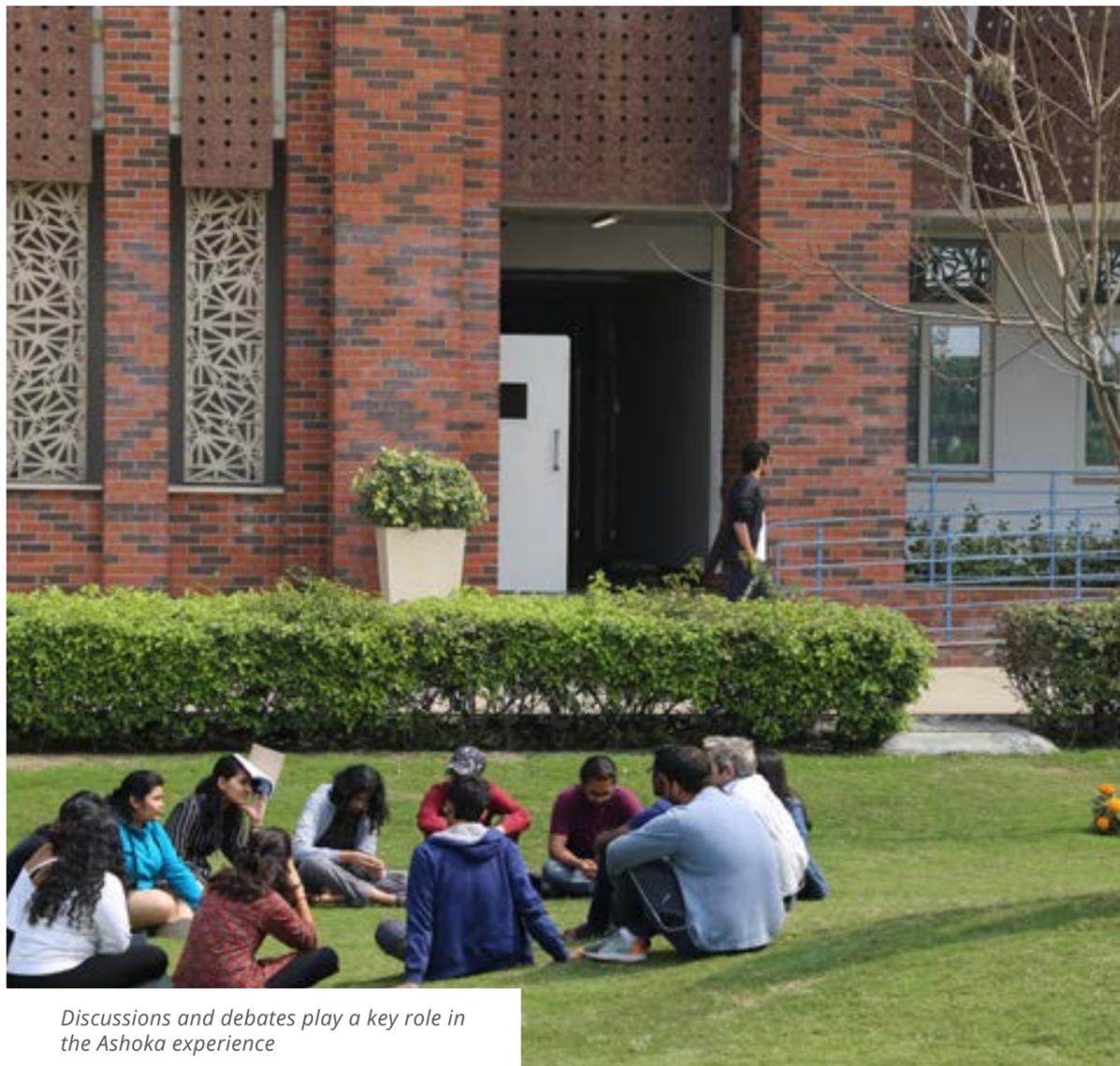
## Admissions and Outreach

Ashoka's outreach efforts resulted in a diverse cohort of undergraduate students. This was the result of engaging with 1,175 schools across 136 cities and 28 states, through presentations, career fairs, webinars, conferences and other events.

The Office of Outreach conducted various activities such as Scientifically Speaking, Meet the Professors and the UG Webinar Series and contests like the Hackathon. As a result,

the Office received 7,764 applications from 2,400 schools across 590 cities and towns. They also conducted 90 campus tours for over 5,000 prospective students and parents through the year.

In 2023, a total of 761 students enrolled in the undergraduate programme. They come from 15 countries and 201 Indian cities and towns.



*Discussions and debates play a key role in the Ashoka experience*



*Students get to explore courses across various disciplines, pursue extra-curricular and co-curricular interests and discover new passions*

## Academics

To graduate with a bachelor's degree in Ashoka, students must pass courses that are broadly divided into three categories – foundation, pure majors and interdisciplinary and co-curricular courses. The course structure is continuously evaluated and improved.

At Ashoka, students get the freedom to choose their own course trajectory. Completing two co-curricular courses, nine foundational courses and elective courses are mandatory to graduate. However, these courses can be taken in any order.

## Placements

The graduating batch of undergraduate students and Ashoka Scholars received offers from leading organisations across the country.

In 2022-23, over 350 students were placed and more than 500 students received internship offers. The highest CTC offered was Rs 35 lakh, while the average CTC was Rs 11.42 lakh.

The students accepted positions at organisations such as McKinsey, Boston Consulting Group, Bain and Company, Ernst & Young, Kearney, Arthur D.Little, Deloitte USI., Indus Insights, HUL, Capital Partners, Clix Capital, DE Shaw, Tata Group, The Xandar Group, Genpact, NIIT, London Stock Exchange, Samagra Governance and The Convergence Foundation.



*Through different projects and internships, students gain real-world experiences and skills necessary for standing out in an increasingly competitive workforce*



*Daksh Walia (MA Economics), won the Rhodes Scholarship. He will now pursue an MPhil at the University of Oxford*

## Graduate Studies

In 2022-23, the Office of Global Education and Strategic Partnerships (GESP) tracked over 100 students for graduate studies, including some alumni. A majority were admitted to prestigious universities across the globe. Sixty-four students will pursue various master's degrees and eighteen students, their PhD degrees. They will join institutions such as Harvard University, University of Oxford, London School of Economics, Yale University, University of Cambridge, University of Chicago, Columbia University, McGill University and several others. Subject areas Ashoka students are headed to study include Biomedical Engineering, Islamic Art and Architecture, Cancer Biology and Therapeutics, Film Editing, Astrophysics and Archaeology.

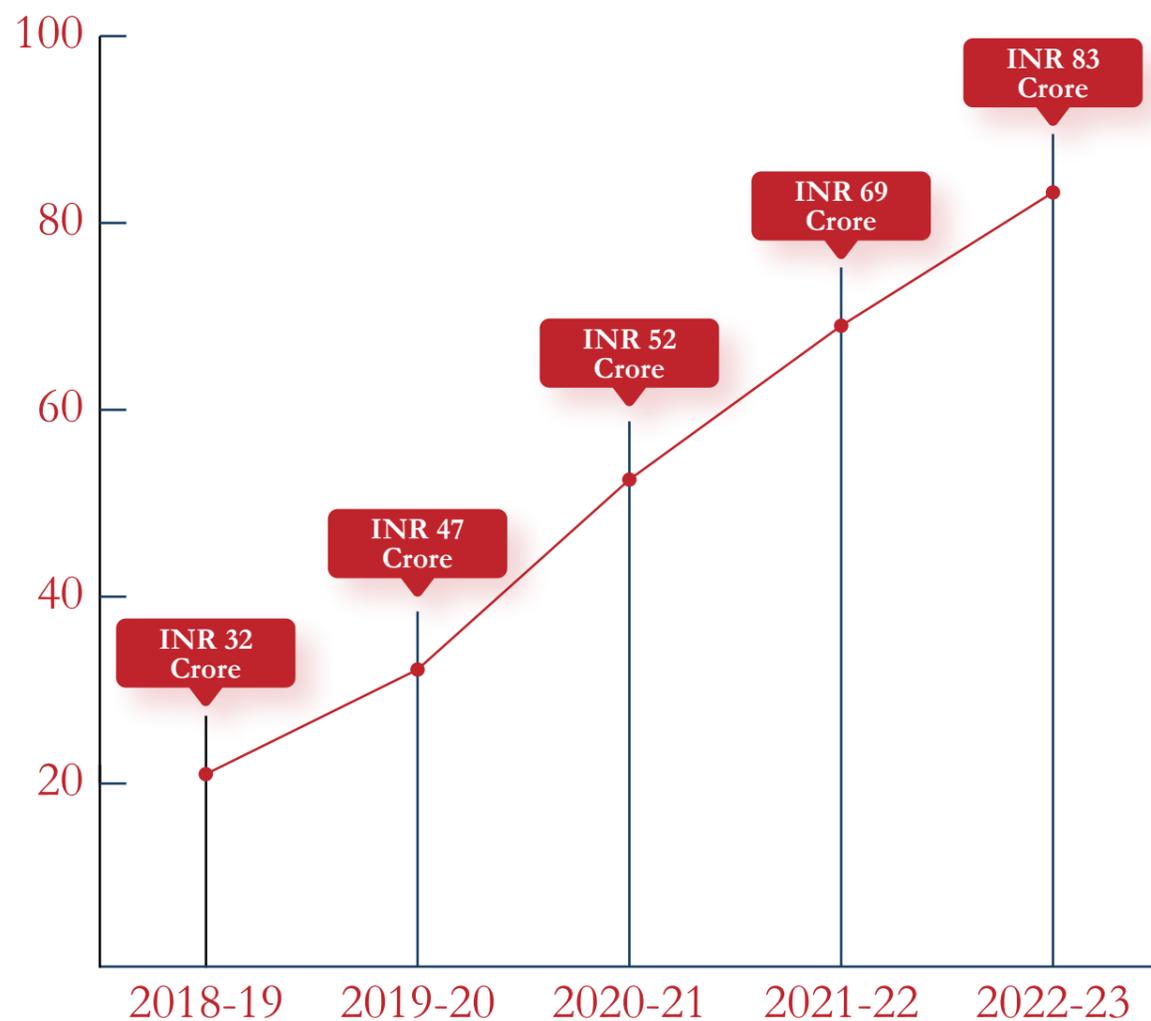
This year, seven Ashoka alumni got admitted to Harvard, of which two undergraduate alumni are the first to be admitted to the English PhD programme there. Mohit Kumar (ASP'23) became the first Indian to win the McCall MacBain Global Scholarship. Dhruv Agarwal, became the first Ashokan to be awarded the Quad Fellowship, a joint initiative by the governments of Australia, India, Japan and the US. Currently, Dhruv is pursuing a PhD in Computer Science at Cornell University.

In June 2023, the first Corporate Scholarship for Graduate Studies was instituted in partnership with Havells Family Foundation and Wake Forest University.

## Financial Aid

Ashoka offers need-based financial aid and all incoming students are eligible to apply for full and partial scholarships. In the academic year 2022-23, fifty-one per cent of students enrolled in the UG programme received financial aid. Out of the 671 students admitted, 345 were scholarship recipients. This includes

various slabs of tuition and residence waivers. Some students also received exceptional aid which includes tuition, meals, residence cost and an additional stipend. An amount of Rs 83.27 crore was given by way of financial aid to undergraduate students during the academic year.



## Graduation

Ashoka hosted the convocation for the Class of 2023 in May. A series of ceremonies were planned for the day as 882 graduates received their degrees. This included the undergraduate cohort of 2023, as well as students from the master's and Ashoka Scholars Programme (ASP). Raghvi Garg, the University's first ever PhD graduate in Economics, also received her degree.

There were two keynote speakers for the event. Professor Padmanabhan Balaram, biochemist and former Director of the Indian Institute of Science in Bangalore, was the keynote speaker for the undergraduate ceremony. For the master's and ASP convocation, the keynote speaker was Professor Sujatha Ramdorai. She is the Canada Research Chair at the Department of Mathematics, University of British Columbia.



The undergraduate convocation ceremony in May 2023

## Road Ahead

Over the course of the next year, plans are in place to introduce the Student Life Activities Board. This will be led by students who will get an

opportunity to work with the Office of Student Affairs as mentors and volunteers in creating enriching experiences on campus for others.



*Building bonds, in the academic world and beyond*

## Ashoka Scholars Programme (ASP)

After completing the three-year undergraduate programme, students can choose to pursue further research and study for a fourth year at Ashoka. Known as the Ashoka Scholars Programme, the additional year earns scholars a postgraduate Diploma in Advanced Studies and Research (DipASR).

Students who have only 08 credits pending

towards completion of their degree programme of three years are also eligible for ASP admission. This programme becomes a gateway for them to complete an advanced major, a capstone thesis, a second major equivalent, a minor, develop a concentration, do some individual study modules or study courses that interest them.



*Students working on their theses are closely supervised by academic advisors who guide them in crafting compelling arguments and accomplishing their research goals*

## Student Life

Students at Ashoka have access to a wide variety of extracurricular activities that are enjoyable and intellectually engaging. In 2022-23, student life thrived through numerous events that revolved around the themes of community service, diversity, sustainability and well-being.



*A classical dance recital by students at the black box theatre*

The University launched the 'Meal of Joy' – a community eating initiative which involves everybody on campus to have a meal together on the University lawns. The Dorm Olympics and The Great Ashokan Weekend saw active student participation. The Great Ashokan Weekend particularly focussed on the themes of sustainability and inclusivity. Additionally, four *Baithaks* were organised where artists such as Soumya Kulshrestha, Vivekananda and Gayathri MR performed and interacted with the students.

## Sports

The Sports and Exercise Office promotes a healthy sporting spirit within the University, in addition to inspiring and nurturing talent. For this, the Office reaches out to every member of the Ashoka community through specially designed activities and events.



*This year, more than 20 universities from across the country participated in Agneepath*

The Office facilitates weekly coaching sessions for 14 sports. In 2022-23, various sports teams at the University participated in over 15 external engagements organised by leading universities across India. The students also competed in over 20 internal events. After three years, the annual sports festival, *Agneepath*, was held in February 2023. More than 20 universities with over 1,000 athletes from across the country participated. This year, student athletes representing Ashoka across multiple sports, won 41 awards.

# YOUNG INDIA FELLOWSHIP





*The YIF acquaints Fellows to a diverse set of subjects and perspectives, delivered by some of the finest professors from India and around the world*

The Young India Fellowship (YIF), Ashoka University's flagship programme, is a one-year postgraduate diploma in Liberal Studies. The programme brings together young individuals who show exceptional intellectual ability and leadership potential. It further prepares them

to become socially conscious leaders and changemakers for the 21st century world.

The programme began in 2011 with 57 Fellows. This year, 99 Fellows graduated. The cohort came from 20 states and across 60 towns and cities from India and Nepal.

## Highlights

The academic year 2022-23 marked the beginning of two new initiatives. First, the Crossover Speaker series which was conceptualised for industry stalwarts to visit Ashoka for immersive interactive sessions with the Fellows. The speakers included Shaheen Mistri, Founder, Teach for India; Saurabh Diwedi, Founder,

Lallantop; musician Shubha Mudgal; Shyam Saran, former Foreign Secretary of India and Manjari Jaruhar, an IPS officer, among others. The second initiative, the Alumni-in-Residence programme was a platform for YIF alumni to meet Fellows through a series of masterclasses and fireside chats.

## Faculty

The YIF continued to invite distinguished faculty from Ashoka, as well as visiting faculty members from across the world (including those from partner institutions).

During the academic year, nine full time faculty from Ashoka and 17 visiting faculty members (including six international faculty members) taught at the Fellowship.

## Admissions and Outreach

During 2022-23, the YIF outreach team broadened their presence through various digital platforms to reach a wider audience. Over 60 events and initiatives took place through college and community sessions, webinars and workshops. This year, the number

of applications increased by 6.5 per cent and LinkedIn presence witnessed a significant rise of 38 per cent. Further, word-of-mouth referrals proved to be more impactful than previous years.

## Financial Aid

The YIF operates on a principle of admission wherein students are offered financial aid

depending on the economic need and family profile.

## Academics

In this academic year, the YIF offered 25 courses. This included 17 core courses along with Critical Writing and a range of diverse seminar courses. Five new courses were also added this year – *Climate Change and the Future of Health, Food and Agriculture, From Theory to Practice: Using Behavioural Economics to Address Global Policy Challenges, Khayal, North Indian Classical Music and the Modern Song: A Story of the Trajectory of Modernity, Language, Politics and*

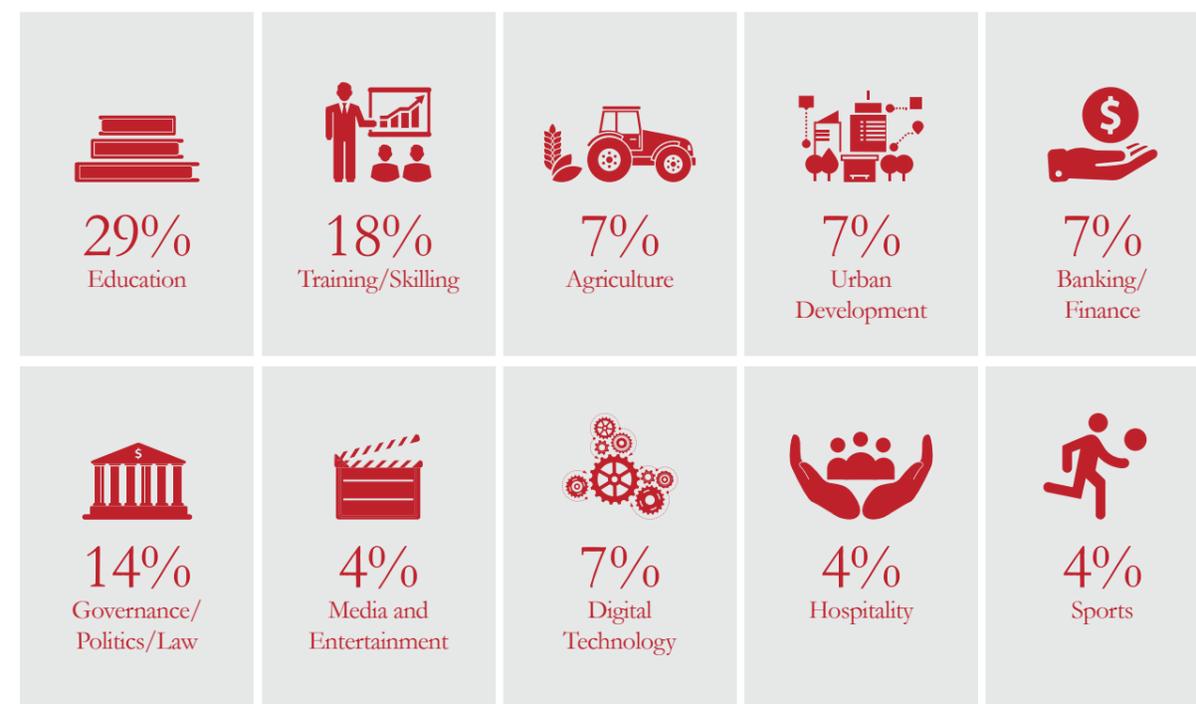
*Society in India and The Universe and Us.*

For the first time, Fellows got the opportunity to earn credits in niche courses taught at the Centres. They studied *Governance Entrepreneurship, Social Entrepreneurship and Impact, Business Analysis and Strategy and Living with Purpose: Tools for Life from Psychology, Neuroscience and Cognitive Wellbeing.*



Amit Chaudhuri teaches a course titled 'Khayal, North Indian Classical Music, and the Modern Song: A Story on the Trajectory of Modernity'

## Sectoral Representation for ELM Projects



## Experiential Learning Module (ELM)

As part of the Young India Fellowship (YIF), students undertake a six-month engagement with external organisations under the Experiential Learning Module (ELM). This is a core component of the curriculum – overseen by a supervising faculty member and members of the YIF programme team. The projects spanned various sectors including government, development, data and technology, gender and law, education and healthcare, among others.

The Fellows worked on 18 projects with organisations such as Pratham, Data.org, OYO, Chief Minister’s Good Governance Associates, Ultimate Players Association, Delhi Dialogue Commission, Dalmia Bharat Foundation, Samunnati, Indian School of Development Management and Centre for Studies in Gender

and Sexuality, to name a few. They also worked on two self-designed projects – gamifying civil services preparation and delivering healthy on-the-go meals to students at Ashoka.

This year, joint strategy meetings were introduced, marking a significant shift in the ELM experience. These meetings provided a platform to align overall project strategy for all stakeholders, including clients, Fellows, ELM supervising faculty and programme facilitators.

All Fellows were trained to ideate, research, identify problem statements, navigate team dynamics and create content. A storytelling workshop was conducted in two sessions for all the Fellows. This gave them an opportunity to present their projects, stories, experiences and outcomes.

## Mentorship

The mentorship programme offers a space for Fellows to connect with mentors and seek guidance on various aspects of work and life. In 2022-23, there were 54 mentors from various domains and industries who supported 77 Fellows. Industry leaders with strong personal, academic and professional track records are invited to be mentors. They are then matched with Fellows whose journeys they can positively impact.

The customised programme allowed Fellows to choose mentors who aligned with their

specific interests and aspirations. They included Ritesh Malik, Founder of Innov8 and Guerilla Ventures, Jake Lush McCrum, CEO of Rajasthan Royals, Martha Selby, Associate Professor of South Asian Studies, University of Texas and Harvard University and author Annie Zaidi. The programme offered personalised and tailored assistance, aiding students in navigating their mentorship conversations through in-person meetings, timely nudges and curated questions.



Former diplomat, Arun Kumar Singh delivering a lecture as part of his course titled 'Deconstructing Select Indian Foreign Policy Challenges and Responses: A Practitioner's Perspective'

## Graduation

The convocation ceremony for the YIF Class of 2023 was held on the University campus in July. The ceremony commenced with addresses by Chancellor Rudrangshu Mukherjee and Vice-Chancellor Somak Raychaudhury. The chief guest and keynote speaker was Mirai Chatterjee, Director of the Social Security Team at the Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA).

The YIF Scholar Award for the highest academic standing in class was given to Sonakshi Grover. Aadya Vatsa received the 'Torchbearer'

award for embodying the spirit and ideals of the programme. The Spirit of YIF award was presented to Anil Bahariya and Dharani Dhavamani for going beyond the call of duty to contribute to different aspects of life at YIF.

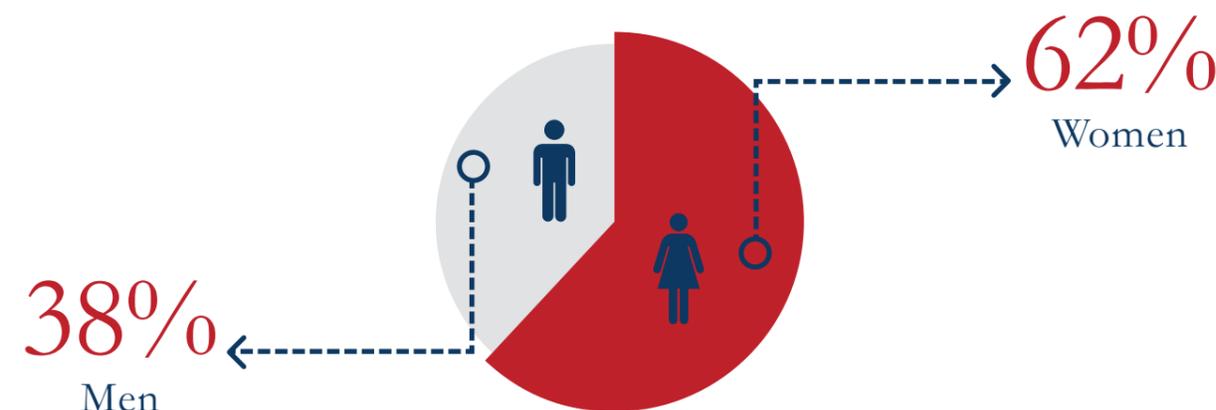
This year, 13 Fellows have secured offers of admission to various international institutions. These include Sciences Po, University of Oxford, Duke University and Rhode Island School of Design, among others.

## Road Ahead

The YIF Class of 2024 welcomed 12 chancellor merit scholars, a newly instituted scholarship covering the tuition and residence fee awarded to exceptional candidates. The cohort of 102 Fellows come from 22 states and 62 cities and towns across three countries. One-fourth of the cohort holds postgraduate credentials and 22 per cent identify as first-generation college-goers.

Based on the success of the new initiatives, 'YIF Crossover Series' and 'Alumni-in-Residence', the team has redesigned some aspects to ensure an even greater Fellow experience this year. The cohort will be able to take cross-listed courses taught at Ashoka Centres in both semesters and choose from a more comprehensive selection of elective courses.

## Fellows Gender Diversity



## Cohort Composition and Diversity

### 100 Fellows



### Geographical Backgrounds



### Educational Attainment



## Undergraduate Majors

- ▶ Advertising
- ▶ Architecture
- ▶ Finance and Accounting
- ▶ Biotechnology
- ▶ Chemical Engineering
- ▶ Communications
- ▶ Computer Science
- ▶ Criminal Law
- ▶ Economics
- ▶ Film
- ▶ History
- ▶ Hotel Administration
- ▶ Electronics and Electrical Engineering
- ▶ Elementary Education
- ▶ Information Sciences
- ▶ International Affairs
- ▶ Marketing
- ▶ Mathematics
- ▶ Mechanical Engineering
- ▶ Medicine
- ▶ Philosophy
- ▶ Physics
- ▶ Political Science
- ▶ Psychology
- ▶ Sociology
- ▶ Statistics
- ▶ Textile Design
- ▶ Zoology and Life Sciences

\*among others



The annual YIF cultural event that showcased the many talents of the Fellows

## Ashoka Alumnus Who Dreamt Beyond the Stars

Aafaque R Khan distinctly remembers seeing four of Jupiter's moons through a telescope as a child. The episode made him curious. By the time he was a teenager, he had spent countless nights on the terrace of his Ujjain home, trying to spot star clusters and galaxies through his home-made telescope. "Perhaps that was when I started to dream about building bigger, better telescopes and becoming an astrophysicist," he says.

Over a decade later, Aafaque still has stars in his eyes and on his mind. A Young India Fellow (YIF) from Ashoka's 2014 cohort, Aafaque is currently a graduate student and Future Investigator (FI) on Future Investigators in NASA Earth and Space Science and Technology (NASA-FINESST) Grant at the University of Arizona. At an age when most of his peers are still settling into a professional role, he has already etched his name in history. After all, how many can claim to have played a part in their country's first – and so far, only – mission for the Sun?

Aafaque R Khan was one of the lead engineers in the Solar Ultraviolet Imaging Telescope (SUIT) payload aboard Aditya - L1 (India's first solar mission designed and developed by ISRO). In layperson terms, he played a key role in building one of the major instruments on board the observatory – the telescope which will study the Sun's atmosphere.

A mechanical engineer, Aafaque had planned to pursue higher education overseas. Having interned at Pune's Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics (IUCAA) earlier, he reached out to the Centre for letters

of recommendation. Instead, impressed with his dedication towards Astrophysics, the Centre offered him a job as a lead engineer for the Solar Ultraviolet Imaging Telescope (SUIT) payload. The SUIT payload is one of the primary 'payloads' or technological instruments of the Aditya-L1 mission. This is the first-time full disk images of the Sun will be taken from space in the 200-400 nm wavelength range. These observations will help understand why the solar atmosphere is hotter than the surface. It will also help to keep a tab on the charged particles which can prove to be dangerous for satellites in space and satellite-based communication. Aafaque recognised opportunities like these don't come often. He was immediately on board.

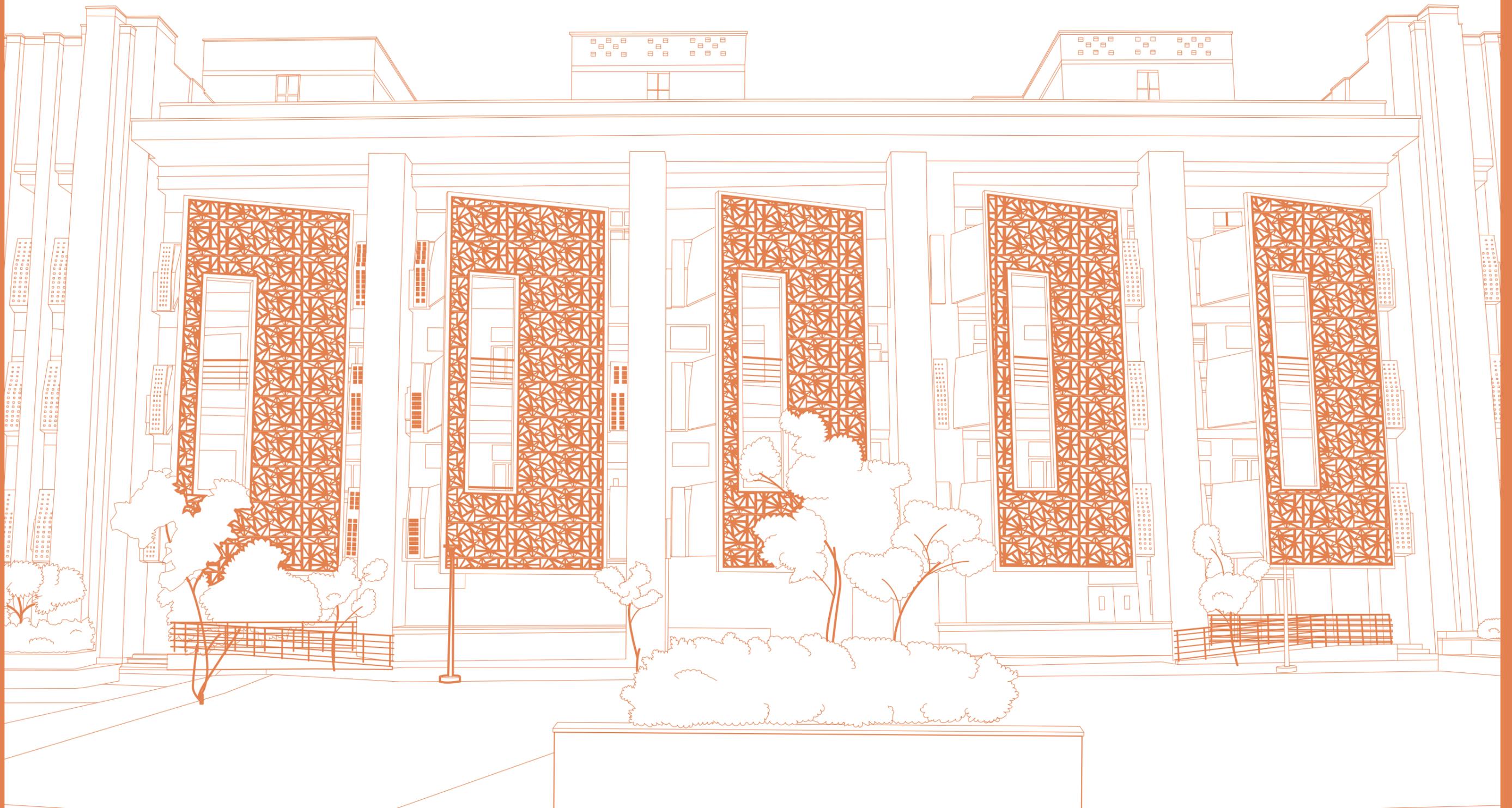
From 2015 to 2019, Aafaque dedicated his efforts to leading the end-to-end design and development of SUIT with various teams at IUCAA and ISRO. As a system engineer, he was not just responsible for design details and technical problem solving, but also project management funding and systems engineering. All this, while being one of the youngest in a team of seasoned professionals.

In 2019, Aafaque moved on from IUCAA to pursue higher education. He is currently in the fourth year of the Astrophysics PhD programme at Steward Observatory. His doctoral research focuses on advancement of UV detector technologies in collaboration with NASA-Jet Propulsion Laboratory and development of next-generation space-based astronomy missions. Aafaque is currently working on his next space telescope, Aspera, a NASA funded small satellite mission.



Aafaque believes the YIF left an undeniable impact on his life. "The programme helped me develop the adaptability, vision and drive required to succeed in a highly-functioning team. The multidisciplinary education provided the ability to look at complex technical problems from different perspectives. Most importantly, YIF taught me that despite coming from a humble social and financial background, I can dream as big as I want and strive to achieve those dreams."

# HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAMMES



## Young Scholars Programme (YSP)

The YSP is a certified summer residential programme, designed to give high school students an exposure to a Liberal Arts and Sciences education at the college level. In the academic year 2022-23, nearly 700 students from 200 schools across 60 cities were part of the programme, making this the largest YSP cohort to date. This year, with the help of the Office of Learning Support (OLS), two students with special needs were inducted.

The YSP Computer Science module was launched along with YSP General and YSP Sciences. The programme allows students to combine week 1 (General) with week 2 (Streams) and do a two-week YSP Advanced programme. Various courses offered include *Creativity* and

*Design Thinking, Techniques for Well-being, The History of Abnormal Psychology, When Maths Meets Economics, Storytelling in the Digital Age, Being Darwinian - Into the Pandemic Era, Environment and AI, Building Ancient and Modern Ciphers, Computing for Biomedical Research and Discovery*, among others. The Future Stream Speaker Series gave students an opportunity to engage with leading academicians, industry practitioners and school counselors on higher education pathways, career trajectories and what it takes to become a future leader. Throughout the programme, various workshops were conducted including sessions on makerspace – a collaborative work space for students to get hands-on learning in high tech creative tools and 21st century skills.

“The YSP gave me confidence for the future, and now I’m surer than ever that I will love the field I’m choosing. As Leo Buscaglia once said, ‘Change is the end result of all true learning’. It helped me change to a better version of myself.”

– Twisha Choudhary, Grade 11,  
Welham Girls’ School

“My experience at the YSP was an incredible one. Not only was there a ton of learning but it was also a lot of fun. Being able to interact with my peers from across the country really broadened my perspectives and expanded my horizons. The well curated sessions through the week were a fountain of information and listening to various professors was an experience in itself.”

– Aryaman Chandra, Grade 11,  
MCTM Chidambaram Chettyar International School



Various workshops and sessions were curated to give students an all-round college experience

## Lodha Genius Programme

The Lodha Genius Programme is a pioneering initiative that aims to nurture academically bright high school students and shape them into future leaders. This fully funded and customised programme addresses our country's critical shortage of high-quality talent, and is supported by the Lodha group.

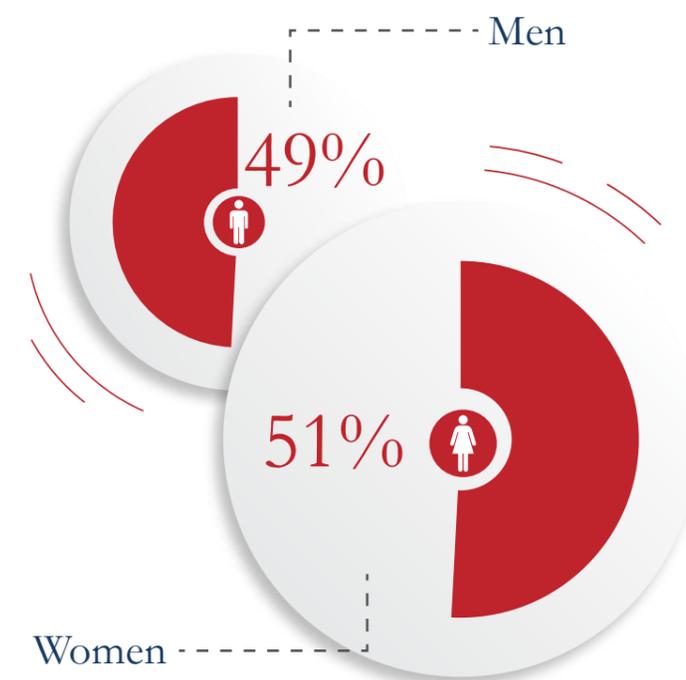
In its inaugural year, the programme welcomed 97 outstanding students from diverse backgrounds across India. These students embarked on a transformative journey, guided by renowned scientists, mathematicians, researchers and Nobel laureate Jack Szostak. This exceptional mentorship provided them with unparalleled support and inspiration.

The programme began with a four-week on-campus module, immersing the students in

an intellectually stimulating environment. Engaging sessions through the Great Ideas Seminar, Mathematics and Science modules formed the bedrock for innovative projects by the students. These showcased the students' creativity and problem-solving abilities. The programme will now continue with its 'light touch module' where students will continue to receive mentorship from the experts, virtually.

One of the programme's highlights is the access to cutting-edge Science, problem-solving by national and international Olympiad trainers, world-class faculty and e-resources provided by the University. This support enables students to delve deeper into their areas of interest, fostering a genuine passion for learning and intellectual exploration.

Women accounted for 51 per cent of the total student enrollment, while men represented 49 per cent.

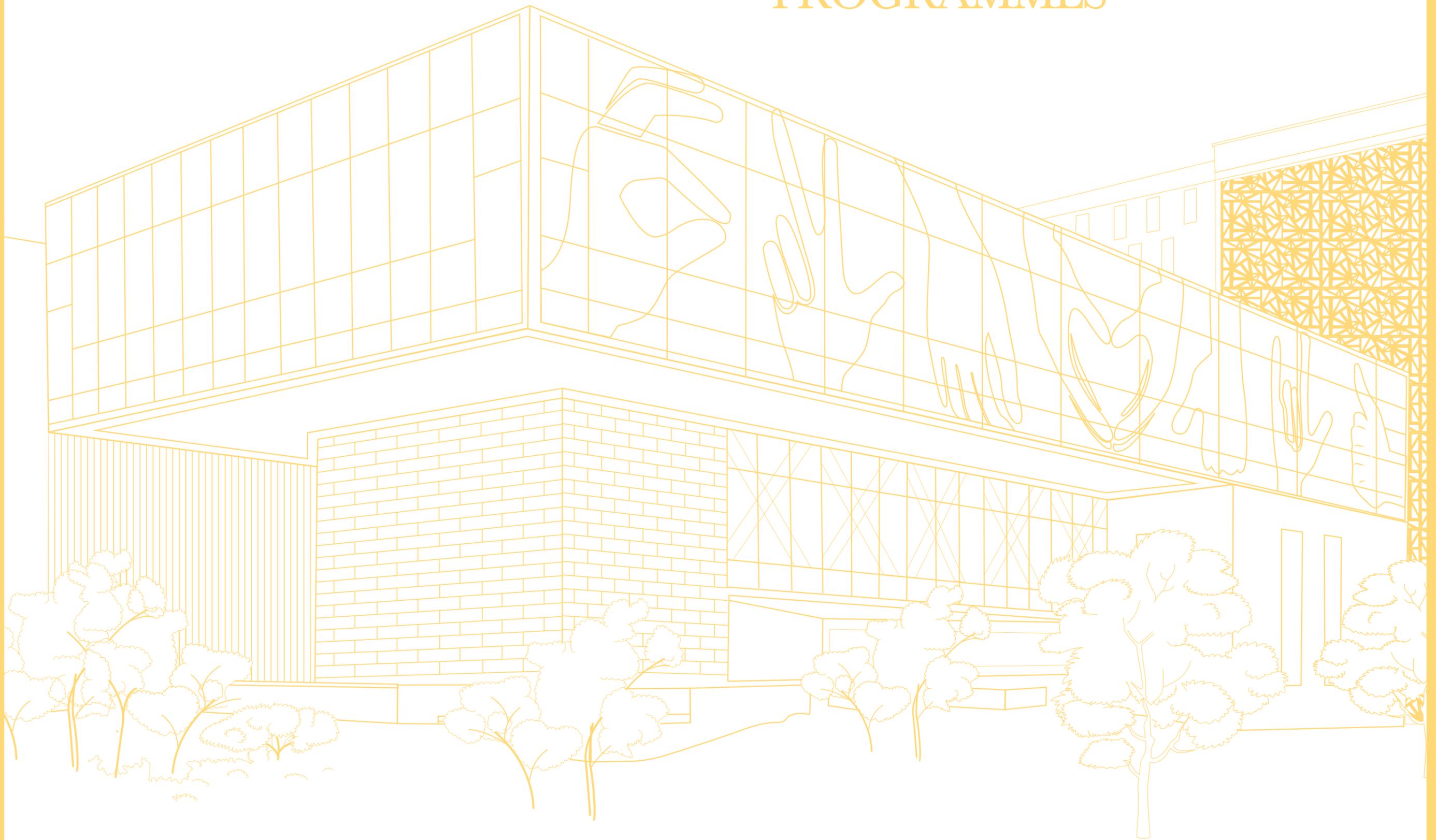


*The first cohort of the Lodha Genius Programme on the steps of the library*

In the upcoming year, new workshops in critical and creative writing as well as theatre will be introduced. The cohort will receive specialised training at the interface of Arts and Science, including industrial design modules. Select students will also have the opportunity to embark on field trips. Moreover, dedicated workshops for our undergraduate teaching assistants (TAs) will further enhance the programme's effectiveness.

The Lodha Genius Programme proved to be a transformative initiative in its first year. By nurturing exceptional talent and providing access to world-class resources, the programme is shaping a new generation of leaders with the skills, knowledge and creativity needed to address future challenges.

# MASTER'S, PHD AND OTHER PROGRAMMES



## Master's in Economics

The master's programme in Economics has been developed to provide students the opportunity to be trained in modern Economics by highly qualified economists. The department's approach brings together economic theory and rigorous data analysis. The coursework in the programme has been designed with the latest research in mind and draws on some of today's most exciting research fields. At the end of the programme, students are expected to have state-of-the-art quantitative skills valued both in academia and in the corporate world.

The fifth cohort of 29 students graduated in May 2023. This year, Daksh Walia won the prestigious Rhodes Scholarship. He will pursue an integrated MPhil-PhD programme in Economics from the University of Oxford. Students from this cohort have been placed in renowned companies such as McKinsey, Deloitte, Ernst & Young, Samagra, Fractal Analytics and Indus Insights. Several others are working with policy research organisations like the Centre for Advanced Financial Research and Learning (CAFRAL) at the RBI and Good Business Lab.

## Master's in English

The master's degree in English offers an intellectually rigorous immersion in the study of Literature, framed by Ashoka's distinctive Liberal Arts vision. Students enrol in core and elective graduate-level seminars, with the option of taking a course in another discipline. They also take advantage of the freedom and mentorship from the department faculty to produce a wide range of research projects in literary and cultural studies, ranging from standard critical works on authors and topics in literary history, critical translations, autoethnographies, to name a few.

Students in the programme continue to receive intensive writing support both within the required courses and through the mentorship of individual faculty, particularly during the thesis phase.



*Students discover a culture of inquisitive reading, writing and discussion at Ashoka*

## Master's in Biology

Launched in 2022, the master's Biology imparts holistic training in the fundamentals of physical and chemical principles of the subject. This programme allows students to customise their learning based on individual interests. They get hands-on training aided by contemporary and innovative pedagogical methods as well as through extensive independent research. The students are trained under highly competent faculty, who are innovative teachers as well as established researchers in their respective fields.

The Department of Biology, under the frame

work of **'Franco-Indian Campus on Health'**, in partnership with the University of Cote d'Azur, France, along with the Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru and Indraprastha Institute of Technology, Delhi (IIIT-D), are working on various domains of research. The areas include cancer, respiratory diseases, ageing as well as public health concerns of antimicrobial resistance. The Franco-Indian campus is a joint initiative by the French Embassy in India and the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Higher Education and Research.



*Fully equipped laboratories at the University have incubated several student-led research studies*

## Master's in Liberal Studies (MLS)

Launched in 2015, the MLS is open to students who graduate from the YIF. Beginning 2022-23, the MLS will only admit 10 students. This decision has made the course exclusive and particularly competitive. Students take part in intensive research projects under the mentorship of faculty members. Several former MLS students have gone on to pursue PhD

programmes at premier Indian and international universities or work as successful professionals.

The 2022-2023 cohort consisted of nine students working with a diverse range of departments. This included Philosophy, English, Visual Arts, Computer Science, Sociology and Anthropology, Entrepreneurship and History.

## Chief Minister's Good Governance Associates (CMGGA) Programme

Launched in January 2016, CMGGA is a strategic collaboration between Ashoka University and the Government of Haryana. The programme includes 25 young professionals who are placed across 22 districts of Haryana. They work with

the administration to streamline systems and provide innovative solutions to revamp existing structures. In 2023, the seventh cohort of 24 people was admitted.



Students participate in various research projects under the mentorship of faculty

## PhD Programmes

Ashoka offers PhD programmes in various disciplines and in multidisciplinary areas across 25 disciplines, taking the total number of PhD students to over 118.

The PhD programme is fully funded to provide scholars all the facilities needed for their research.

During the initial two years, the cohort

primarily focuses on their coursework, gradually transitioning to their thesis in the later years.

This year, Raghvi Garg from the Department of Economics, became the first PhD scholar to graduate from Ashoka. She is currently an Assistant Professor in the Department of Economic Sciences at IIT Kanpur.

### Gender-wise distribution of all PhD students



### Discipline wise distribution of PhD scholars



## From Ashoka's First PhD Graduate

When I had to decide on pursuing my PhD, Ashoka was not the conventional choice. It was back then, a young university, with its first batch standing at the brink of graduation. Starting a PhD programme at this stage meant growing with Ashoka, where I would learn from its journey as much as it'll learn from mine. The University has a solid pool of faculty members, and I was particularly looking forward to exploring different areas of research. Given the alignment of my area of interest, I felt confident and motivated towards the pursuit and followed my heart, even if that meant going against the conventions.

The potential synergy at Ashoka was something that gave me additional room to experiment with Economics. Professor Bhaskar Dutta headed the Economics Department back then, and interacting with him helped me gain clarity and I had known Professor Abhinash Borah since my master's days. Professor Dutta and Professor Borah's presence at Ashoka was reassuring.

Ashoka's Visitors Programme had a significant impact on me. It provides immense learning opportunities for young researchers and is instrumental to their growth as intellectuals. Leading researchers visited the University, which gave me an opportunity to discuss my work with them. Professor Yoram Halevy, (University of Toronto) visited Ashoka during the first year of

my PhD and my interaction with him notably influenced my work. Having no cohort of fellow researchers was a drawback. However, Ashoka enabled an environment for collaborative research with students enrolled in master's and undergraduate programmes. With the vision and support of my advisor, Professor Abhinash Borah, we were able to build a group of enthusiastic students who would pursue research in Decision Theory, an important yet neglected field of research in Economics in India.

I am deeply indebted to my advisor, Professor Borah, for his support and encouragement. More than anyone else, he believed in me and inspired me to pursue a PhD. His relentlessness, drive for perfection and foresight continues to shape me into a better version of myself.

Ashoka gave me the freedom to pursue research in an unimposing way, helping me build a strong foundation for the trailing batches.

I had faith in Ashoka's vision to build an education system that would grow dynamically, and provide the scholars with a global platform to collaborate with established researchers and help them make a mark of their own in their respective fields. I knew and was reassured by the professors here, that I will not only have the freedom that a researcher desires but also the freedom she deserves.

Raghvi's research explores the intricate dynamics of individual decision-making. With a keen interest in Choice Theory, Decision Theory and Behavioral Economics, Raghvi delves into the complexities of human behavior within social contexts.

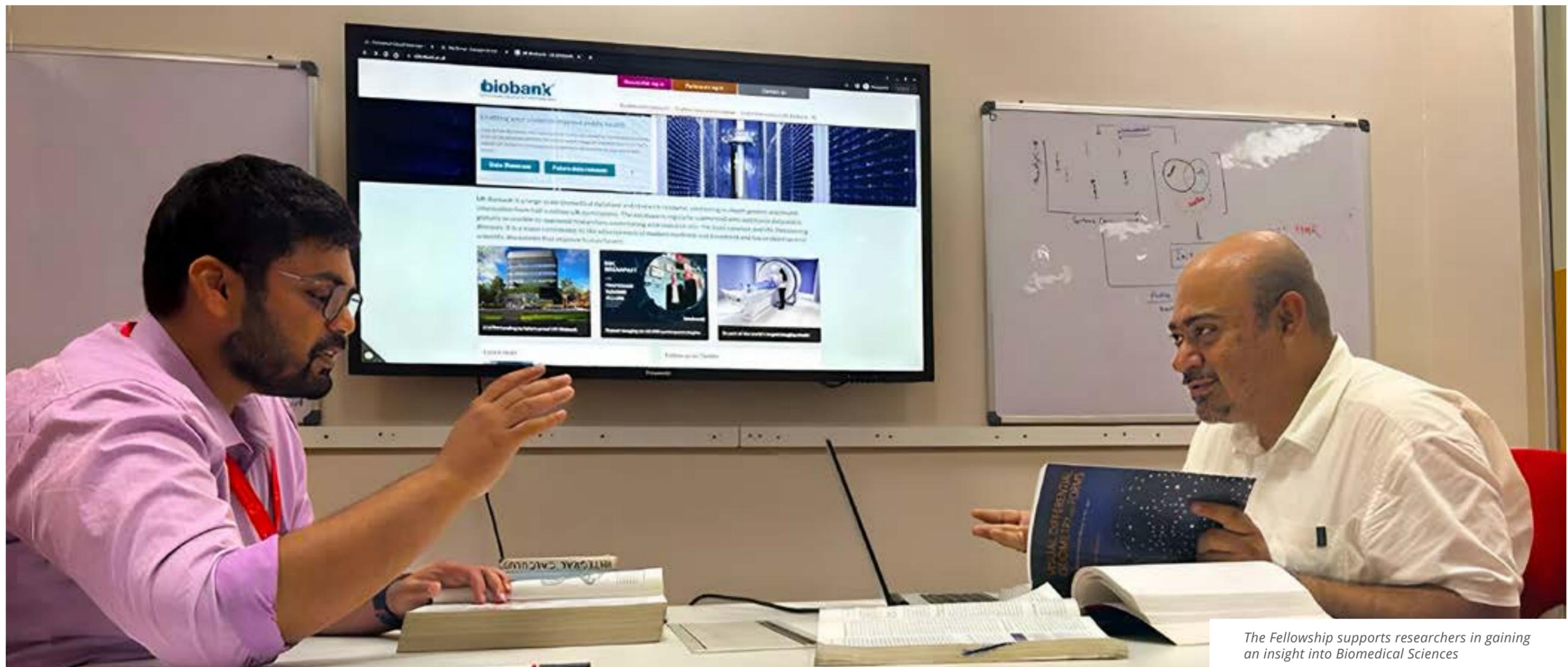


## Simons-Ashoka Early Career Fellowship

In 2022, the Trivedi School of Biosciences launched the Simons–Ashoka Early Career (postdoctoral) Fellowship in Quantitative Biomedical Sciences. This is the first initiative by the Simons Foundation outside the United States in a developing country. The foundation aims to advance the frontiers of

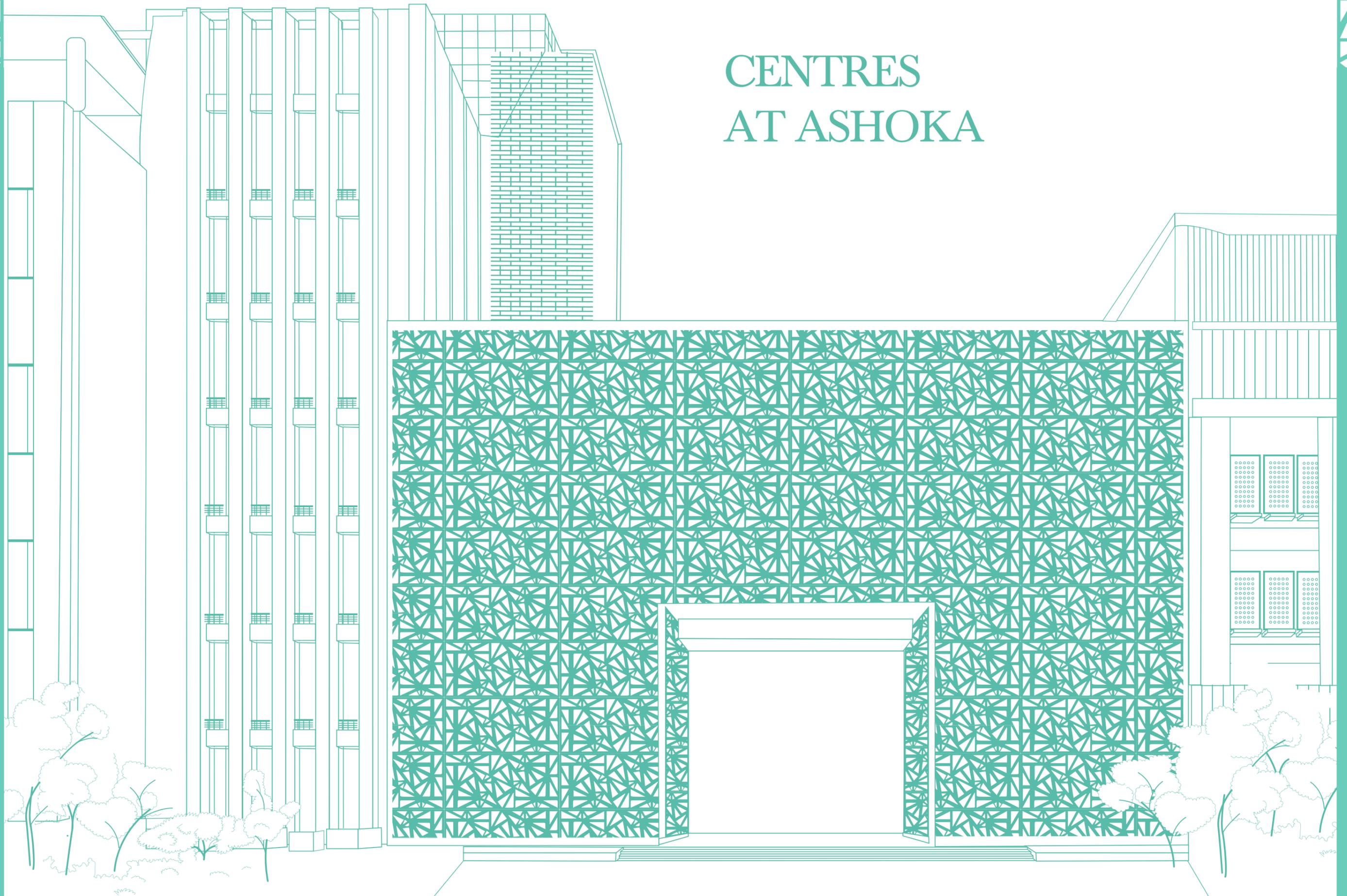
research in the Quantitative Sciences. The broad areas of study include developing Mathematical and Computational Biology methods for big data analysis on health, and addressing fundamental questions in Biomedical Sciences that impact health.

Currently, the postdoctoral programme hosts two Fellows, who under the mentorship of the Sciences faculty at Ashoka are working in the research areas of their choice. Fellows have the opportunity to collaborate and perform part of their research from the wider National Capital Region of India or in any relevant lab outside India.



*The Fellowship supports researchers in gaining an insight into Biomedical Sciences*

# CENTRES AT ASHOKA



## Centre for Economic Data and Analysis (CEDA)

CEDA was established by the Department of Economics in 2019. The Centre publishes original research providing insights into socio-economic issues with data-rich analyses. Established with the goal of demystifying data, CEDA has not only created data products and analysed content, but also made it accessible and usable for a wide variety of audiences: researchers, students, teachers, journalists and policymakers.

CEDA's Data Portal provides concise, easy-to-understand data summaries. These are calculated via a sophisticated back-end architecture that cross-references various public datasets. This year, the Centre launched

four interactive data portals. These include, Socio-Economic Data, a comprehensive repository of data obtained from official databases, census surveys and other sources of administrative data pertaining to the Indian economy; the Eco Meter which presents high-frequency macroeconomic and alternative indicators across different sectors and industries in an easy-to-understand format; Agri Market Data, a portal which contains data on prices and quantities of over 300 agricultural commodities from over 2,700 *mandis* across the country since 2000 and the Food Prices Data, which shows retail and wholesale prices of 22 essential commodities from more than 100 centres across India since 2009.

## Ashoka Centre for People-Centric Energy Transition (ACPET)

The Centre aims to fill critical knowledge gaps around the daunting challenge of achieving a green energy transition that is both context-responsive and advances the three pillars of sustainable development. It is channelising its research to (i) better understand the drivers of societal change around energy, (ii) recommend strategies for successfully implementing transformation initiatives and identify new ones, and (iii) hold a mirror up on unintended outcomes of current and proposed interventions.

It seeks to actively engage stakeholders of the energy transition, across scale and geography, to fast-track learning and root all recommendations in hands-on, multi-stakeholder experiences.



*ACPET aims to explore various frameworks (technical, economic and social) to drive energy transition*

## Centre For Climate Change and Sustainability (3CS)

The 3CS brings together members of the Ashoka community who have a shared interest in studying, communicating and mitigating the effects of future climate change on our society, health and environment. The 3CS was established in 2019 to provide a comprehensive interdisciplinary education to the next generation of Ashoka researchers. In 2022-23, the Centre continued funding 12 projects under broad themes such as ecology, conservation, climate change and sustainable communities.

The 3CS collaborated with Delhi Research Implementation and Innovation (DRIIV), on the Solutions for Air Pollution Mitigation through the Engagement, Engineering and Research (SAMEER) project for sustainable air quality in a workshop conducted in Delhi NCR. It focused on creating awareness about the impacts of air pollution and its mitigation measures. The annual flagship conference 'Healing Earth 3.0' was organised by the Centre to facilitate conversations around the climate crisis and its wider impact on our world today.



*Snapshots from the DRIIV event*



Students at a Mandarin calligraphy workshop

## Ashoka Centre for China Studies (ACCS)

The ACCS looks towards building China Studies as an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary area with an additional focus on language. It works on China-related research and collaboration to foster a greater understanding of the country across academic, policy-making and public audiences in India.

The Centre collaborated with the Department of Sociology and Anthropology and the University of Westminster, to host 'The Himalayas from its Edges: Mobilities, Networks, Geographies'. This was a first-of-its-kind conference that brought together 27 scholars from various disciplines and institutions across the world to discuss the Himalayas in their historical and contemporary

sense. New courses such as *Stone, Paper, Bamboo, Silk: Sinophone Textual Cultures* by Eloise Wright, *An Interpretive History of Mao Zedong and the Chinese Communist Revolution* by Sayantani Mukherjee and *Confucianism, Family Lineage, and Local Society* by Daniel Murray, were introduced.

In 2023, the first set of students graduated with a minor in China Studies. The first cohort of scholars sponsored by Harvard Yenping Institute from the Mandarin Language Scholars Programme are set to finish their one-year intensive language training at the Mandarin Training Centre of the National Taiwan Normal University.

## Centre for the Creative and the Critical (CCC)

The CCC provides a forum to raise and address questions on creative practice and critical argument. It brings together writers, translators, artists, scholars and publishers with different traditions and histories from around the world. By doing so, the Centre fosters inter-cultural and extra-disciplinary discussions about creative practice. Such discussions are often not found in more professional settings, such as academic or market-driven conferences.

In 2022-23, the Centre, along with literaryactivism.com, initiated several new dialogues, including 'Interviews on Site', a series

featuring various conversations. It hosted the poet and critic Charles Bernstein from Museum Of Modern Art, New York and the scholar-translator Elena Lombardi from Blackwell's, Oxford. The 8th symposium in the Literary Activism series, titled 'The Writer-Critic and Literary Studies', was organised in partnership with the India International Centre, New Delhi, bringing together speakers from the UK, US and India. Scholars and writers from Harvard University, University College London, Indiana University Bloomington and the University of Glasgow participated in the event.



Art work on display at the Spring Haat in 2022



Karthick Balasubramanian, Nayanjot Lahiri and Binita Phartiyal holding the sediment core in the Chakradhara meadow from where it was extracted

## Centre for Social and Behaviour Change (CSBC)

Supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, CSBC drives impactful behaviour change among marginalised communities through foundational research, capacity building and scale-up of behaviour change interventions in health, water, financial inclusion, sustainability and rural livelihoods.

CSBC partnered with the Centre for Decision Research at the University of Chicago and the Economics faculty at the University of Leicester to conduct seven behavioural experiments for the peer-reviewed publications. Recent publications include research papers in academic journals such as *Health Communication*, *Vaccine: X*, *Reproductive Health* and *Ideas for India*.

The Centre along with the Department of Water Supply and Sanitation on the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), jointly published Behavioural Diagnostic Report with the Ministry of Jal Shakti.

In association with the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA), the Centre trained nearly 600 government officers through customised training programmes on behavioural science and policy. In addition, the Centre studied COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy in rural Uttar Pradesh and Bihar under a competitive grant from the Sabin Vaccine Institute. The research and findings were documented in short films released at the second annual conference organised by Sabin in June 2023.

## Centre for Interdisciplinary Archaeological Research (CIAR)

Launched in early 2021, the CIAR is a distinctive, institutional initiative which brings Archaeology and the Sciences together in order to offer new perspectives that will deepen the study of the Indian past. As a result of this cross-fertilisation, it hosts two components that support each other: field-based courses and laboratories for teaching and research.

The Centre completed the first phase of work in the Bandhavgarh National Park and Tiger Reserve in which ancient caves, medieval temples, reservoirs and sculptural relics were documented, and a paper was published in *Current Science*. A second paper has appeared

online in *South Asian Studies*. In the second phase of work, a study involving applications of various paleoenvironmental reconstruction proxies has started in order to understand the human relics in the forest better. This field work started in May 2023, in collaboration with Dr Binita Phartiyal (Birbal Sahn Institute of Palaeosciences, Lucknow) and Dr Karthick Balasubramanian (Agharkar Research Institute, Pune). It involves an analysis of the sediments and water in reservoirs and in the meadows on the Bandhavgarh plateau. A sediment core has already been extracted from the Chakradhara meadow which is likely to reveal the changing climate and the evolving forest cover there.



Teachers and enumerators at a Block Education Office in Sitapur, Uttar Pradesh

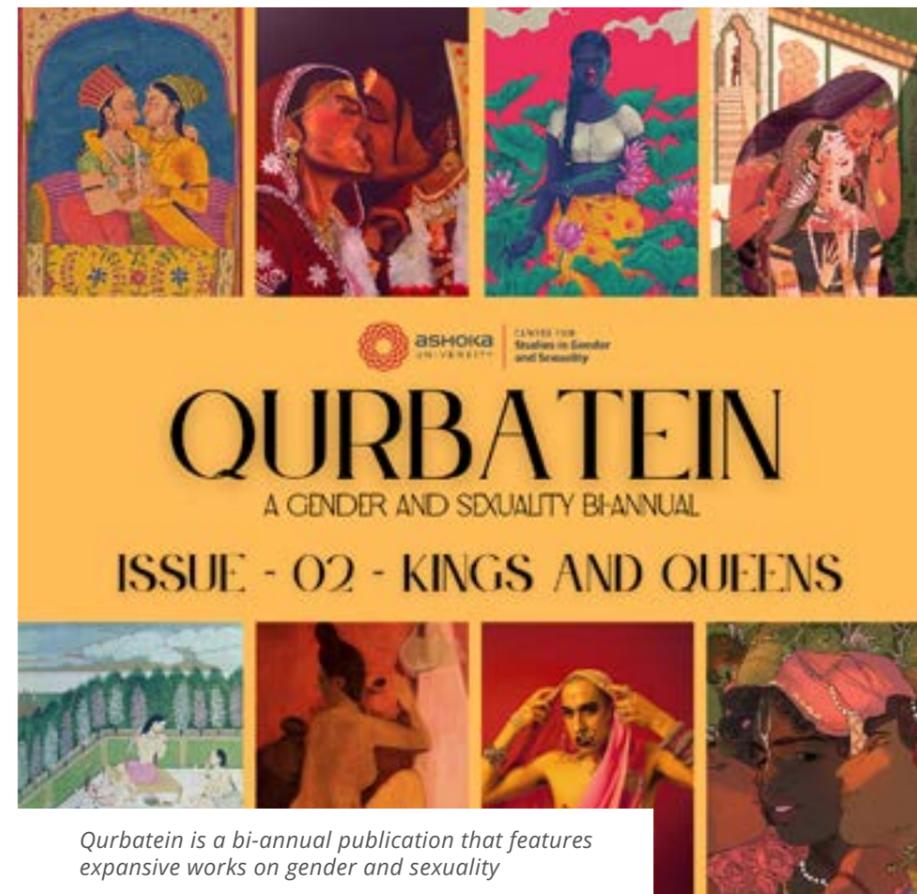
## Ashoka Centre for Translation (ACT)

ACT was established in 2021 to foster, nurture and foreground India's multilingual ethos. It engages with practitioners and students of translation at Ashoka and beyond, through a variety of texts. These range from the literary and the political to the scientific, oral and popular domains.

The Centre announced the 'Women Translating Women' project supported by the Susham Bedi Memorial Fund. Under this project, selected works translated from Indian languages that explore the multiple spaces inhabited by women in diverse contexts will be published by *Zubaan*. Over the past year, ACT has hosted dialogues with speakers such as the thinker and institution builder GN Devy, the Telugu writer Gogu

Shyamala, and other scholar-practitioners from the University of Edinburgh, California State University, New York University, Northwestern University and Jawaharlal Nehru University.

The Centre participated in lectures, workshops and panels at the University of Delhi, Asia Pacific Writers and Translators and the Jaipur Literature Festival. Following the Centre's mission of democratising knowledge through translation, the team also assisted the International Federation of Library Associations and the Stephen Spender Prize with translation-related work. With the support of the New India Foundation, ACT has compiled the 'State of Indian Translations Report' which will be released soon.



*Qurbatein is a bi-annual publication that features expansive works on gender and sexuality*



*Professor GN Devy delivering a lecture on Void and Silence-Substance and Speech*

## Centre for Studies in Gender and Sexuality (CSGS)

CSGS engages with issues of gender and sexuality through an interdisciplinary lens. In the academic year 2022-23, the Centre released 'Mapping Sexuality in India', an online resource directory on gender and sexuality that is the only one of its kind in the subcontinent. Mapping Sexuality contains a comprehensive and dynamic list of institutions, publications, digital spaces and conferences on gender and sexuality in India.

The Centre also published *Qurbatein: A Gender and Sexuality Bi-annual*, featuring scholarly and non-scholarly work from South Asia. With original commissioned artwork and scholarly and creative pieces, *Qurbatein* captures the aesthetic and political pulse of an entire subcontinent.

At Ashoka, the Centre mentored a team of Young India Fellows to produce 'The Sexual Justice Project', which mapped legal judgments over the last five decades as they pertain to cases on sex in India. In tandem, CSGS also launched a podcast series featuring interviews with distinguished lawyers and scholars on issues central to the themes of the project.

In another first, the Centre also inaugurated TAARIF (Transformative Arts and Research Initiatives Fellowship), the first fully-funded fellowship for trans\* scholars in India.

## Centre for Social Impact and Philanthropy (CSIP)

CSIP is India's first academic centre focused on enabling strategic and robust philanthropy for greater social impact. Through its research and knowledge products, convening and facilitation opportunities and leadership development programmes, the Centre is cultivating a stronger non-profit sector for a vibrant and equitable India.

In 2022-23, CSIP launched two significant reports on research studies. The first report 'How India Gives', provides a deeper understanding of the formal and informal ways Indians donate to philanthropic causes. Interviews were conducted with a panel comprising approximately 81,000 households across 18 states to understand the giving patterns across geographies and socio-economic groups. The study revealed that the largest portion of India's household donations are driven by religious beliefs and follow family traditions. People also

donate to support those in financial distress. The second report 'Talent Management in the Indian Social Sector', revolved around studies to enable social sector organisations build strategies and infrastructure conducive to their evolving talent management needs. The findings are based on a rigorous survey conducted with hundred Social Purpose Organisations (SPOs) nationwide. The study benchmarks compensation and benefits in the sector against for-profits.

The Centre virtually organised the third edition of 'Resilience Strategies for Non-profits in India (RSN)', with faculty from the Harvard Business School. The key topics covered were fundraising, compliance, strategy and leadership. The Centre also nurtures emerging social impact leaders within Ashoka's alumni community through its Mother Teresa Fellowship (MTF). This year, the ninth cohort of MTF finished their 18-month fellowship.



*Ashoka strives to build inclusive communities and empower students to see the world differently - through work, in and outside the classroom and in peer interactions*



*MTF Fellows and the CSIP Team during the Learning Immersion programme*

## Trivedi Centre for Political Data (TCPD)

TCPD conducts empirical research and promotes data-driven research, policy work and journalism. It does so by producing and disseminating open-access political data by conducting original research and developing research partnerships. Over the academic year, the Centre published 55 articles across various media.

During the academic year, the Centre focussed on releasing new datasets like the Indian Judiciary dataset, the Indian elections dataset from 1951-1962 and the TCPD Urban local

bodies dataset – a project between TCPD and the Centre for Advanced Study of India, University of Pennsylvania.

TCPD covered the Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Tripura and Karnataka elections. The team went to Gujarat, Manipur, Himachal Pradesh, and Karnataka to conduct the fieldwork for the state elections.

The 'Lok Dhaba' dataset hosted by TCPD won the 2023 Lijphart/Przeworski/Verba Dataset Award from the American Political Science Association.

## New Centres of Excellence at Ashoka

### ► The Isaac Centre for Public Policy and Good Governance

The Centre is an outcome of a long-held desire to set up an interdisciplinary initiative that offers an academic programme in Economics and Public Policy and catalyses policy relevant research. The Centre will also conceptualise executive education programmes.



*New centres will lead path-breaking work across domains and themes*

### ► Centre for Data Sciences and Analytics

The work of this Centre will be anchored by the Computer Science (CS) department. They aim to become the leading academic institution in India and Asia that offers world-class and first-of-its-kind research, training, teaching and capacity building in Data Science. It also plans to provide a repository of open access public data across interdisciplinary fields.

### ► Centre for Digitalisation, AI and Society

The public and private sector in India have embraced the tremendous scope and applications of digitalisation and AI in public life. This Centre aims to bring together unique opportunities to ask both theoretical and applied research questions about safe and secure design and deployment of such technologies. It will take an interdisciplinary approach to such questions, working with different disciplines such as Political Science, Philosophy, Economics and Anthropology.



*Centres engage in research and aim to create social impact*

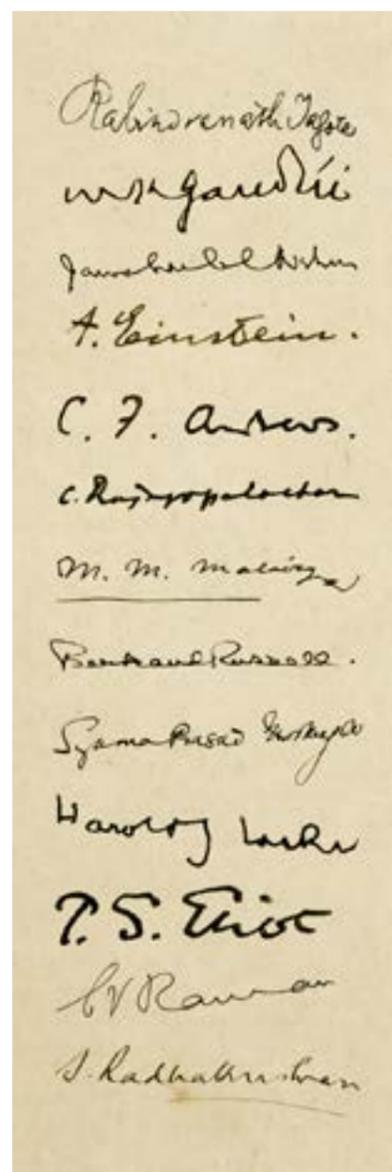
## Archives of Contemporary India

The Archives of Contemporary India was instituted in 2017 to create a centre for historical and social science research in the country. It focuses on preserving primary source material for the study of modern and contemporary Indian history.

In the academic year 2022-23, the Archives added valuable private papers of eminent individuals and academics, taking the tally of the Archive's collection to 64. This includes papers of HS Vatsyayan 'Agyeya' (writer and poet), Dileep Padgaonkar (journalist and writer), KS Bajpai (scholar diplomat), Anil Dharker (journalist), Vinay Kumar Srivastava (anthropologist and author), SP Shahi (wildlife conservationist), Dilip Simeon (labour historian and social activist), Ranoj Basu (Former Permanent Secretary, AICC), Achin Vanaik (author and social activist), SK Lambah (scholar diplomat) and N Raghavan (freedom fighter and diplomat). The Archives added to the papers of Girish Karnad, Ullas K Karanth, Nandita Haksar and Raza Tehsin. It also now houses rare photos of tigers and their habitats (Kailash Sankhala).

Preparation of catalogues continued throughout the year. Collections of Dr S Radhakrishnan (1903-1930, 1931-1948), LM Singhvi, MK Ranjitsinh, Dileep Padgaonkar, Raza Tehsin, ND Jayal, Dilip Simeon, Rauf Ali and DK Lahiri Choudhury were documented. Preparation of metadata of these collections is underway. Approximately 65,644 pages of selected documents from the collections of Dr S Radhakrishnan, Kuldip Nayar, Raza Tehsin, Dileep Padgaonkar, Anil Dharker and *Mainstream* were digitised.

A significant achievement during the year was the launch of the official Archives website on September 5th, Teacher's Day, along with an online exhibition on Dr S Radhakrishnan. The website now hosts digitised documents and audio-visual materials from the collections, enabling scholars to access the Archives online.



Signatures of eminent people. The Archives is home to their letters

Over 1,500 audio-visual materials were digitised and uploaded on the website. Further, around 30,000 digitised documents and photographs from the collections of Dr Manmohan Singh, Chandi Prasad Bhatt,

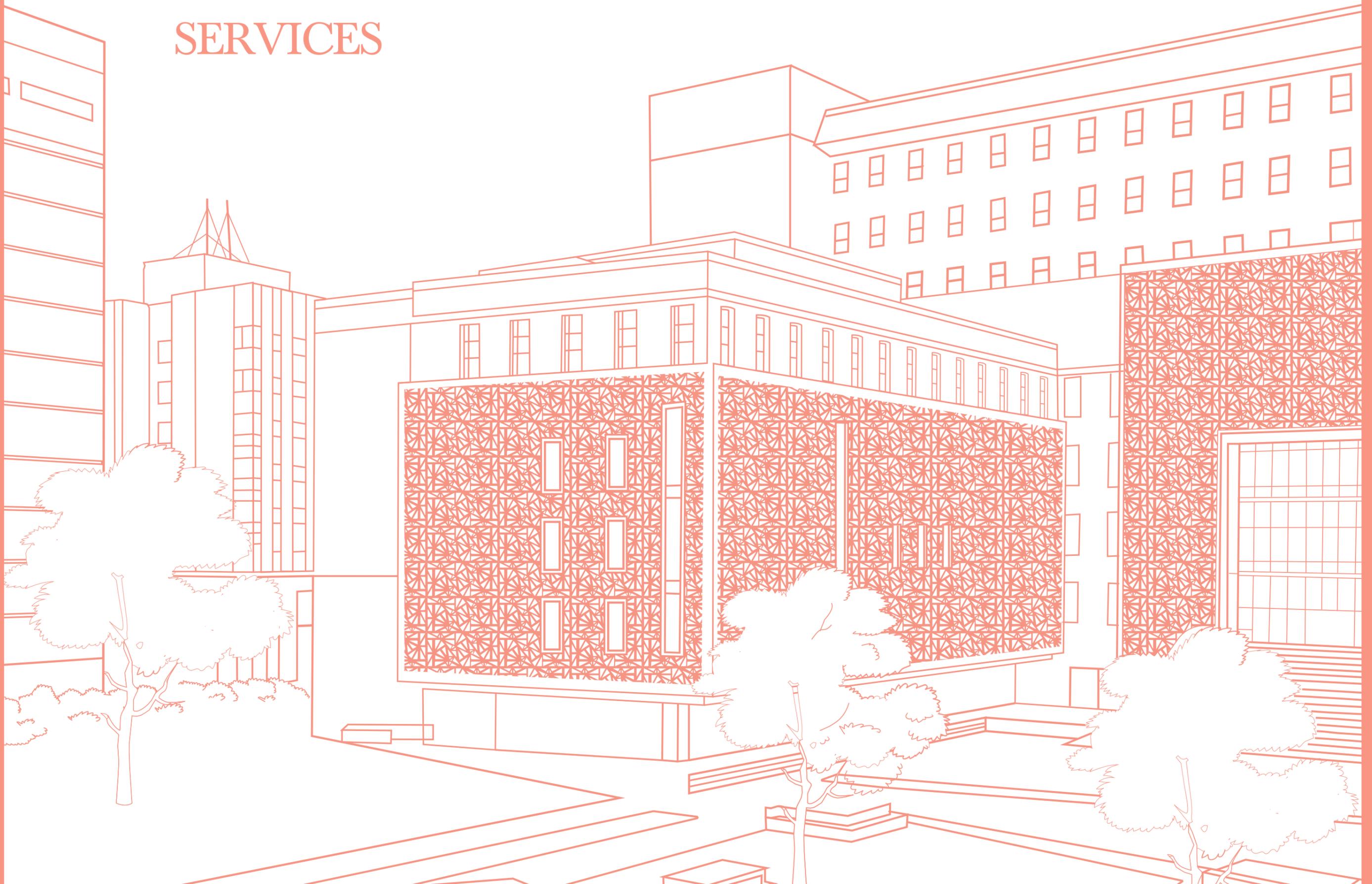
Lakshmi Sahgal, LM Singhvi, Girish Karnad, Prabhakar Machwe, Dr S Radhakrishnan, *Sanctuary Asia magazine*, *Mainstream* and WWF newsletters were made available online.



The HDFC Board visited Ashoka's library and archives in March 2023

Ashoka's Archives of Contemporary India continued upgrading various facilities for conservation and preservation. This included installing a high-tech overhead scanner for digitisation, an encapsulation machine for preparing archival polyester covers for old black and white photographs and preserving them in special acid-free photo boxes. A Redundant Array of Independent Disks (RAID) storage system for storing and saving the digital data was also installed in the Archives Repository.

# STUDENT SERVICES



## Ashoka Centre for Well-Being (ACWB)

The ACWB is a non-aligned centre offering counselling and psychological support for the Ashoka community. The Centre is one of its kind in India with a focus on capacity building at every level of the organisation (students, staff and faculty). In the last academic year, ACWB provided support to 767 Ashokans through 3,619 individual counselling sessions. This is indicative of the importance that is placed on preventive mental health care and an openness to conversations about mental health issues which is the Centre's credo.

With a vision of creating a community-based system of care, the Centre's signature Gatekeeper Training enables student volunteers to identify sources of distress, listen with empathy and offer peer support. In 2022-23, over 25 training sessions were conducted,

including well-being workshops with research assistants, high school students (Young Scholars Programme and Lodha Genius Programme), Young India Fellows, Chief Minister's Good Governance Associates, faculty, teaching fellows, staff and the admissions team.

During the academic year, ACWB collaborated with several international universities. The ACWB team visited University of Cambridge as part of the research collaboration between Ashoka and Cambridge, the Edutech Asia International Conference, Singapore and the One Earth Many Faiths Conference by Hope for Creation, University of Oxford. This year, ACWB and Ashoka have been recognised by the Mary Christie Institute, USA, in a paper titled 'Peer Programmes in College Student Mental Health', as the only Indian university with peer support programmes.



ACWB Director Arvinder J Singh interacting with students

## Centre for Writing and Communication (CWC)

The CWC works closely with the academic community at Ashoka to develop critical thinking, writing and communication skills. It provides support across disciplines through in-class lectures, workshops and one-on-one sessions. This year, in addition to ensuring continued alignment with Ashoka's inclusion and diversity objectives, a key focus of CWC's work was on digitising the 'Plagiarism and Citation Workshop'. Starting from this academic year, all incoming undergraduate students are expected to complete the course online.

In addition to conducting the Academic Bridge Programme and its year-long English language support programme, the Centre also organised its Winter School on Research Writing. Other programmes offered include Professional

Communication in English, Editing and Proofreading, Research Writing in the Social Sciences and Humanities, Academic Writing in the Sciences and Academic Publishing. The CWC held its fourth annual conference on 'Writing Data: Interdisciplinary Perspectives' in the last academic year. The conference featured eminent speakers, emerging researchers and established practitioners from the Indian School of Business, the Indian School of Public Policy, Jawaharlal Nehru University, IIT-Kanpur and the National Institute of Advanced Studies. Various workshops were conducted throughout the year, including writing museum labels and catalogue raisonné, ideating and creating zines, storytelling through wordless picture books, narrative journalism, storytelling in international development and storytelling in Science.



CWC Team at Ashoka



*The CfE team's visit to the Indian Parliament*

## The InfoEdge Centre for Entrepreneurship (CfE)

CfE blends Liberal Arts and Sciences with Entrepreneurship, fostering a unique interdisciplinary approach to learning with a focus on creating positive social impact. With a vision to inspire, inculcate and incubate game-changing ideas, the Centre offers a wide range of academic interventions, incubation and acceleration programmes.

The Centre's commitment to inculcate entrepreneurship knowledge and skills is reflected in the delivery of 45 courses, including Leadership, Strategy, Finance, Digital Transformation, Management and Entrepreneurship. The faculty comprises prominent thought leaders and industry experts, who deliver unparalleled quality entrepreneurship education. Beyond classrooms, the students had the opportunity to participate in several field visits, including The Parliament of India, ChrysCapital, Eldeco, Wow Momo Foods, Bindaas Collective, Innov8 Coworking by Oyo, Unlimited Confluence, Medanta (Gurugram) and Aman Bagh.

The Centre's flagship event, Startup Ashoka, is a continuous 24-hour event where aspiring entrepreneurs at Ashoka showcase their big ideas. The Entrepreneurship *Haats* focus on the spirit of 'Ashokapreneurs'. During the academic year, the Centre incubated a significant number of start-ups, reflecting its commitment to nurturing innovative ideas and fostering an entrepreneurial spirit among students. The Centre's Entrepreneur in Residence (EiR) programme provides intensive incubation and mentorship to future entrepreneurs. The Startup Incubation Lab (SIL) guides students through their start-up journey, providing valuable experience and insights. Through collaborations with organisations like Youth Co: Lab, CfE actively participates in capacity-building programmes and entrepreneurship fairs, fostering collaborations and knowledge exchange among young social entrepreneurs.

## Career Development Office (CDO)

The Career Development Office (CDO) is committed to preparing students for the job market. This is achieved through various initiatives such as Career Preparatory and Internship Preparatory Programmes. Bootcamps on Product Management and Consulting are also organised.

Over the years, the Office has placed over 2,000 graduates and developed relationships with almost 500 organisations across industries. The CDO, through its efforts, matches the right talent with the right jobs. Through internships and projects, students gain real-world experiences and skills necessary for standing out in an increasingly competitive workforce.

The Career Preparatory Programme (CPP) is a unique and comprehensive training programme aimed at mentoring and providing career guidance to students, who in turn get an opportunity to learn from industry stalwarts, Ashoka founders and alumni. This year, over 1,500 students participated in this programme.

In the academic year 2022-23, all students who opted for placements were recruited.



*To prepare students for job interviews, CDO conducts mock interview sessions on campus*

## The Office of Academic Affairs (OAA)

OAA administers the full spectrum of the University's undergraduate academic experience. This ranges from managing the course registrations, assigning student mentors, facilitating faculty feedback and the degree check process – which assesses whether or not a student has met all the requirements necessary to graduate. It also advises students on planning their course trajectory. The Office works closely with various departments to support students' academic performance. Additionally, it assists the faculty to develop the academic programmes. At the end of each semester, OAA releases the

Dean's List honouring students with the best academic records.

In 2022-23, the OAA automated various processes like the Teaching Fellow Requisition Portal and improved the Degree Check mechanism. The OAA also conducted training sessions for various departments regarding the Academic Management System, making it easier for students to raise queries and book appointments. Furthermore, the Office is actively working on implementing the National Education Policy (NEP).



*A team from the University of Pennsylvania on a visit to the Ashoka Campus*

## Office of Global Education and Strategic Partnerships (GESP)

GESP leads all international partnerships with other academic institutions. This includes negotiating, developing and managing global collaborations. The Office provides opportunities for students to participate in summer and semester abroad programmes with access to international faculty.

Currently, Ashoka has over 52 partnerships with international universities. These include the University of Pennsylvania, King's College London, Sciences Po, Trinity College, UC Berkeley and Yale University. The University signed several additional Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) with international universities such as Cote D'Azur University, Cornell University and University of Melbourne, among others.

Between January and May 2023, GESP advised over 250 Ashoka students on study-abroad programmes. This year, over 110 students

attended summer courses and programmes overseas, of them, 25 received financial aid from Ashoka and its partners. Currently, 16 students are working on research fellowships or other unique programmes. For the summer courses, students attended various universities, including London School of Economics, King's College, Stanford University, UC Berkeley and Columbia University. For research internships, students went to Caltech, Cornell University, Columbia University and the World Bank.

As part of the Visiting Students Programme, nine international students took part in Ashoka's summer semester. The students came from partner universities such as King's College, Durham University and Georgetown University. In addition, 34 Ashoka students spent a semester at universities like Yale, NYU, Columbia and the University of Geneva. Of these, 29 were nominated to study overseas.



*OAA supports students in every step of their academic journey at Ashoka*



OSA organises events like the Spring Haat on campus

## Office of Student Affairs (OSA)

OSA drives student experiences outside the classrooms to provide a well-rounded campus experience. The Office supports students through its three verticals:

-  Residence Life
-  Student Life
-  Sports and Exercise

This year, four speaker connect sessions were organised called ‘The Series’ featuring actor Rahul Bose, journalist Deep Halder and musician Abhay Sharma. The Office also organised cultural tours called The *Safarnama Express* in Delhi and Sonipat. Ashoka *Haats* were set up on campus to encourage and display the artwork of local artisans, women and queer entrepreneurs. The annual inter-collegiate sports fest, *Agneepath*, had close to 1,500 external participants.



OLS Director, Reena Gupta, with students

## Office of Learning Support (OLS)

OLS is committed to making Ashoka an inclusive space for students with physical, sensory and learning disabilities. The Office has taken collaborative measures with the faculty, staff and student body, including academic accessibility-related projects and ground-level action to ensure a smooth campus life experience for all. The Office also provides a wide range of resources and services, such as assistive technologies, personalised study skills guidance, disability support and sensitisation of the Ashoka community.

During the academic year, OLS focused on fostering a culture of allyship by mobilising the Ashoka community. This included training the Resident Assistants, members of clubs and

societies, student volunteers and participants for major campus events. Other events conducted on campus include the ‘Inclusion in Higher Education Leadership Summit’ and ‘Inclusion Through Innovation’, which aimed to raise awareness and facilitate important discussions on inclusion within and beyond Ashoka.

Currently, the Office is in the process of expanding and strengthening its existing projects such as support and mentorship for students with disabilities, and non-disability related academic concerns, other initiatives such as the College Readiness Programme, the Peer Learning Support Programme and the annual Neurodiversity Initiative.

## Research and Development Office (RDO)

The Office is focused on empowering faculty and researchers to pursue their research goals as well as strengthening the research ecosystem at Ashoka by equipping laboratories with state-of-the-art infrastructure and facilities.

In 2022-23, the RDO facilitated over 78 extramural faculty grants (21 international and 57 domestic) from 39 funding agencies. Over Rs 17.10 crore was disbursed as faculty extramural research grants in the last financial year. The Office also disseminated 137 funding opportunities.

Ashoka was awarded a prestigious research grant by the Government of India under their Promotion of University Research and Scientific Excellence (PURSE) Programme. The four-year grant, of Rs 9.50 crore, aims to accelerate research on disease dynamics. Ashoka is one of the 12 Indian universities to receive this grant. Additionally, a grant of Rs 13.06 crore was given by the DBT/Wellcome Trust India Alliance.

In 2022-23, a substantial grant of Rs 40 crore was provided for four years to enhance scientific studies and research. This grant contributes to Ashoka's commitment to scientific research excellence, including scholarships for underprivileged women students and funding for interdisciplinary research initiatives. It also facilitates RDO's ability to recruit top faculty and support innovative research projects.

During the academic year, the Office released the 'Compendium on Research Grants',

which includes various funding opportunities, travel grants and fellowships. The RDO also introduced a valuable Grant Database to boost research opportunities at the University that lists diverse funding options such as national and international grants, private foundations and collaborative initiatives spanning multiple disciplines. The Office extended support in setting up Drosophila Laboratory, Magnetic Characterisation Laboratory and Central Instrumentation Laboratory.



Students working in the Physics lab

## Faculty Research

Ashoka emphasises on interdisciplinary research and provides support to faculty members, visiting scholars and students to pursue rigorous and collaborative research endeavours. This support enables faculty to publish papers, write books, participate in conferences and represent the University at various fora. Many faculty members are recipients of prestigious grants, fellowships and awards. The academic year 2022-23 witnessed a significant increase in the number of publications in reputed journals and books, some of which are highlighted below.

► **Amit Chaudhuri's** (Creative Writing) *Sojourn* is a dramatic work of fiction. It is a book about the present as it slips into the past, a picture of a city and of a troubled mind.

► **Janice Pariat's** (Creative Writing and History) *Everything the Light Touches*, is an extraordinary tale of travellers spanning continents and centuries. In this narrative, four individuals, separated by time and boundaries, discover a profound connection with nature as they travel in search of companionship and empathy.

► **Rita Kothari** (English) published a book titled, *Uneasy Translations: Self, Experience and Indian Literature*, which is a quietly political book that questions what we consider legitimate knowledge.

► **Priyank Narayan's** (Entrepreneurship) book, *Leapfrog: Six Practices to Thrive at Work*, published by Penguin India, lays down six evidence-based insights to help readers advance their careers at an incredible pace.

► **Pratyay Nath** (History) published *The Early Modern in South Asia*, which explores the arrival of modernity in South Asia and challenges the notion that it solely emerged with British colonialism. Through ten engaging chapters, the book examines various domains such as philosophy, warfare, law, environment, politics, violence, religion and society to trace the contours of South Asia's early modernity between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries.

► **Nayanjot Lahiri's** (History) *Searching for Ashoka*, weaves together elements of travelogue, history, and archaeology to delve into the multifaceted identities of Emperor Ashoka.

► **Upinder Singh** (History) published a book chapter titled 'Ideas of Empire in Ancient India in a Comparative Frame' in *Bridging Two Worlds*, published by the University of California Press.

► **Srinath Raghavan** (History) wrote a book chapter titled 'The Military in Internal Security' in *Internal Security in India: Violence, Order, and the State*, published by Oxford University Press. He also published a chapter titled 'Coercion' in *Security Studies*, published by Taylor & Francis.



Professor Nayanjot Lahiri with the CIAR team in Bandhavgarh

► **Mitul Baruah's** (Sociology and Anthropology and Environmental Studies) book titled *Slow Disaster - Political Ecology of Hazards and Everyday Life in the Brahmaputra Valley, Assam*, provides a captivating and observational narrative of the difficulties encountered by societies residing in Majuli, India.

► **Clancy Martin** (Philosophy) published a book titled *How Not to Kill Yourself*. The book is published by Penguin Book House and has become 'A New York Times Book Review Editor's Choice'.



## Grants Awarded to Faculty

- ▶ **Anurag Agrawal (Trivedi School of Biosciences [TSB])**  
was awarded a grant for research on ‘Genomic Surveillance programme for SARS-CoV-2: Consortium of India and Sri Lanka’ from Wellcome Trust. He also received three additional grants from Pfizer for Fellowships in infectious disease
- ▶ **Arunava Sinha (Ashoka Centre for Translation)**  
received a grant from New India Foundation
- ▶ **Aryya Ghosh (Chemistry)**  
received a Start-up Research Grant from Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB)
- ▶ **Bhanu Gupta (Economics)**  
was awarded a grant for ‘Survey of taxpayer’s knowledge and barriers to compliance’ by the Sylff Association (Tokyo Foundation for Policy Research)
- ▶ **Bhri Gupta Singh (Sociology/Anthropology)**  
received a grant from Brown University for research on ‘Impact of COVID-19 on urban poor neighbourhoods in north India’
- ▶ **Deepak Asthana (Chemistry)**  
was awarded a grant by Axis Bank
- ▶ **Garima Mishra (Physics)**  
received Start-up Research Grant from SERB for research on ‘DNA: Topology and Dynamics’
- ▶ **Guhan Venkat (Mathematics)**  
was awarded a grant from SERB under the scheme ‘Mathematical Research Impact Centric Support’
- ▶ **Bittu (Biology and Psychology)**  
received a IndiaBiosciences Outreach Grant, for research on ‘Discover Learning - Scientific ways of learning and critical thinking for undergraduate students’
- ▶ **Kritika Garg (Biology)**  
was awarded a grant from the Department of Biotechnology (DBT) for her project titled ‘Sexual selection in birds: a genomic perspective’

- ▶ **Kumarjit Saha (Mathematics)**  
received a grant for research on ‘Directed random networks and their scaling limits’ from the Indo-French Centre for the Promotion of Advanced Research (CEFIPRA)
- ▶ **L S Shashidhara (Biology)**  
was awarded a grant by the Rockefeller Foundation for research on ‘COVID-19: The second wave and beyond’. He also received a grant for his work on Antimicrobial resistance from Axis Bank
- ▶ **Lalit Contractor’s (Economics)**  
project titled ‘Support prices, input subsidies and misallocation in Indian agriculture’ is sponsored by Structural Transformation and Economic Growth, Center for Economic and Policy Research
- ▶ **Santu Bera (Chemistry)**  
was awarded the Ramanujan Fellowship from SERB
- ▶ **Projit B Mukarji’s (History)**  
project titled ‘Psychic Socialism: Quest for a New Science in India, c. 1947-71’ has been awarded the prestigious 2023 Guggenheim Fellowship
- ▶ **Shraddha Karve and Laasya Samhita (TSB)**  
received a grant from the Society for Molecular Biology and Evolution (SMBE) for ‘New ideas on molecular mechanisms in evolution (NEMO)’
- ▶ **Sramana Majumdar (Psychology)**  
was awarded the Spring 2022 Researchers in the Global South Grant for the project titled ‘From Suspicion to Revenge: A Multidimensional framework of Fear speech and its relationships with Sharing intentions and Truth perceptions’ from the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues (SPSSI)
- ▶ **Susmita Saha (Physics)**  
received the Start-up Research Grant from SERB. She also received funding for her research on ‘Nano Magnonic Devices’ by Axis Bank
- ▶ **Anindo Chatterjee (Biology)**  
was awarded the National Post-Doctoral Fellowship by SERB
- ▶ **Biswajit Shit (Biology)**  
received the International Travel Grant from SERB
- ▶ **Kankana Bhattacharjee (Chemistry)**  
was awarded the Senior Research Fellowship by Indian Council of Medical Research
- ▶ **Swati Agarwala (Biology)**  
received the Research Associateship for research on ‘Understanding the role of mitochondria in mediating neo-plasticity of stem cells’ from DBT

## Office of the Dean of Faculty (ODF)

The ODF oversees the functioning and welfare of Ashoka's faculty. The Office coordinates with various departments to recruit new faculty and oversees the tenure and promotion process. It is also responsible for administratively managing faculty leave and sabbaticals and the annual faculty research grant.

Other aspects that fall within the purview of the Office range from faculty-related data management to logistical assistance for new faculty. The Office addresses day-to-day concerns that faculty may have, within and outside the classroom.

## Alumni Relations Office (ARO)

The ARO ensures Ashoka's 5,000 strong alumni community remains connected to the University. The Office garners invaluable alumni support for University activities. There is constant engagement through newsletters, emails and updates on social media. The ARO has also organised alumni chapter meets in India and across the world. Additionally, they facilitate meetings between interested students and alumni working in the same field. This is done through the mentorship programme, internships and other career opportunities.

A revamped alumni portal was launched this academic year to strengthen engagement and to serve as a repository of updated information.

Ashoka alumni contribute to the University in various ways such as providing internship and employment opportunities, as well as support to fundraising. Jairaj Bhattacharya, from the Young India Fellowship batch of 2012, is the first Ashoka alumnus to become a founder.



*As part of their engagement activities, ARO organised an alumni weekend on campus in 2023*

## Ashoka Parents' Office

Now in its second year of operation, the Parents' Office is increasingly becoming the preferred bridge between parents of students and the University administration. The Office addresses queries and concerns Ashoka parents have as important stakeholders in the students' academic journey. It also engages in outreach and keeps parents informed of the University's activities.

The Parents Handbook, produced by the Office, is given to the parents of all incoming UG students at the beginning of the academic year.

This works as a ready reckoner on all important student-related academic and residence life policies. The Office also reaches out to parents through individual meetings to get support for the University's internship, placement and fundraising programmes. The Parents Fund has seen a steady inflow of donations through the last year. The Office also curates a monthly newsletter on campus events and important institutional achievements, which has witnessed a steady rise in engagement.



*Proud Ashoka parents*

## A Day in the Life of a Translation Class

‘So, professor, how do we begin translating? Should we read up a lot about the author? Read all their books first? Read critical essays?’ S is full of questions, as usual, and the rest are pleased that she’s asking what’s on their minds.

I don’t answer, but I start my students on their riyaz instead, asking them to translate into English a page from a translation of a *Harry Potter* novel in their mother tongues. The excitement is palpable, and then we compare their translations with one another’s and, finally, with the original. Giggles all round.

We will go on to do this riyaz for several more classes, working on snatches of prose, poetry, dialogue, and other forms. We talk about the possibility – and then we try it out – of doing feminist translations of distinctly male texts. The translations are highly imaginative, and it opens up their minds to the possibilities. Then we decide it’s time to translate by sound alone and not my meaning. So we translate birdsong. Yes, translate – by interpreting the sounds as conversations. P shakes his head ruefully. ‘Translation is so magical, I don’t think I can handle it,’ he whispers.

~|~

Three arms are pointing towards the ceiling.

‘We have to talk about this before we go any further. What happens when we can’t understand something in the text?’

‘What if there can be more than one meaning? Do we pick one when translating?’

‘Do we try to figure out what the writer might have meant, or do we go with what we think is the meaning?’

K has a problem. ‘I love the story I’m translating. I love it so much I am certain I cannot translate

it well enough.’ If only K looks around the room, she will find everyone else overwhelmed by the same possibility.

~|~

‘Professor, is everything translatable?’

‘What do you think?’

‘Yes. Maybe not with perfection, but to a large extent.’

‘No, some things cannot be translated. How will you take an entire culture of one language into another?’

‘You don’t have to. The reader has to learn it. Why should someone in the UK read a Gujarati novel under the impression it’s in English and therefore must come from a familiar cultural framework?’

‘But doesn’t that diminish the richness of the translation, if the cultural backdrop cannot be carried over?’

‘Are you telling me every reader in Bengali understands the culture that has gone into every Bengali novel? Every reader has to make their own effort.’

Or, just another five-minute break between intense translation exercises in class.

~|~

V is insistent that his English translation should retain a number of words in the original Kannada. A long dialogue follows, proving that teaching translation is, like translation itself, a matter of negotiation, of sensitising the translator to the fact that choices must be made mindfully, that they must be defensible, and that they should not ideally come from an external position or dogma, but be intrinsic to the text.

And so the conversation that is going to help both V and me learn about translations begins. I ask whether the words he wants to retain will take on a very different role in the translated text. ‘What if your readers start interrogating the text because of the presence of these Kannada words?’ I ask V. ‘Surely those words did not force readers to question them when reading them in the original text?’ V smiles. He was expecting this, and he has his answer ready.

‘But professor, why should reading an English translation of a Kannada text not make the reader interrogate the text? How else will the Kannada-ness of the text come through when virtually every word is in English? What if the reader of the English translation thinks it’s actually an English book?’

This isn’t going to be resolved, and it doesn’t really need to be. What we’re both (re)learning is that no choice of the translator’s must be by default – and that there are myriad choices, each of them valid provided there is a certain consistent

reasoning behind it. This is something of a journey from the notion that there is one perfect translation for every text, and that it is the job of every translator to strive for that perfection.

~|~

‘Professor, will AI replace us? Will books be translated by AI soon?’

I can do no better than to quote the brilliant novelist Vivek Shanbhag, who teaches fiction-writing at Ashoka University. He said this in a different context, but it fits. ‘Translation is not about what’s said in the words, but what remains unsaid.’

‘And no AI is going to figure that out,’ N completes the puzzle.

Arunava Sinha is an Associate Professor of Creative Writing. His research is focused on the translation of fiction, non-fiction and poetry in Indian languages and English.



## University Trends and Metrics

METRICS	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
<b>STUDENTS</b>			
<b>Undergraduate + ASP</b>			
Number of students enrolled <sup>1</sup>	1,612	1,833	2,203
<b>Diversity</b>			
Percentage of women	55.02%	56.08%	56.60%
Percentage of students from non-metro cities <sup>2</sup>	36.48%	37.32%	39.13%
Percentage of international students	7.26%	6.93%	4.63%
<b>Postgraduate (MA/MSc, MLS)</b>			
Number of students enrolled <sup>1</sup>	67	104	105
<b>Diversity</b>			
Percentage of women	38.81%	51.92%	59.05%
Percentage of students from non-metro cities <sup>2</sup>	44.78%	56.73%	57.14%
<b>Young India Fellowship (YIF)</b>			
Number of students enrolled	301	190	100
<b>Diversity</b>			
Percentage of women	60.80%	54.21%	62.00%
Percentage of students from non-metro cities	59.14%	62.11%	61.00%
<b>PhD</b>			
Number of students enrolled	46	67	121
<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS</b>	<b>2,026</b>	<b>2,194</b>	<b>2,529</b>

METRICS	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
<b>FINANCIAL AID</b>			
Percentage of students receiving financial aid (UG)	47%	48%	49%
Percentage of students receiving financial aid (PG)	53%	58%	64%
Cumulative amount of aid (Rs cr)	250	328	417
<b>ALUMNI</b>			
Number of alumni	2,808	4,150	4,747
Percentage in India	95%	96%	96%
Percentage in other countries	5%	4%	4%
<b>PLACEMENTS</b>			
Number of recruiters who hired	143	126	145
Percentage of students placed <sup>3</sup>	100%	100%	100%

### NOTES:

The Ashoka campus in Sonipat was inaugurated in 2014, along with the commencement of the UG programme

<sup>1</sup>The numbers used in this report are as of 30 September 2023.

<sup>2</sup>All cities excluding Delhi-NCR, Bengaluru, Chennai, Kolkata, Pune, Hyderabad, and Mumbai

<sup>3</sup>This includes all students who opted for placement services

METRICS	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
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### ADMISSIONS AND OUTREACH

#### Undergraduate Programme

Number of applications	5,843	6,077	7,764
Number of Indian cities	321	332	411
Number of institution touch-points <sup>4</sup>	981	809	1,175

#### Young India Fellowship

Number of applications	2,717	1,922	2,047
Number of Indian cities	439	456	453
Number of institution touch-points	235	140	61

### FACULTY

#### Undergraduate

Number of faculty	212	268	241
Full-time faculty	115	152	148
Visiting faculty	97	116	93
Percentage of women	41%	43%	43%
Student to faculty ratio <sup>5</sup>	7:1	7:1	11:1

#### Young India Fellowship

Number of faculty	48	37	26
Full-time faculty	9	8	9
Visiting faculty	39	29	17
Percentage of women	15%	19%	20%
Student to faculty ratio <sup>5</sup>	6:1	5:1	4:1

#### NOTES:

<sup>4</sup> Both online and offline engagements (webinars, workshops, presentations, online counselling sessions, seminars, and stalls)

<sup>5</sup> Not calculated according to the Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) metric

METRICS	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
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### STAFF

Number of employees	249	307	444
Percentage of women	52%	49%	54%

### INTERATIONAL COLLABORATIONS

Number of partnerships	23	30	52
Countries of partner institutions	11	14	18
Number of partners from 200 institutions <sup>6</sup>	8	16	32

### FUNDRAISING

Total commitments raised (Rs Cr)	1,541	1,789	2,279
Commitments raised during the year (Rs Cr)	109	297	442
Number of founders	155	165	190
Number of donors and annual fund contributors	37	43	57

### INFRASTRUCTURE

Total constructed area (in '000 sq ft) <sup>7</sup>	989	1,204	1,204
Student housing capacity <sup>8</sup>	2,548	2,548	2,548

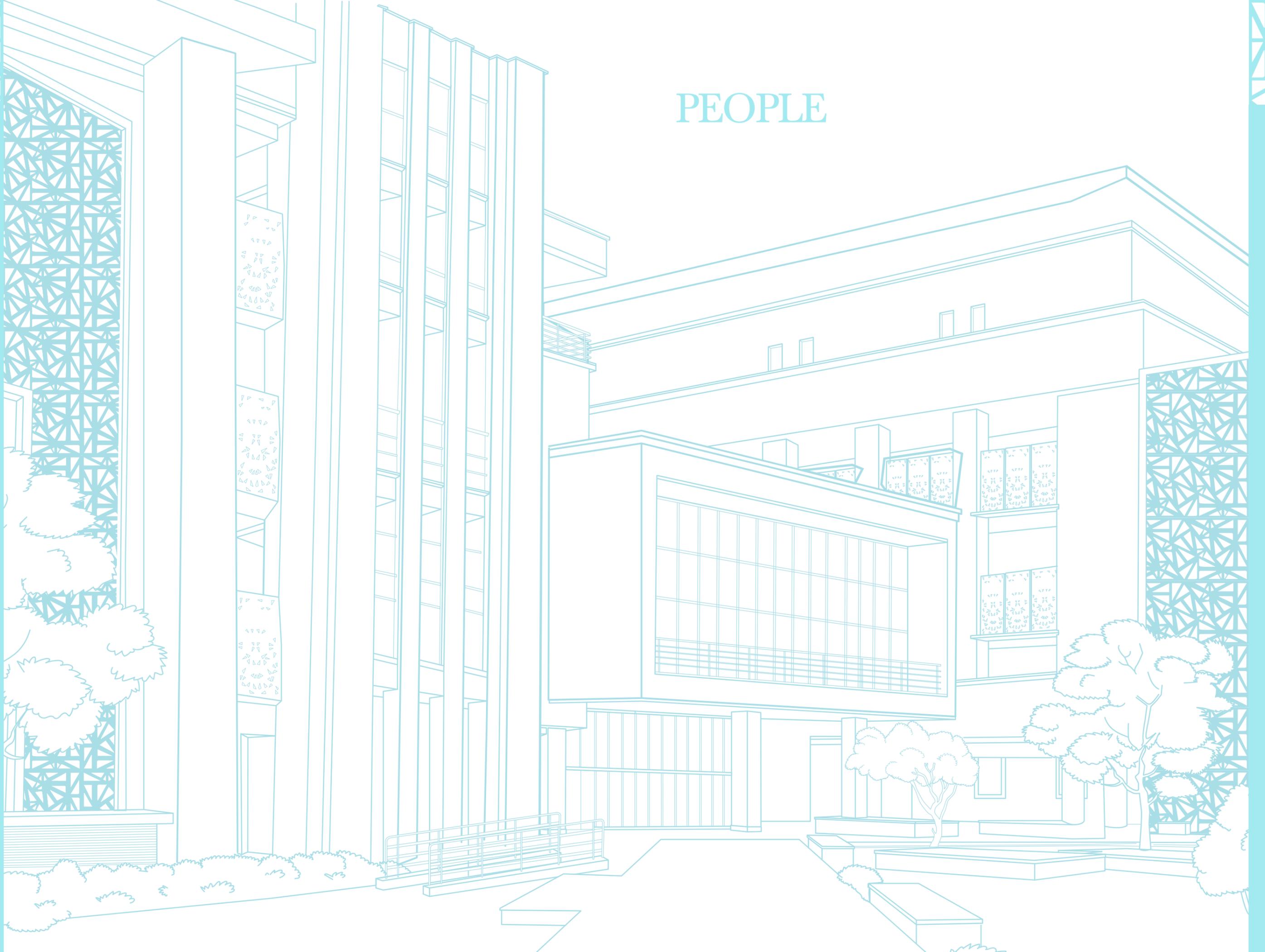
#### NOTES:

<sup>6</sup> Calculated according to QS rankings

<sup>7</sup> The permissible areas have been calculated as per Floor Space Index (FSI) allowed by Haryana Urban Development Authority (HUDA)

<sup>8</sup> Number of students

# PEOPLE



Ashoka has created – and continues to invest in – an organisational structure that fosters academic growth and administrative excellence. The University's overall leadership vests with the Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor and distinct teams have been appointed to meet diverse academic and administrative requirements.

The academic side of the institution is led by Deans and Directors of academic centres

while the administrative functions are led by Vice-Presidents and Directors for various functions.

The University continues to attract and recruit outstanding academics to its faculty while simultaneously investing in building administrative capabilities to accelerate growth. The following pages highlight the names of Ashoka's leadership team.

## Leadership Team

### Rudrangshu Mukherjee

Chancellor

### Somak Raychaudhury

Vice-Chancellor

### Amita Baviskar

Dean, Faculty  
Professor of Environmental  
Studies and Sociology and  
Anthropology

### Venkat Eshwara

Pro Vice-Chancellor  
(Development, Placements and  
Alumni Relations)

### Bikram Phookun

Dean, Academic Affairs,  
Professor of Physics

### Gautam Menon

Dean, Research and  
Development Office and  
Professor of Physics and Biology

### Anurag Agrawal

Dean, BioSciences and Health  
Research, Trivedi School of  
Biosciences

### Vanita Shastri

Dean, Global Education  
and Strategic Partnerships

### Aniha Brar

Dean, Young India Fellowship  
and Vice-Chancellor's Office

### Sachin Sharma

Registrar and Controller of  
Examinations

### Ali Imran

Vice-President, External  
Engagement

### Bhaskar K Mishra

Vice-President, Operations

### Priyanka Chandhok

Vice-President, Career  
Development Office

### Gitanjali Gandhiok

Vice-President, Development

### Ambica Chaturvedi

Assistant Vice-President,  
Human Resources

### Vineet Sabharwal

Senior Director, Pro VC's Office

### Vikram Bawa

Senior Director, Office of  
Outreach

### Paras Bansal

Senior Director and Head -  
Ashoka X

### Anu Batra

Senior Director, Information  
Technology

### Manish Gupta

Senior Director, Finance

### Rashmi Berry

Senior Director and Head -  
High School Programmes

### Priyank Narayan

Director, Info Edge Centre for  
Entrepreneurship

### Arvinder J Singh

Director, Ashoka Centre for  
Well-Being

### Kanika Singh

Director, Centre for Writing  
and Communication

### Mercia Prince

Director, Office of Admissions

### Pooja Manaktala

Director, Office of Student Affairs

### Mani Lamba

Director, PR and Communications

### Deepa Bhatnagar

Director, Ashoka Archives of  
Contemporary India

### Reena Gupta

Director, Office of Learning  
Support

### Karan Bhola

Director, Young India Fellowship

### Anu Singh

Director, Alumni and Parents  
Relations Office

### Nilanjana Bose

Director, Strategic  
Communications

### Ashutosh Singh

Associate Director, Procurement

### Gurmeet Kaur

Assistant Director, Security

### Shiuli Biswas

Director, Chairperson's Office

### Devendra Gupta

Director, Projects



Team Ashoka

## Governing Body

### Rudrangshu Mukherjee

(Chairperson)

Somak Raychaudhury

The Secretary to  
Government, Haryana

Madhu Chandak

Puneet Dalmia

Ashish Dhawan

Pramath Raj Sinha

Siddharth Yog

Deep Kalra

Ziaa Lalkaka

## Board of Management

### Somak Raychaudhury

(Chairperson)

The Secretary to  
Government, Haryana

Pramath Raj Sinha

Ziaa Lalkaka

Rahul Mookerjee

Aditya Ghosh

Karishma Shanghvi

Amita Baviskar

Gautam Menon

Bharat Ramaswami

Nayanjot Lahiri

Subhashis Banerjee

## Academic Council

### Somak Raychaudhury

(Chairperson)

Amita Baviskar

Bharat Ramaswami

Gautam Menon

Vanita Shastri

Aniha Brar

Jonathan Gil Harris

Sanjukta Datta

Kranti Saran

Kathryn Hardy

MAA Khan

Rajendra Bhatia

Simantini Ghosh

Alok Bhattacharya

Dipankar Bhattacharya

Sourav Pal

Subhashis Banerjee

Ratul Lahkar

Piyali Banerjee

Suraj Shekhar

Aparna Chaudhuri

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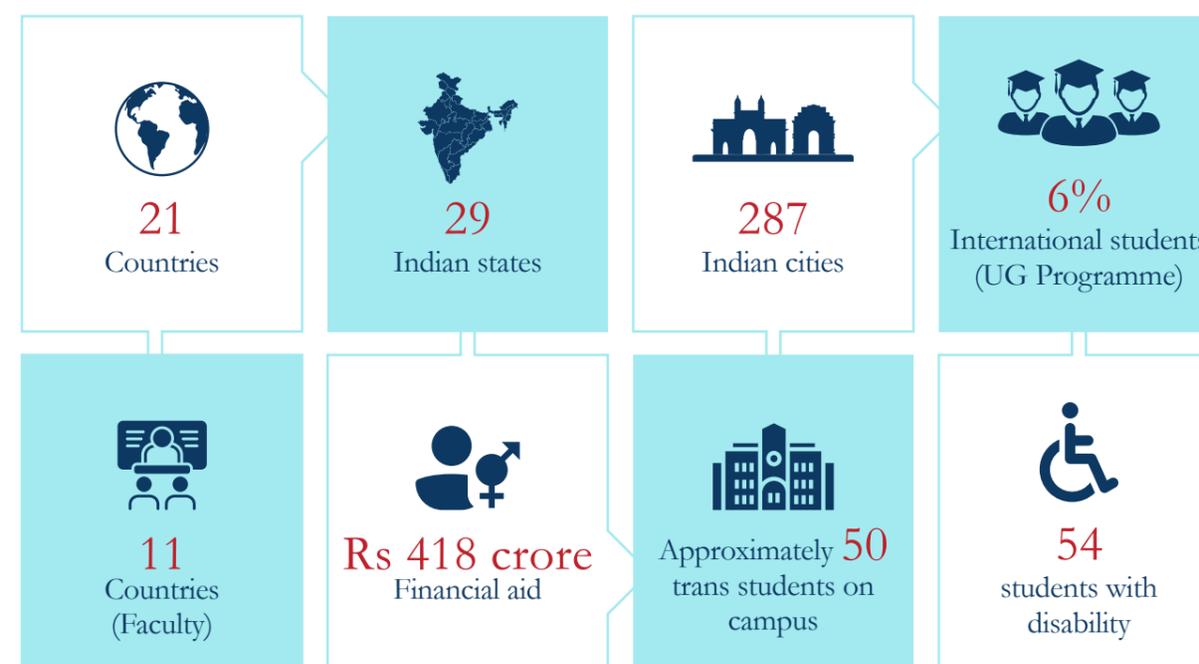
*Priyank Narayan with students at the Centre for Entrepreneurship*

# Inclusion, Diversity and Belonging

Ashoka is committed to making high-quality education accessible to deserving students, irrespective of their socio-economic backgrounds. In the last decade, Ashoka has

provided need-based financial aid of Rs 418 crore (USD 52mn) to 4,200 students – making it India’s largest scholarship programme in higher education.

## Women constitute



Inclusion and diversity are central to Ashoka’s vision of creating a holistic and nurturing environment



Founders' Day 2023

Ashoka is built on the principles of collective philanthropy and shared governance. The University has raised financial commitments of Rs 2,279 crore (USD 285 million) till 30 June 2023.

## Governance

Ashoka incorporates and adheres to the highest global standards of governance in academic institutions. The University is professionally managed with several bodies overseeing academic and administrative aspects of the institution. These range from the Governing Body, Academic Council, Board of Trustees and Board of Management to other internal teams

that manage diverse operational matters.

Ashoka has appointed professionals with strong competencies to supervise and execute wide ranging administrative functions. These teams continue to scale in number and competencies as the University expands its capacity and operations.

## Fundraising

Commitments raised have been deployed for the acquisition of land, construction, buildout and meeting operational expenditure of the first phase of the University and for subsequent expansion plans (the acquisition of land and construction of the second phase of the campus). Philanthropic funds have been raised from individuals across the

world, Indian corporates through CSR and a few foundations. Individuals and organisations who have contributed to the funding above a certain threshold, have been recognised as the founders of the University.

Contributions from non-founders are acknowledged as donors and annual fund contributors.

## Founders, Donors and Contributors

The University is grateful to all its founders, both individuals and companies (supporting Ashoka through their CSR programmes). Ashoka is also thankful to donors and annual fund contributors whose grants support a large number of scholarships at the University.

Each contribution, regardless of quantum, is

received in the spirit of public trust and as an act of faith towards Ashoka's core mission.

Names of founders (in various categories), donors and annual fund contributors are as follows (as of October 2023).

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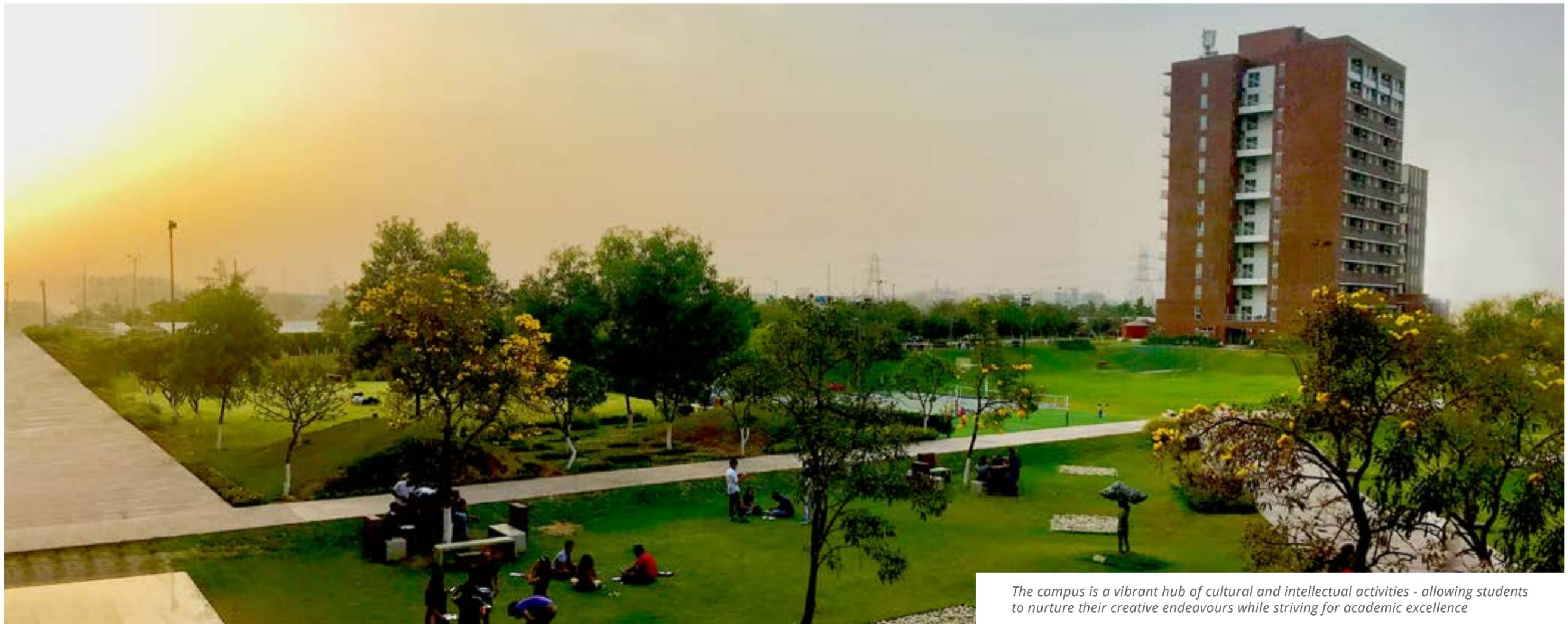
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*The campus is a vibrant hub of cultural and intellectual activities - allowing students to nurture their creative endeavours while striving for academic excellence*

## Campus

Ashoka believes in building future leaders and change agents in an environment that is transparent and dynamic. The University's campus embodies the same values, ethos and aspirations. Through its architecture, Ashoka has facilitated a creative, inclusive and collaborative learning and research environment.

The campus architect Perkins-Eastman, specialises in university campus design. The Ashoka campus reflects one of Ashoka's core values – combining Indian aesthetics with international best practices. Examples can be seen in elements unique to the University, such as stone *jaali* combined with a red brick facade. The firm has also designed for Columbia University, University of Pittsburgh, New York University and ISB Mohali, amongst others.

This year, Ashoka became the first Indian university to be awarded the prestigious International Safety Award by the British Safety Council. This

recognition is a testament to the robust safety measures and efforts in fostering a culture of well-being.

Ashoka continues to work on achieving net-zero emissions – including solar roofs, sewage treatment plants, water treatment plants and a rainwater harvesting system. This year, the University has made significant progress in embracing technology to enhance its services and operations, optimising infrastructure and showcasing commitment to safety and sustainability. The University embarked on a horticulture enhancement project. At present, Ashoka's south campus has 1,664 trees.

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UNIVERSITY



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