



Annual SDG Report 2025

A Review of the University's Initiatives
to Foster Sustainability

Annual SDG Report

A REVIEW OF THE UNIVERSITY'S INITIATIVES TO FOSTER SUSTAINABILITY



ashoka
UNIVERSITY

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Research



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A Note from the Vice-Chancellor

At Ashoka University, we remain committed to academic excellence, inclusive growth, and our collective responsibility toward shaping a more sustainable and equitable future. As we present the SDG Report 2025, it is an opportunity to reflect on how our values as an institution align with the global ambition of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Across disciplines, our faculty and students are engaged in generating knowledge that is both socially relevant and globally resonant. The Rakesh Jhunjhunwala School of Economics and Finance informs policy through rigorous empirical research, which is enriched by the interdisciplinary collaborations fostered by the Harish and Bina Shah School of Humanities. These insights into human systems are then coupled with technological innovation from the Trivedi School of Biosciences, which addresses challenges like climate resilience and health, and the Ashoka School of Advanced Computing, which uses AI to tackle complex societal problems. This year, we are thrilled to complete this ecosystem of impact with the establishment of the Havells School of Management & Leadership. This partnership with Havells India deepens Ashoka's mission to cultivate the responsible, ethical leaders poised to build a better future for India and the world.

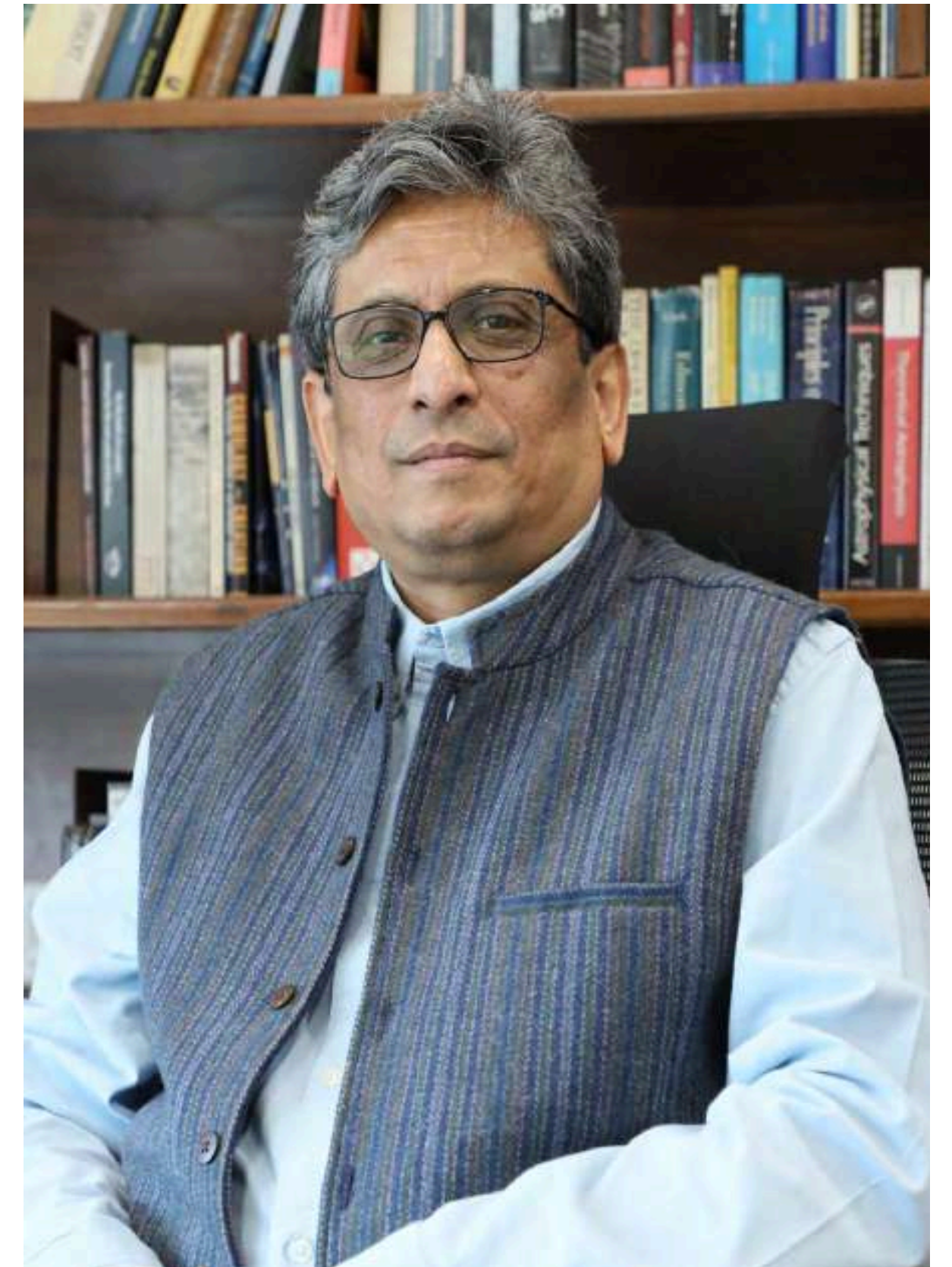
Our research centres and interdisciplinary initiatives continue to make a direct contribution to the SDG framework. The Centre for Climate Change and Sustainability brings together scholars from across nine departments to address pressing planetary challenges through both academic inquiry and applied action. The Koita Centre for Digital Health fosters innovations that enhance public health delivery and data-driven interventions.

These efforts are complemented by the Centre for Social and Behaviour Change, the Centre for Economic Data & Analysis and the Isaac Centre for Public Policy, which continue to drive behavioural and structural transformation through policy-aligned research.

Our liberal arts ethos is designed to foster not only intellectual curiosity but also a sense of civic and global responsibility. This is reflected in the way our students participate in social outreach, environmental action, and community-based learning through the LiveGreen@Ashoka programme.

The Office of Sustainability plays a central role in embedding sustainability across campus and academic engagement. Through collaborations with every department and administrative office, it ensures that sustainability is not a peripheral concern but a shared institutional commitment.

From energy and waste management to student-led awareness initiatives, the Office is helping shape Ashoka as a living laboratory for sustainability. We are also strengthening our global partnerships with universities, think tanks, and multilateral institutions, extending our impact beyond national boundaries and contributing to a collective global vision for sustainable development. As we reflect on our progress and look ahead, the SDG framework continues to guide Ashoka's efforts academically, operationally, and institutionally. The University remains steadfast in its resolve to be a model of sustainability-driven higher education institution in India and beyond.



Somak Raychaudhury

Professor Somak Raychaudhury

Vice-Chancellor, Ashoka University

1 NO
POVERTY



END POVERTY IN ALL ITS FORMS EVERYWHERE

COVID-19, Sex Workers and Survival: How Did the National Network of Sex Workers Support Member Organisations?



Research

This paper by V Kalyan Shankar examines how the National Network of Sex Workers (NNSW) (a coalition of over 70 CBOs and NGOs across 10 Indian states)responded to the severe livelihood crisis faced by sex workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. With restrictions on mobility, surveillance, and loss of clientele, sex workers faced sharp income drops, food insecurity, and debt traps, while state support was inconsistent or exclusionary. The study situates NNSW within a typology of collective action, tracing its evolution from an informal advocacy alliance (1998) to a formal network (2020), and analyses its multi-tiered fundraising strategies. These included global appeals (notably to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria), state-level advocacy (especially in Maharashtra), and regional philanthropic mobilisation.

Findings reveal that global and state-led funding efforts were plagued by bureaucratic barriers, inadequate documentation, and exclusionary implementation, leaving most members without direct aid. The paper highlights broader lessons on how formalised networks of marginalised workers can adapt and mobilise resources in emergencies, expanding their role beyond advocacy to tangible livelihood security.

Consumption Smoothing, Commodity Markets, and Informal Transfers



Research

This paper by Digvijay S Negi, Ashoka University and collaborators investigates how low-income, rural households in India manage to smooth consumption in the face of seasonal and unpredictable variations in income, particularly when formal financial services like credit and insurance are inaccessible. The authors focus on milk consumption, a nutritionally critical and non-storable good in India, using five years of high-frequency panel data from 30 villages. They find that while households cannot achieve full consumption smoothing, they do manage to shield about 80% of their milk consumption from fluctuations in milk production. Crucially, this smoothing is primarily achieved through commodity market transactions—buying and selling milk—rather than through informal inter-household transfers.

The study further reveals that improved road infrastructure—driven by the PMGSY program—significantly enhances households’ ability to use markets for risk management. Better roads lower trade frictions, increase reliance on markets for smoothing consumption, and reduce dependence on informal transfers. This suggests that infrastructure development not only improves access to markets but also plays a critical role in household-level resilience and food security. The findings highlight the centrality of market access, rather than social networks alone, in supporting consumption stability in rural, resource-constrained settings.

Rethinking Development and Sustainability



Teaching

Mitul Baruah, Professor of Sociology/Anthropology and Environmental Studies, leads this interdisciplinary seminar that critically examines the concepts of “development” and “sustainability.” Students engage with major theories from modernisation and dependency to post-developmentalism and feminist critiques to understand how development unfolds and whose interests it serves. The course challenges students to rethink sustainability within the framework of global neoliberalism, exploring the intersections of economic growth, environmental justice, and social equity, with a focus on the Global South and the pursuit of just and sustainable development.

Development Economics



Teaching

This core course offered by the Economics Department takes a close look at why poverty persists in some parts of the world while others experience steady growth. It encourages students to question the barriers that hold economies back, from limited resources to institutional challenges, and to consider what kinds of policies can truly make a difference. Using a mix of economic theory, evidence-based analysis, and case studies, the course provides both the big-picture framework and the practical tools needed to understand development. By the end, students gain a clearer sense of how nations can move toward greater prosperity and human well-being.

Public Economics & Wealth and Inequality in China



Teaching

Taught by Professor Bhanu Gupta, Assistant Professor in the Economics, Public Economics examines how governments shape modern economies and reduce poverty, focusing on taxation, public goods, and social security programs while training students in microeconomic models and empirical policy analysis. Complementing this, Wealth and Inequality in China, offered by the China Studies Department and taught by Eloise Wright, Assistant Professor in the History, traces the roots of poverty and inequality in China from the 16th century to the present, highlighting how gender, age, and ethnicity influenced disparities and how various strategies sought to address them.

Devolution, Development, Democracy



Teaching

Focusing on inclusion and last-mile delivery of essential services, this course, taught by Amarjeet Sinha, Former Advisor to the Prime Minister of India, explores the link between democratic governance, development programs, and livelihoods. Beginning with the structural and historical challenges of inclusion, it then turns to the mechanisms of devolution and their role in enabling development at the grassroots. The course illustrates how policies are translated into action at the last mile. It also considers the institutional arrangements that determine success or failure in implementation and reflects on lessons for building more responsive and accountable systems.

India at Work: Challenges and the Road Ahead



Kanika Mahajan and Anisha Sharma, Professors of Economics, in this policy brief highlight the growing disconnect between India's economic growth and the state of employment. While per capita income has steadily increased, job creation has not kept pace—especially in non-agricultural sectors. The brief outlines that most employment is still in low-productivity, informal work, with real wages stagnating and social protection largely absent. Despite some gains in workforce participation, especially among women, India continues to struggle with youth unemployment, regional disparities, and a weak manufacturing base.

The authors argue for urgent, targeted policy reforms to address these challenges. They recommend focusing on job-rich sectors like labour-intensive manufacturing and emerging services, aligning skilling programmes with market demand, simplifying labour and business regulations, and expanding formal social protections. Special attention is called to increasing female labour participation and supporting balanced regional development. Overall, the brief emphasises that creating decent work—not just growth—must become central to India's development strategy.



Kanika Mahajan
Associate Professor of Economics

“India’s progress in reducing poverty will hinge on how effectively we address the deep challenges in our labour market. While the economy has grown at a steady pace, job creation has not kept up, and most new employment remains low-productivity and informal. Average wages have stagnated for salaried employees, women’s participation while increasing is still low, and regional disparities in opportunities persist. To truly eradicate poverty, growth must be inclusive, translating into good-quality and better paying jobs across sectors and regions. This requires a dual focus: expanding non-farm employment opportunities, particularly for young and educated workers, and strengthening social protection for the vast informal workforce. Equally critical is unlocking the untapped potential of women, whose economic participation is central to resilient and equitable growth. We can truly eliminate poverty when India’s demographic dividend is matched by dignified, productive work that allows all households to share in prosperity.”





END HUNGER, ACHIEVE FOOD SECURITY AND IMPROVED NUTRITION, AND PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE



Ashoka Farm Fresh – The Organic Farming Club of Ashoka



Ashoka Farm Fresh is Ashoka University's organic farming club, devoted to cultivating sustainable practices and nourishing community ties. By actively growing organic vegetables on campus and organizing events to share the harvest, the club encourages students to reconnect with nature and gain hands-on insight into food systems. Its signature event, MasterChef, invites participants to craft creative dishes using freshly harvested produce, celebrating healthy eating, culinary exploration, and community spirit. Through experiential learning and collaboration, Ashoka Farm Fresh fosters environmental awareness and cultivates a greener, more connected campus culture.

Economics of the Agri-food System



Taught by Devesh Roy, Professor of Economics, examines how agri-food systems influence efforts to reduce poverty and hunger in low- and middle-income countries, focusing on sustainability, resilience, and inclusivity in the face of shifting food demand, climate change, and evolving technologies and policies. Complementing this, Economics of Agricultural Transformation, taught by Bharat Ramaswami, Professor of Economics, explores long-term solutions to hunger through economic development viewed via food and agriculture, using models of structural transformation and micro-econometric techniques to analyse how institutions, technologies, and policies shape agricultural systems and global food security.

Where Does Our Food Come From? A History of Food and Commodity Capitalism



Amrita Kurian, Visiting Faculty in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Ashoka University, teaches this course that explores modern food systems through historical and anthropological perspectives. It raises thought-provoking questions about everyday consumption, like whether eating sugar or drinking tea can be political acts and traces the journey of consumer goods from production to consumption. By examining how our eating habits connect to broader economic and social systems, students are encouraged to reflect on how everyday choices might help build more equitable and sustainable futures.

Eat Like a Human: A Glimpse into Ancient Foodways



Kalyan Chakraborty, Assistant Professor of History at Ashoka University, leads this interdisciplinary course exploring major shifts in human food practices throughout evolutionary history. Combining recent scientific methods with new theoretical perspectives, students reconstruct ancient diets to understand the social, economic, and climatic contexts of past societies. By situating modern nutrition and food system challenges within this deep historical framework, the course provides a broad perspective on human sustenance and survival.

Growing More, Eating Less: India’s Cereal Consumption Patterns



Kulvinder Singh, in his analysis ‘Growing more, eating less: India’s cereal consumption patterns’ for the Centre for Economic Data and Analysis (CEDA), examines the evolving dynamics of food grain production and consumption in India over a 30-year period. The study highlights a remarkable increase in food grain output—from 184.3 million tonnes in 1993–94 to 332.3 million tonnes in 2023–24 leading to an improvement in per capita food grain availability, which rose from 14.1 kg to 17.3 kg per person per month during the same period. However, despite this increase in availability, data from consumption expenditure surveys reveal a decline in food grain consumption and its share in total household expenditure. The study uncovers regional variations, with states like Odisha and West Bengal consuming more cereals, and Punjab and Kerala consuming the least. Importantly, inequality in cereal consumption between rural consumption deciles has narrowed, with the bottom 10% catching up to the top 10%, whereas in urban areas, the poorest 10% consume more cereals than the richest 10%. A broader dietary shift is also evident, with increased spending on processed foods, meats, and dairy products. By unpacking these trends, the analysis contributes by highlighting the need to go beyond aggregate availability and focus on nutritional adequacy, consumption equity, and changing food preferences critical dimensions for ensuring long-term food and nutrition security in India.

Spillover Effects of Import Competition: Edible Oils in India



In this paper, Bharat Ramaswami, Professor of Economics, explores how international trade policy affects agricultural production, food prices, and rural livelihoods in India. The study examines the long-term impact of trade liberalisation in the edible oils sector, especially following the 1990s when India shifted from import restrictions to allowing private imports of palm oil and other edible oils. Although edible oil processing employs few workers, it depends on oilseeds like mustard and groundnut, which are cultivated on 14% of India’s farmland, mostly in dryland regions where farming is already vulnerable. The paper finds that regions with a higher share of oilseed cultivation experienced greater price impacts due to import competition, suggesting local producers were more exposed. However, wages and employment were largely unaffected, indicating that workers may have reallocated within or outside agriculture. The study highlights that while consumers benefited from lower prices, producers adapted by changing cropping patterns. These dynamics reveal how trade policy intersects with food security, income stability for farmers, and the resilience of agricultural systems.

The Equilibrium Impact of Agricultural Support Prices and Input Subsidies



Lalit Contractor, Assistant Professor of Economics, in collaboration with others, investigates how agricultural support policies—specifically Minimum Support Prices (MSP) and fertiliser subsidies—affect productivity, labour allocation, and welfare outcomes in the Indian economy. The study employs a dynamic general equilibrium model that incorporates heterogeneous agents, sectoral occupational choices, and financial constraints, closely reflecting rural Indian realities. Using empirical data and model simulations, the study finds that removing MSPs results in a modest increase in total output and reduced misallocation, as labour moves from agriculture to non-agriculture. However, this also leads to a drop in consumer welfare, especially for the poor, due to the loss of subsidised food rations. On the other hand, reducing input subsidies sharply decreases agricultural output and aggravates productivity gaps, mainly by cutting fertiliser use among financially constrained farmers. The paper also shows that replacing these subsidies with budget-neutral income or in-kind transfers improves welfare for all groups and helps alleviate financial frictions, without distorting market signals, making such policies a more efficient alternative.



Amita Baviskar
Professor of Environmental Studies and Sociology and Anthropology

“To understand the issue of hunger, we must remember that food is not just about calories and nutrients but about culture, politics, economy, and ecology. It’s about ideas and institutions that shape who eats what and who goes without. In my course, we study how access to food intersects with existing structures of social inequality. We examine how systems of production and distribution—landownership, Green Revolution technologies, state welfare schemes—affect food. We follow food from the farm to the plate, looking at the connections between the well-being of land, water, human and non-human living beings. We explore how ethics and emotions, science and religion, nature and culture, shape contemporary food systems. Students get to reflect on the connections between personal action and planetary welfare. They also develop an interpretive frame that can be applied to understand and address issues around food justice and sustainability.”

Good to Eat, Good to Think: The Political Ecology of Food



This course, offered by Amita Baviskar, Professor of Environmental Studies and Sociology & Anthropology, explores food as both a source of nutrition and a cultural medium, situated within ecologically and politically defined contexts. It examines the journey of food from farm to plate, highlighting the interconnections between land-based resources, human and non-human well-being, and evolving food systems. Students analyse how agrarian changes intersect with structures of social inequality and how ethics, emotions, science, religion, and culture shape contemporary food practices. The course aims to help students appreciate the diversity and complexity of food ecologies, understand long-term political-economic processes, and critically assess the causes and impacts of unequal access to food. It also encourages reflection on the links between personal choices and planetary welfare, fostering an interpretive framework to address food justice and sustainability.

Examining India's Food Consumption and Agricultural Trade Patterns



Kulvinder Singh, Research Analyst at the Centre for Economic Data and Analysis (CEDA), has authored two studies on the evolving dynamics of India's food systems. In "Growing More, Eating Less: India's Cereal Consumption Patterns", he investigates the paradox of rising food grain production alongside declining per capita cereal consumption over the past three decades. While higher yields have boosted production, household cereal intake has fallen in both rural and urban areas. Singh attributes this decline to shifting dietary preferences shaped by rising incomes, urbanisation, and lifestyle changes. Households now spend less on cereals and more on processed foods, animal products, and diverse diets—patterns consistent with Engel's and Bennett's laws. He stresses the need for crop diversification, improved nutritional security, and attention to regional disparities.

In "India's Agricultural Goods Trade, 2013–2022", Singh analyses a decade of trade data, showing India's shifts between net exporter and net importer, with a return to net exporter status since 2020. Cereals, especially rice, dominate exports, while edible oils account for over three-fourths of imports. Rising exports of fruits, vegetables, and pulses, alongside declining maize and oilseed imports, highlight structural shifts. Together, these studies provide critical insights for building sustainable and resilient food systems.

A Summer of Discontent for India's Soybean Farmers



Akshi Chawla, former Director of the Centre for Economic Data and Analysis (CEDA) and Kulvinder Singh, a Research Analyst at the Centre for Economic Data and Analysis (CEDA), in their study 'A summer of discontent for India's soybean farmers' pertaining to soybean prices, highlight the paradox between consumer relief and farmer distress. While soybean serves as a key input in a variety of food products—from soy sauce and tofu to refined oil and livestock feed—it has recently been selling below the Minimum Support Price (MSP) across India. In July 2024, soybean was sold at an average of INR 4,305 per quintal, compared to the MSP of INR 4,600. This price depression is not unique to India; global soybean prices have been falling due to improved supplies. While this may ease household food budgets in the context of persistent food inflation, the decline poses serious risks to farmer incomes, especially for those who have taken crop loans. The analysis underscores a key tension in agricultural policy—ensuring affordable food for consumers while maintaining remunerative prices for producers—and draws attention to the need for more robust price support mechanisms. The findings closely align with the aim to ensure sustainable food production systems and resilient agricultural livelihoods.



Shaifali Sharma
Nutritionist

"As a nutritionist, I believe that good health is a harmonious balance of nourishing food, physical activity, and mental well-being. Prioritising whole foods—rich in vitamins, fibre, and essential nutrients—can fuel your body and sharpen your mind. Staying hydrated, eating mindfully, and maintaining a consistent routine of movement not only supports immunity and digestion but also boosts mood and energy levels. True wellness comes from sustainable habits, not extremes—so be kind to yourself, and let nutrition be your foundation for a vibrant, resilient life."



Seed Stories for Sustainable Urban-Rural Food Systems



Seed Stories is a 45-minute documentary capturing the conservation efforts of Dr. Debal Deb and his team in Odisha's Niyamgiri mountains, where over 1,000 endangered heirloom rice varieties are preserved, making it the world's largest project of its kind. Set in the Eastern Ghats, a biodiversity hotspot home to Indigenous Kondh communities, the film explores the region's centuries-old agroecological traditions now threatened by genetically modified crops and agrochemicals. Using an ethnographic lens, it documents the rapid spread of chemical-intensive cotton monoculture and its socio-cultural impact. Funded by 3CS, Seed Stories has been screened at national and international festivals, including the University of Zurich, University of Michigan, Geneva Graduate Institute, and Harvard University, sparking critical dialogue on biodiversity, food sovereignty, and sustainability.

Social Policy in India



Hemanshu Kumar, Assistant Professor of Economics, teaches this course that examines India's role as a welfare state through the lens of applied microeconomics, with a focus on policies addressing hunger and malnutrition. Students analyse key areas such as food security and child nutrition, evaluating both program design and real-world impact.





ENSURE HEALTHY LIVES AND PROMOTE WELL-BEING FOR ALL AT ALL AGES



Ashoka Infirmary – NABH Accreditation



The Ashoka Infirmary, operated in partnership with Blue Circle Medi Services Pvt. Ltd. (BCMS), has become the first and only on-campus clinic in India to receive accreditation from the National Accreditation Board for Hospitals & Healthcare Providers (NABH). Awarded by the Quality Council of India, NABH accreditation is widely regarded as the gold standard for healthcare quality, reflecting a commitment to patient safety, clinical excellence, and continuous improvement.

This recognition places Ashoka Infirmary among an elite group of healthcare providers nationwide and highlights the University's dedication to ensuring accessible, high-quality medical care for its community. The accreditation, valid from August 1, 2024, to July 31, 2027, underscores the collaborative efforts of Ashoka University and BCMS to establish a benchmark in campus-based healthcare services. By achieving NABH accreditation, the Infirmary not only sets a new standard for on-campus medical care in India but also reaffirms its role as a trusted centre for well-being, responsive to the needs of students, staff, and faculty alike.



राष्ट्रीय अस्पताल और
स्वास्थ्यचर्या-प्रदाता प्रत्यायन बोर्ड
**National Accreditation
Board For Hospitals and
Healthcare Providers**

Ashoka Centre for Well-Being



The ACWB is a university centre that offers counselling and psychological support to students, staff, and faculty at Ashoka. Focusing on preventive, clinical, and promotional factors, it seeks to combat the onset of mental health problems and advance informed behaviour change. The centre serves as a resource to offer its expertise to various other institutions - Bar and Bench, Youth for Sustainability India and National Progressive School Council to name a few. ACWB through its webinars, workshops and training serves as a resource to other departments of the University such as the Office of Academic Affairs (OAA), Centre For Social Impact and Philanthropy (CSIP), Admissions Team, Chief Minister's Good Governance Associates Programme (CMGGA), Centre for Studies in Gender and Sexuality (CSGS) and Office of Outreach.

Promoting Health and Inclusion Through Sports



Sports and exercise at Ashoka University are designed to create a healthy, balanced, and holistic life for our students. Special Olympics Bharat – Ashoka Chapter (SOBAC) aims to foster inclusivity by engaging individuals with intellectual disabilities in sports and recreational activities. It operates under the Special Olympic Bharat Haryana Chapter, promoting awareness and creating an inclusive sports environment.

Advancing Population Health Research at CHART



The Centre for Health Analytics Research and Trends (CHART) builds a robust evidence-based repository on population health issues through interdisciplinary research. Its multi-disciplinary team includes public health experts, epidemiologists, biostatisticians, social scientists, and specialists in environmental epidemiology, geospatial analysis, health economics, and nutrition. CHART's current large-scale research studies address air pollution, nutrition, psychosocial factors, and climate change, focusing on their impacts on health across ages. Using AI-based modeling, CHART develops exposure metrics and dashboards for future research. The center also supports policy development for national and regional governments, promotes capacity-building in research and advocacy, and collaborates internationally to provide training for early and mid-career researchers, fostering the next generation of scientists.



Digital Transformation of Healthcare



The Koita Centre for Digital Health at Ashoka (KCDH-A) is advancing the field of digital health through pioneering research and education aimed at creating a new generation of digital health leaders and innovators. With a unique interdisciplinary approach, KCDH-A's programs explore forward-looking technologies like digital twins and the broader digital transformation of healthcare. In line with this mission, KCDH-A collaborates globally, notably through initiatives like the Digital Transformations for Health Lab (DTH-Lab). DTH-Lab, co-led by Professor Anurag Agrawal and Professor Ilona Kickbusch, was established in 2023 to implement recommendations from The Lancet and Financial Times Commission on Governing Health Futures 2030 and focuses on value-based, digital-first health systems to address digital health inequities, youth-centered healthcare models, and public trust in health data. KCDH-A with partnership with Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine (JHUSOM) in Baltimore, enables small breakthrough grants, co-funded to support joint research between Ashoka faculty members, including Dr. Rintu Kutum and Professor Debayan Gupta, alongside Johns Hopkins researchers. This initiative fuels pioneering research to tackle complex health challenges, exploring digital health innovations such as digital twins and new approaches to health equity.

Augmented Intelligent Clinical Support Systems for IVF/ICSI



In the project “Augmented Intelligent Clinical Support Systems to Aid Decision-Making for Pregnancy Outcomes after IVF/ICSI,” researchers from AIIMS New Delhi, CMC Vellore, and Ashoka University are developing an advanced AI-powered decision-support framework for assisted reproductive technologies. The study proposes the creation of a national-level interoperable common data model (CDM) that consolidates multimodal patient information including demographics, medical history, lab results, imaging, and treatment details into a unified platform. Using state-of-the-art AI/ML methods such as deep learning and graph neural networks, the project will generate clinical prediction models capable of estimating cumulative live birth rates after complete IVF cycles. These models will be validated on retrospective and prospective datasets of approximately 10,000 patients, ensuring robustness and scalability. The intended outcomes include a uniform national ART registry to harmonise data reporting, AI-powered prognostic tools to provide couples with individualised success rates before treatment, and privacy preserving multimodal systems that integrate seamlessly into clinician workflows. Beyond improving clinical efficiency and reducing paperwork, the system is designed to enhance patient centred care, offering emotional and financial clarity to couples navigating fertility treatment. Ultimately, the project lays the foundation for equitable, data-driven reproductive healthcare across India.



Anurag Agrawal
Dean, BioSciences and Health Research,
Trivedi School of Biosciences and
Head, Koita Center for Digital Health

“Health for all cannot be achieved merely by scaling digital services when the science is still shallow. At KCDHA, we believe that digital scaling along with deep research via frontier technologies must happen together to truly advance SDG3 through understanding, not just delivery. This is why location of KCDHA within a deep science system of Ashoka and TSB matters.”



Designing Youth-friendly Solutions for Digital Health in India



The project “Designing Youth-Friendly Solutions for Digital Health in India: A Framework for Bridging Gaps and Enhancing Inclusivity Across Diverse Contexts” evaluates the digital readiness of frontline healthcare stakeholders, including Auxiliary Nurse Midwives (ANMs), Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs), doctors, and Information Assistants (IAs). Focusing particularly on rural and underserved regions, the study investigates barriers such as low digital literacy, inadequate infrastructure, workload pressures, and resource constraints that hinder adoption of digital health systems. Through surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions, the project maps existing capacities and identifies systemic challenges in technology use. Based on these insights, it proposes targeted interventions ranging from structured training and IT support to infrastructure improvements and streamlined digital processes that can enhance stakeholder capacity and foster sustainable digital adoption. The expected outcomes include a comprehensive report with tailored recommendations, heightened awareness among healthcare workers, and evidence-based inputs for policymakers. By strengthening readiness and trust, the study seeks to improve efficiency, inclusivity, and scalability of digital health initiatives across diverse Indian contexts.

Public Health and Social Power



Teaching

Mekhala Krishnamurthy, Associate Professor of Sociology and Anthropology leads this course guided by the idea that “medicine is a social science.” It explores how public health intersects with social power at multiple levels, examining how state authority, market forces, and professional expertise shape health systems and individual well-being. Drawing on ethnographic readings and the work of social theorists, clinicians, and activists, students engage with pressing questions about the role of government in healthcare, the commercialisation of health, and the ethics of drug discovery and distribution.

Performing Arts and Student Well-being



Teaching

Ashoka University's co-curricular offerings in the performing arts are designed to enhance student well-being by combining physical discipline with artistic expression. Courses emphasise the development of strength, balance, and fluidity while increasing creativity and cultural appreciation.

Mayurbhanj Chhau: Martial Dance introduces students to a traditional martial art form that blends dynamic movement with control and coordination, encouraging both physical fitness and expressive storytelling. Similarly, Bharatanatyam: A Glimpse focuses on building sound technique and body alignment through the foundational skills of classical dance, instilling discipline and grace.

Health Economics



Teaching

This course, offered by Aparajita Dasgupta, Associate Professor of Economics, introduces students to the microeconomic foundations of health economics, an essential and growing field with significant implications for public policy. It examines key topics such as the measurement and determinants of health, health disparities, the relationship between health and economic development, financial risk protection against health shocks, fertility and demographic change, economics of nutrition and human capital, behavioural aspects of health, gender dimensions, and the economic evaluation of health programs.

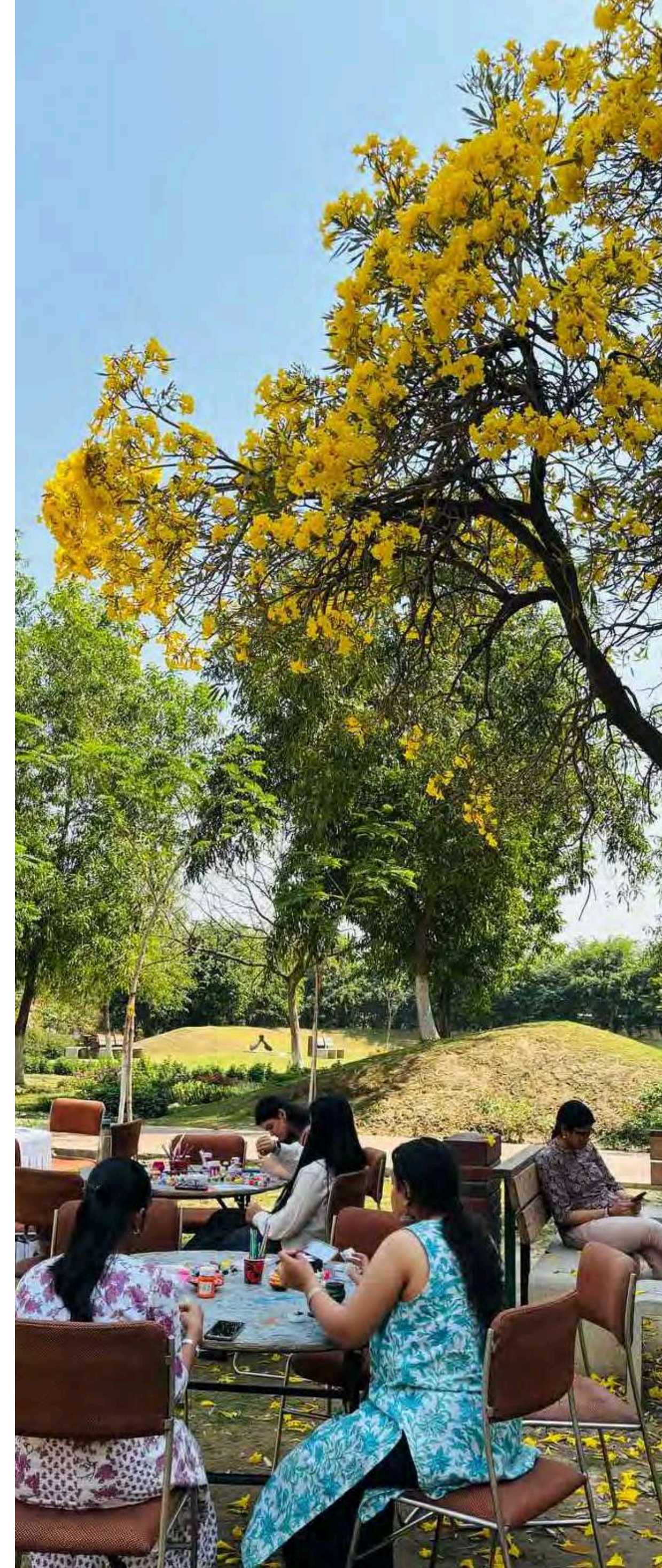
Students engage with a variety of research papers and chapters, focusing on econometric techniques and causal inference methods used in applied microeconomics. The course emphasises participatory learning through readings, discussions, and presentations, enabling students to critically evaluate health economics research and apply theoretical concepts to policy-relevant questions.

Psychology of Health and Illness



Teaching

Exploring health beyond just biology, this course delves into how culture, society, and personal experience shape what it means to be healthy or ill. Students study key theories of health and illness and examine psychological approaches to healing and well-being. The course is led by Professor Annie Baxi, Visiting Faculty in the Psychology Department, whose expertise brings rich cultural and critical perspectives to understanding the lived experience of health.



Human Genetic Disorders: From Rare Diseases to Cancer



Teaching

Alok Bhattacharya, Professor of Biology, teaches this course on the genetic basis of human health and disease. Students explore the genetic causes of thousands of rare disorders and various cancers, learning about diagnostic methods and emerging treatments. The curriculum also trains students to analyse human genomic data to identify disease-causing genes, providing a comprehensive understanding of genetic disorders.

Advanced Technique: Computational and Statistical Genomics



Teaching

The course offered by Kasturi Mitra, Associate Professor of Biology and Tanmoy Roychowdury, Associate Professor of Biology, provides both theoretical grounding and practical training in genomic data analysis. It covers fundamental concepts of genomic variation, key technologies and methods, and approaches to studying the genetic basis of human phenotypes and diseases. The curriculum combines lectures, demonstrations, and hands-on sessions, enabling students to utilise publicly available genomic resources, understand models of genetic inheritance, and design relevant research experiments. By completion, students gain the ability to explain genomic technologies, analyse variation, and apply computational and statistical tools to address research questions in genomics.

Physiology



Teaching

The course taught by Mayank Garg, Simons-Ashoka Early Career Fellow, Sonal Gupta, Faculty Fellow and Anurag Agrawal, Professor and Dean, BioSciences and Health Research, Trivedi School of Biosciences offers a physiological perspective on the human body as a biological machine, focusing on the processes that sustain life and the consequences of their failure, including disease and death. It covers key physiological systems such as respiration, circulation, metabolism, and waste disposal, with an emphasis on measurement and management of these processes. Students will also explore emerging areas like genomics, digital health, and the concept of digital twins integrating genomic and lifetime biomedical data.

By the end of the course, students will gain a foundational understanding of critical human physiology, mechanisms of disease, diagnostic tools, and practical exposure to simple medical devices including ECG, lung function testing, and health wearables.

Introduction to Neuroscience



Teaching

This core course offered by the Psychology Department provides a scientific framework for understanding mental health and well-being by examining how the biological system of the brain produces behaviour and complex cognition. The curriculum covers the electrical properties of nerve cells, synaptic transmission, and the structure of the nervous system.

Scaling Telemedicine for Health Equity



Research

In the study “A Qualitative Assessment of Barriers and Facilitators of Telemedicine Volunteerism During the COVID-19 Pandemic in India,” Sharon Barnhardt, Director (Research) at the Centre for Social and Behaviour Change and collaborators explore the motivations and challenges faced by health practitioners who volunteered in a multi-state telemedicine network during the pandemic. The study distinguishes between intrinsic drivers of service and structural factors that affect volunteer engagement.

By conducting in-depth qualitative interviews and applying thematic content analysis, the research finds that most practitioners were driven by a strong sense of duty and public service. Organisational improvements—such as pre-screening calls, collecting patient data beforehand, and enabling follow-up consultations—were highlighted as ways to enhance the experience. The study not only sheds light on the intrinsic motivations behind healthcare volunteerism in times of crisis but also introduces practical design recommendations for sustaining such efforts post-pandemic. These findings have implications for leveraging telemedicine as a scalable solution to address health personnel shortages in underserved communities beyond emergency contexts.

Promote to Protect: Modelling Peer Influence on Vaccine Perception



Research

Shagata Mukherjee, Deputy Director – Policy, Centre for Social and Behaviour Change, and collaborators propose a novel data-driven approach to understanding vaccine hesitancy using behavioural modelling and natural language processing (NLP). Unlike conventional survey methods and heuristic-based models, their methodology extracts attitudes from open-ended survey responses across diverse socio-demographics in India, using machine learning and NLP to map behavioural transitions into a compartmental contagion model.

This differential equation-based model, rooted in real perceptions, reveals that positive peer influence plays a critical threshold-sensitive role in shifting vaccine attitudes. The model also integrates the impact of misinformation and socio-contextual bias, enabling more nuanced policy responses. This innovative approach enhances the precision of public health interventions by grounding behavioural models in real-world opinion dynamics.



Driving Innovation for IFA Adherence



Partnerships

The Uttar Pradesh Behavioural Insights Unit (UP BIU) of Centre for Social and Behaviour Change, supported by a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, is advancing the fight against anaemia by applying behavioural science to improve uptake and adherence to iron and folic acid (IFA) supplements. Targeting women of reproductive age—including pregnant and lactating women—and adolescents both in and out of school, this three-year initiative contributes directly to the national goal of Anaemia Mukht Bharat.

Through a competitive process, service providers and consortia will be selected to design, pilot, and rigorously evaluate interventions that can be scaled through the government system. This may include leveraging emerging digital platforms currently being piloted in the state to reach wider populations effectively. To enable collaboration, UP BIU will facilitate partnerships among applicants and ensure the dissemination of findings to inform evidence-based policymaking.

In parallel, Johns Hopkins University will host a Learning Collaborative that connects projects in India, Nigeria, and Ethiopia, creating a cross-country platform for sharing insights on nutrition supplement adherence. This initiative bridges research, practice, and policy, ensuring scalable, sustainable approaches to reducing anaemia prevalence.

Embodied Uncertainty and COVID-19



Research

In the study “Embodied Uncertainty and COVID-19: Social Identity, Stigma, Trust and Coping through the Pandemic,” Sramana Majumdar, Assistant Professor of Psychology, explores how uncertainty shaped lived experiences during the pandemic. The study draws on the theoretical framework of Embodied Uncertainty to examine how individuals and communities navigated meaning-making and coping strategies amidst health, livelihood, and social disruptions.

Through longitudinal qualitative research, interviews were conducted with participants from diverse socio-demographic backgrounds during two phases of the pandemic in India. Thematic analysis revealed complex intersections between social identity, stigma, economic hardship, and evolving coping mechanisms. Findings also highlight shifts in institutional trust and information-seeking behaviours, shaped more by lived experiences than by formal policy actions. The study not only underscores the vulnerabilities that emerged during collective crises but also illustrates how social identities shaped perceptions of risk and resilience. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of uncertainty in public health crises and offers insights into strengthening community-centred responses.

Financing Universal Vaccine Access in Middle-Income Countries



In the study ‘Public Preference for Financing Preventive Vaccines in Health Shocks: The Case of COVID-19 Vaccines in a Middle-Income Country,’ Narges Hajimoladarvish, Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Social and Behaviour Change and collaborators investigate Iranian citizen’s willingness to pay for COVID-19 vaccines and the factors influencing it. The study distinguishes between preferences for imported versus domestic vaccines and evaluates the role of socioeconomic characteristics.

Using a cross-sectional survey during Iran’s third COVID-19 wave and applying contingent valuation and ordered probit regression, the study finds that nearly 60% of respondents were willing to contribute to vaccine financing. Preferences were not significantly affected by the vaccine’s origin. Willingness to pay was higher among individuals with greater income, supplementary insurance, higher education, perceived risk, and those working in healthcare.

Cognitive Mapping in the Prefrontal Cortex



In two related studies, Sneha Shashidhara, Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Social and Behaviour Change, and collaborators investigate how the human brain organises and integrates cognitive operations and stimulus categories. The first study, ‘Task and Stimulus Coding in the Multiple-Demand Network,’ distinguishes between task-type and stimulus-category discrimination within the brain’s multiple-demand (MD) system. Using multivariate pattern analysis and fMRI data, the study finds strong task-type discrimination in core MD regions, while stimulus category (faces vs. buildings) was more pronounced in adjacent visual and parietal areas.

The second study, “Category-Biased Patches Encircle Core Domain-General Regions in the Human Lateral Prefrontal Cortex,” explores the spatial layout of category-biased patches (faces, places, tools, body parts) that surround domain-general MD regions. These interdigitated patches support flexible cognitive control by channelling specialised information into core MD circuits.

ACWB’s Mental Health for High Schoolers (MHHS) Initiative



The Ashoka Centre for Well-Being (ACWB) launched the Mental Health for High Schoolers (MHHS) initiative to empower adolescents during this crucial developmental phase, where they encounter both external pressures and internal challenges. The program combines psychoeducation with play-based learning methods, equipping students with practical tools to navigate their emotional landscape. Recognising adolescence as a pivotal period for mental health development marked by heightened stress, evolving emotional comprehension, and susceptibility to external influences—the initiative aims to build resilience and strengthen coping mechanisms before challenges escalate.

At Saraswati Senior Secondary School, Assawarpur, an interactive workshop on “Inner Monitor for Emotional Regulation” helped students explore self-awareness, stress management, and strategies to handle academic pressures. In collaboration with the Spread Smile Foundation, ACWB engaged children in interactive activities fostering joy, cheer, and community well-being. A new milestone was achieved through a partnership with Government High School, Rai, where a workshop on “Focus & the Inner Monitor” guided Class 9 students to enhance concentration and manage distractions, especially during examinations. Together, these initiatives reflect ACWB’s commitment to advancing its mission of Mental Health for All by extending mental health education beyond Ashoka, fostering resilience, focus, and emotional well-being among communities.



Experiential Arts Therapy for Culturally Competent Training



The Ashoka Centre for Well-Being, in collaboration with the University of Derby (UK) and Manahkshetra Foundation (India), organised an Experiential Arts Therapy Workshop under the ‘Going Global Partnerships India Programme.’ The workshop formed part of an arts-based research initiative aimed at developing a culturally competent curriculum for master’s level training in arts therapy in India.

The programme engaged Indian students and mental health professionals in action-based workshops to identify practices, perspectives, and challenges that shape effective arts therapy in the Indian context. By centring lived experiences, the research sought to determine what elements should be included in a curriculum that is not only academically rigorous but also culturally appropriate and socially relevant.

A critical focus of the initiative was sensitivity to India’s intersectional realities, including caste, class, gender, and religion, ensuring that future arts therapy education reflects the diversity of Indian society. The study highlights how collaborative, participatory models of curriculum development can strengthen mental health training and contribute to inclusive, context-driven approaches to well-being.



Arvinder J Singh
Director, Ashoka Centre for Well-Being

"Sustainability in mental health is not about isolated programs but about creating a culture of care that is community-owned, led and nurtured by the community itself. At Ashoka University, we have engaged every stakeholder so that support is embedded in the everyday fabric of campus life. Peer-led initiatives like the Mental Health First Responders and Gatekeeper Training for student leaders are central to our work because peers with lived experience become the most trusted and enduring resource. Sustainability demands accessibility. To this end, we initiated ongoing community events to normalize conversations around mental health, reduce stigma, and highlight mental hygiene. In parallel, we established a 24x7 helpline to ensure immediate support for those feeling vulnerable or isolated on campus. Sustainability to me also means sharing knowledge rather than reinventing it. That is why we have built strong networks with other higher education institutions, ranging from IITs and IIMs to Delhi University. Our work extends beyond the university, reaching underserved communities such as Asawarpur village in Sonapat where we regularly conduct workshops for high school students in government schools to raise awareness and build resilience."

Building a Culture of Well-being in Higher Education



Arvinder J Singh, Director of the Ashoka Centre for Well-Being, contributed to national dialogues on strengthening student well-being in higher education institutions. On March 4, 2024, she participated as a panelist at IIT Gandhinagar in the workshop ‘Building Scalable Systems for Student Wellbeing in Residential Programs.’ Speaking on ‘Building a Culture of Wellbeing: Creating Supportive Environments that Prioritise Mental Health and Emotional Well-Being,’ she emphasised the importance of developing a shared vocabulary for mental health literacy and encouraging open conversations beyond the domain of counsellors and therapists. She highlighted that cultivating awareness and responsibility across the community can enable a transformative culture of care.

On March 18, 2024, Dr Arvinder was invited to IIM Udaipur for a workshop under the Malaviya Mission Teacher Training Programme (MMTTP). Drawing on Ashoka’s resident Well-Being Centre, she stressed the need for residential institutions to establish dedicated spaces for well-being. Together, these engagements highlight the critical role of systemic, community-driven approaches to promote emotional and mental health in higher education.

The Effect of COVID-19 on Fertility in India: Evidence from the NFHS



Gby Atee and Aparajita Dasgupta, Professors of Economics, along with collaborators, investigate how fertility behaviour in India responded to the COVID-19 pandemic. Using district-level lockdown intensity data and retrospective birth histories from NFHS-5 (2019–2021), they apply a difference-in-differences approach. Their analysis reveals a 0.2 percentage point increase in the probability of births in the post-COVID period, starting roughly nine months after the first national lockdown in March 2020 and tapering off within the next ten months. This fertility rise is concentrated in states with higher baseline fertility and districts likely to have experienced high reverse migration during the lockdown. Interestingly, the increase is mainly due to higher-order births, while first births declined in areas under stricter mobility restrictions.

This paper explores potential mechanisms and finds a significant decline in modern contraceptive use—especially short-acting reversible methods and sterilisation—after the onset of the pandemic. These changes suggest that disruptions to reproductive healthcare services during COVID-19 may have played a key role in the fertility shift. The paper contributes to the broader literature on the demographic effects of disease environments and public health shocks in the Global South. It underscores how crises like COVID-19 can reshape reproductive behaviour, especially among vulnerable groups, with long-term implications for health policy and human capital development.

Intoxicant Consumption Dynamics Under Alcohol Prohibition: Evidence from India



Ronit Mukherji, Assistant Professor of Economics and his collaborator investigate the impact of Bihar's 2016 alcohol prohibition law on household consumption behaviour, particularly focusing on alcohol and other intoxicants like cigarettes, bidis, and tobacco (CBT). Using dynamic difference-in-difference methods with monthly household data, the authors show that alcohol consumption dropped significantly following the ban, while CBT consumption initially declined but later increased, indicating a shift from alcohol to tobacco-based substitutes. The findings suggest that alcohol and CBT are initially complementary, but when alcohol becomes unavailable, substitution effects take over.

The study also highlights important shifts in household spending: urgent healthcare expenses declined while spending on positive lifestyle changes and education increased, pointing to broader well-being improvements. However, the rise in CBT use over time dampened some of these health gains. Overall, the paper emphasises the importance of recognising dynamic consumption responses and substitution patterns when designing public health interventions, especially in developing economies.

Birth Order Effects in Maternal Health-seeking Behaviour: Evidence from India



In this paper, Digvijay S Negi, Professor of Economics, examines how maternal health-seeking behaviour in India shifts with the birth order of children, drawing on nationally representative data from the National Family Health Surveys (2015–2021). Using a within-mother comparison approach, the study finds that mothers are significantly less likely to deliver their second and third-born children in institutional facilities or with the assistance of medically trained personnel compared to their first-born. The research identifies both behavioural and structural factors behind this pattern: diminished risk perception after an uncomplicated first birth and financial constraints with growing family size. However, the negative birth order effect is mitigated by improvements in local infrastructure, such as new roads and access to banking services. The authors also find that this decline in institutional delivery correlates with reduced early-life vaccinations for later-born children, underscoring the long-term health implications. The study presents policy-relevant insights for improving maternal and child health outcomes by highlighting the need to address both informational and infrastructural barriers to healthcare access.

Quantitative Mapping of Environmental to Clinical AMR via DNA Barcoding



Partnerships

Ashoka University, with partners including the National Chemical Laboratory (Pune) and the Pune Knowledge Cluster, is leading the project Quantitative Mapping of Environmental to Clinical AMR via DNA Barcoding, funded by the International Pathogen Surveillance Network (IPSN) catalytic grant supported by the World Health Organisation's pandemic hub. Led by Dr. Laasya Samhita and Dr. Shraddha Karve (Ashoka University), Dr. Mahesh Dharne (NCL Pune), Priyanki Shah (Pune Knowledge Cluster), and Dr. Aradhita Baral (Koita Centre for Digital Health), the project addresses the urgent global health challenge of antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

The study employs DNA barcoding techniques to trace and quantify the movement of resistance genes from environmental sources such as water, soil, and waste—into clinical settings like hospitals and outpatient facilities. By mapping these transmission pathways, the project seeks to bridge a critical gap in AMR surveillance, creating scalable, local data-driven models of disease spread.

The findings will generate actionable insights to inform targeted public health interventions, optimise funding priorities, and guide AMR policy in India. Beyond the national scope, the project aims to strengthen India's role in global genomic surveillance, offering replicable models for the Global South to enhance AMR detection, preparedness, and control.

Investigating Host-Microbiota Interactions in Vaginal Dysbiosis and their Impact on Pregnancy Outcomes



Research

This project led by Kavita Agarwal, Assistant Professor of Biology focuses on understanding the molecular and enzymatic features of vaginal dysbiosis in Indian women, with an emphasis on the interactions between microbial communities and the host environment. By analyzing glycosidase activity and sequencing vaginal microbiomes from selected clinical samples, it aims to identify correlations between microbial composition and enzymatic activity in women of reproductive age. These findings will inform the development of proof-of-concept diagnostics based on glycosidase activity, with a longer-term goal of creating a reliable point-of-care test for bacterial vaginosis. The project operates in collaboration with PSRI Hospital, New Delhi, enabling access to clinically relevant samples and insights into pregnancy-related health outcomes.

AI-Driven Discovery of Small Molecule Inhibitors Against Dengue Virus NS3 Serine Protease



Research

Sourav Chatterjee, Professor of Chemistry, combines artificial intelligence and computational biophysics to discover small molecule inhibitors targeting the NS3 serine protease of the dengue virus. The team compiles high-quality bioactivity data for NS3 and related proteins and converts ligand and protein structures into numerical features to enable machine learning analysis.

They apply advanced machine learning frameworks and use tools like DiffDock and DynamicBind to predict binding affinities for compounds with the lowest IC50 values, including proteases from dengue virus clinical isolates in India. This approach has identified around 12 promising hit molecules, which are now being synthesised and experimentally validated, advancing the development of new dengue therapeutics through AI-driven drug discovery.



Characterising the Role of Polycomb-group Proteins in Human CD8 T Cell Differentiation



This project, led by Rama Akondy, Associate Professor of Biology, investigates the regulatory role of Polycomb-group (PcG) proteins in the differentiation of human CD8 T cells, aiming to uncover the molecular blueprint that governs the development of effective, long-lived immune memory. Such immune memory is often compromised in chronic diseases, leading to persistent infections and poor immune responses. The research funded by CSIR seeks to identify key PcG protein interactions and validate their functional significance in shaping CD8 T cell fate.

Beyond its scientific focus, the project contributes to the development of skilled researchers by training Ph.D. students in advanced immunology, vaccinology and translational research. The project also strengthens the research ecosystem by fostering a strategic partnership with the Post Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences (PGIMS), Rohtak. This collaboration connects basic science research at a private university with clinical application in a major state government medical college and hospital, providing access to clinically relevant human samples and data. Through this bridge, the project ensures its findings are grounded in real-world health challenges while creating a robust pipeline for translational outcomes.

Helical Peptide-Based Self-powered Piezoelectric Platforms for Tissue Regeneration



Santu Bera, Faculty Fellow and Ramanujan Fellow of Chemistry, is developing and preclinically validating ultra-short helical peptide-based, miniaturised, self-powered piezoelectric platforms for tissue regeneration. These innovative devices generate their own electrical signals without the need for batteries or external power, making them a safer and more efficient alternative to current invasive electrotherapies.

Unlike existing piezoelectric systems, which are often made from inorganic or polymer-based materials and have limitations for use in vivo, this peptide-based approach offers better biocompatibility, efficiency, and noninvasive operation. Combining material science, supramolecular chemistry, self-assembly, and tissue engineering, the project aims to create custom biomaterial platforms that control biological functions and accelerate tissue repair. The expected outcome is a new class of bioelectric devices that improve diagnostics, enhance treatments, and reduce healthcare costs.





ENSURE INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE QUALITY EDUCATION AND PROMOTE LIFELONG LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL



Making Academics at Ashoka Inclusive for Students with Diverse Needs



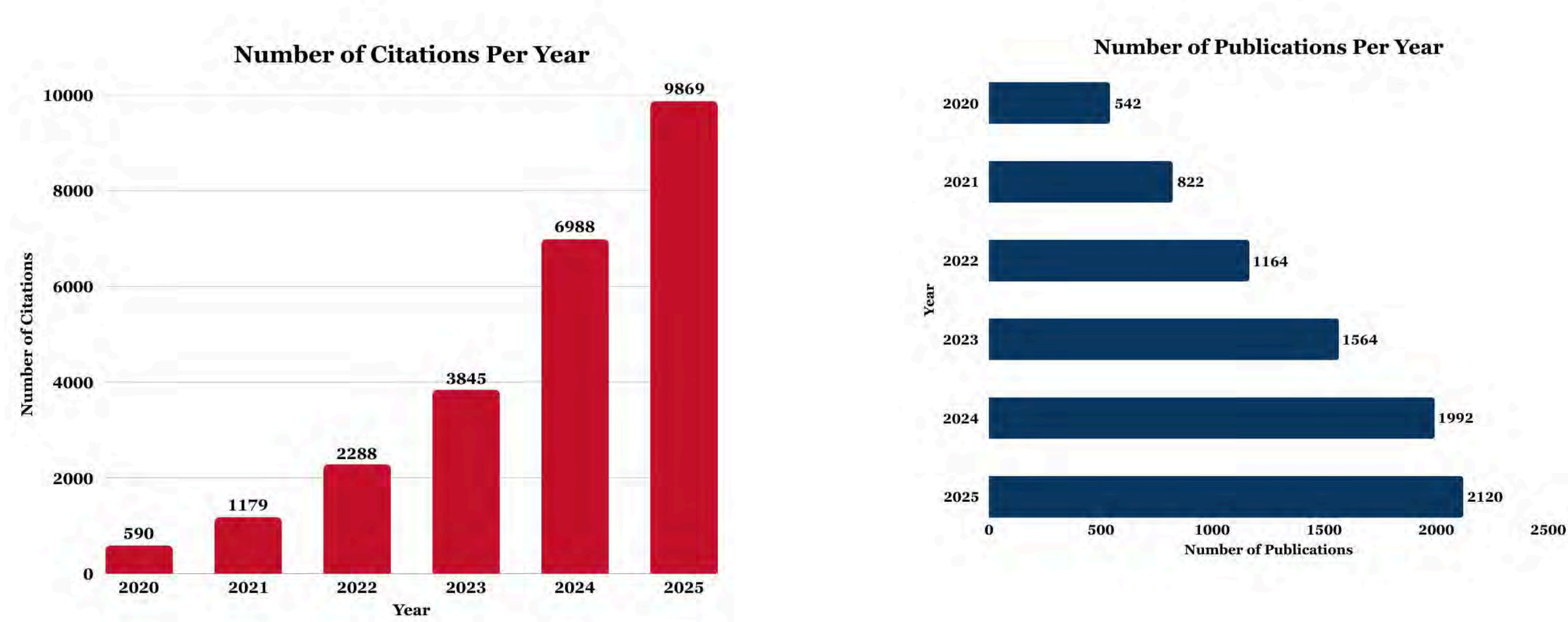
The Office of Learning Support (OLS) provides tailored support for students with disabilities, including visual and hearing impairments, autism, and cerebral palsy, as well as for those facing academic challenges. OLS creates individualized learning plans, offers academic accommodations, and collaborates with faculty to foster inclusive classrooms. Accessible content and STEM courses are prioritised, along with services like note-taking, exam support, and room modifications. OLS also aids students with academic difficulties through strategies for time management, prioritization, and academic planning.

College Readiness Programme



The Office of Learning Support (OLS) hosted two successful editions of its flagship College Readiness Programme for high school students with disabilities, their families, and professionals. Each three-day virtual session provided essential information to support informed decisions about higher education and fostered inclusion. The programme built a community for shared learning, creating a safe space to exchange resources. It grew into a far-reaching initiative, promoting inclusion in higher education beyond the Ashoka ecosystem.

ASHOKA IN NUMBERS



COUNTRY COLLABORATIONS



The Lodha Genius Programme



The Lodha Genius Programme (LGP), a fully funded initiative by the Lodha Foundation in collaboration with Ashoka University, is dedicated to identifying and nurturing exceptionally talented students in science and mathematics from Grade 9 through early career stages. Through a rigorous selection process, 200–300 high-potential students are chosen annually for a four-week residential immersion at Ashoka University, featuring advanced coursework, hands-on research, and sessions led by global experts, including Nobel Laureates.

The programme integrates academic excellence with holistic development—offering co-curriculars like ethics, arts, and sports—fostering well-rounded, socially conscious individuals. Year-round mentorship, Olympiad preparation, college guidance, and access to scientific resources ensure sustained support beyond the summer experience. Ashoka University provides academic leadership through its Science Advisory Council and a rich network of faculty and researchers. LGP not only breaks financial barriers but empowers India’s future innovators with the tools, values, and global exposure needed to drive scientific progress and ethical leadership.



Anupama Ambika Anilkumar
Deputy Director
Global Research Alliances

“In the past three years, the Lodha Genius Programme has grown from being a pilot programme for high schoolers bringing them closer to the real world science and mathematics to an established year-long engagement programme featuring many prominent names in mathematics and sciences featuring as speakers as well as faculty. At the Lodha Genius Programme, we try to marry sciences and mathematics with ethics, values and community building- SDGs and the value that comes with it form a major part of the training programme. It is imperative to build in a sense of this value system right from the beginning so that the population can be creative, imaginative and responsible at the same time. We have been working with the Office of Sustainability for the past two years in developing dedicated 5-day workshops for the LGP students, which extend beyond the summer module, where the students get to work on real-world projects with adequate mentorship at each stage. These projects in their preliminary stage, are completely funded by the Lodha Genius Programme and provide a platform for prototype building, thereby combining sustainability, innovation and entrepreneurship.”

Young Scholars Programme



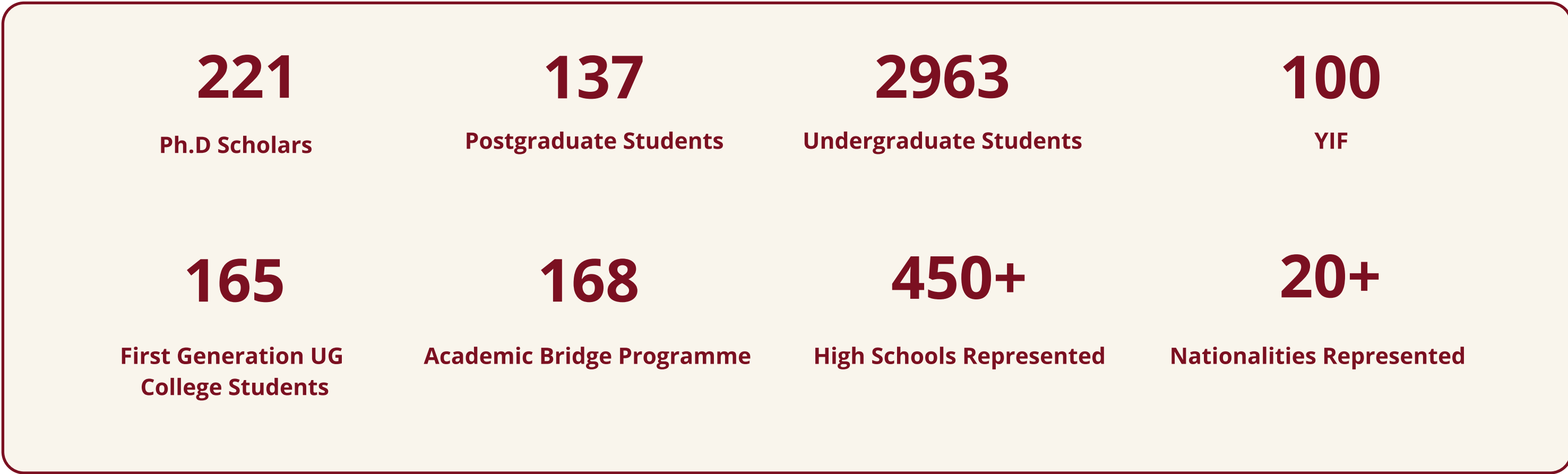
The Young Scholars Programme (YSP) is a value-added initiative that empowers young students in grades 9 to 12, through a summer residential experience that exposes them to liberal arts and sciences. Through seven interdisciplinary courses, participants gain hands-on learning opportunities and exposure to Ashoka’s distinguished global faculty and industry experts. The initiative equips young scholars with critical skills and knowledge, preparing them for successful academic and career paths.

Expanding Horizons through Online Education



AshokaX is an innovative initiative by Ashoka University designed to democratize access to high-quality education through digital platforms. By offering a diverse range of online programs—both live and asynchronous—AshokaX meets the varied needs of learners while maintaining the academic excellence associated with the university. With a focus on interactive and collaborative learning, the platform utilizes cutting-edge technology to create engaging educational experiences. As AshokaX aims to extend its reach globally, it sets a new standard for online education, promoting inclusivity and empowering learners from all backgrounds.

STUDENTS IN ASHOKA



TEACHING AND RESEARCH AT ASHOKA



**The figures are based on the Academic Year 2024-2025

Making Digital and Physical Infrastructure at Ashoka Accessible



The Office of Learning Support (OLS) at Ashoka University serves as a central hub for accessibility, collaborating with operations and other teams to make campus spaces inclusive, including initiatives like accessible shuttles. OLS raises awareness through events and workshops such as Dyslexia Awareness Month and Sign Language sessions, while also producing newsletters like the Neurodiversity Initiative. It provides cutting-edge assistive technology, like the PIAF (Pictures in a Flash) device and the upcoming Graphiti display, to support academic independence for students with diverse needs. Additionally, OLS is enhancing campus infrastructure with Braille signages and Accessible Ashoka App indoor navigation for improved accessibility.



Ashoka Literature Festival



The Ashoka Literature Festival (ALF) 2025 brought together acclaimed writers, artists, and performers in a three-day celebration of literature, art, and music. Highlights included sessions with International Booker Prize-winning translator Deborah Smith, who conducted live translation labs and shared insights on the art and politics of translation, and celebrated author Ruchir Joshi, who discussed his historical novel The Great Eastern Hotel. Other notable events featured Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni in conversation on her literary journey, a Writing Queer(ly) panel by the Centre for Studies in Gender and Sexuality, the launch of Ishan Shanavas’s book The Light of Wilder Things, and the introduction of the Cozy Nook Library Literary Prize for graphic narratives. The festival also offered an immersive blend of performance and art through the ALF Open Mic in collaboration with Vistaar, the ALF Film Festival, and a memorable finale with Indian Ocean’s electrifying concert, followed by a soulful Ghazal Night. With sessions on translation, archives, queer literature, and the vibrant cultural tapestry of India, ALF 2025 created a dynamic space for dialogue, creativity, and community, leaving attendees inspired and connected through shared stories and artistic expression.



Using Eye-tracking to Examine Strategies for Evaluating Compound Lotteries



In this study, Narges Hajimoladarvish and Sneha Shashidhara, Senior Research Fellows at the Centre for Social and Behaviour Change, explore how individuals evaluate uncertain outcomes using eye-tracking technology. The study distinguishes between two competing axioms in decision theory: the Reduction of Compound Lotteries (ROCL) and Compound Independence (CI). By analysing gaze patterns and integrating behavioural valuation data, the researchers find strong evidence in favour of the ROCL axiom, suggesting participants use a forward induction strategy rather than evaluating options sequentially backwards as predicted by CI. This pattern holds across various types of lotteries and is reinforced in a separate reasoning task. The study not only sheds light on the cognitive mechanisms underlying complex decision-making under uncertainty but also introduces an innovative methodology combining eye-tracking with behavioural economics. These findings have implications for how individuals process layered information and make rational choices in real-world contexts.

Improving Parental Engagement in Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Learning



Sneha Shashidhara, Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Social and Behaviour Change (CSBC) and collaborators in the study examine how behaviourally informed interventions can empower parents to support their children's early education. Despite efforts like the NIPUN Bharat Mission, foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN) outcomes remain low in many parts of India. This field experiment tested two interventions—one providing daily Hindi and Math activities through WhatsApp peer groups, and the other through printed workbooks. Both included motivational nudges and reminders to build parents' self-efficacy and reduce cognitive barriers to engagement. The WhatsApp arm improved understanding of FLN skill progression, while workbook users placed greater value on FLN learning. The findings suggest that even parents with limited resources can effectively support learning at home when equipped with the right tools. This research was funded by a BMGF core grant to CSBC (INV-026871), with Central Square Foundation (CSF) as the key study partner.

Religious Identity, Lost Learning: Evidence from Colonial India



The Centre for Writing and Communication integrates research closely with its teaching approach, developing resources and methods to foster interdisciplinary engagement in reading and writing across Ashoka's diverse academic landscape. As part of its ongoing pedagogical research efforts, CWC held its fourth annual conference, *'Writing 'Data': Interdisciplinary Perspectives'*, which explored how writing mediates the interaction of Big Data within the social sciences, liberal arts, and humanities. The event included a keynote address by Dr. Avik Sarkar, Visiting Faculty at the Indian School of Business, and was chaired by Bharat Ramaswamy, Dean of Academic Affairs and Professor of Economics at Ashoka University. Dr. Sarkar highlighted innovative frameworks for public policy applications of diverse data types, including mobile, satellite, and employment data. Emphasis was placed on interdisciplinary research practices and the ethical complexities of engaging with Big Data in academia.



Shantanu Ganguly
Director, Library

"Open Access Movement in SDG sectors is the need of the hour in India, a robust platform will reduce duplicity and enhance best practices."

Open Access as a Knowledge Platform for Sustainable Development Goals



HDFC Library, Ashoka University hosted a one-day international conference titled 'Open Access as a Knowledge Platform for Sustainable Development Goals', which explored the intersection of Open Access (OA) publishing and knowledge sharing with the United Nations' SDGs. The event emphasised OA's role in enabling universal access to scientific findings, accelerating discovery, and empowering researchers. Discussions focused on how OA contributes to effective knowledge management and global accessibility. The conference provided a collaborative platform for experts, policymakers, and stakeholders to discuss topics including the OA movement in India, open data management, OA knowledge platforms, SDG resource mapping, and Open Educational Resources.

Understanding the Mechanism of Cytoskeletal Reorganisation in the Host During Salmonella Infection

 Research

Intracellular pathogens such as Salmonella and E. coli cause significant morbidity and mortality in developing regions. This project, led by Anup Padmanabhan, Assistant Professor of Biology, investigates the molecular mechanisms by which Salmonella induces cytoskeletal reorganisation to invade host cells, focusing on interactions between bacterial effector proteins and specific host proteins. Using mammalian cell culture systems, the study aims to uncover early steps of pathogen attachment and entry, which may serve as targets for novel therapeutic interventions. Entry blockers for such intracellular pathogens are considered promising drug candidates, particularly in the context of rising antimicrobial resistance (AMR), and this research contributes to identifying potential chemotherapeutic targets. The project involves collaboration with IIT Delhi and Amity University.

Environmental Studies

 Teaching

This mandatory Foundation Course reflects Ashoka's dedication to cultivating environmental citizenship among all students. It introduces the pressing global challenges of our era, such as climate change, species extinction, and environmental justice, while exploring the complex relationships between society, politics, and the economy through an environmental lens. The course encourages students to engage deeply with the central question: how can we live in harmony with nature?

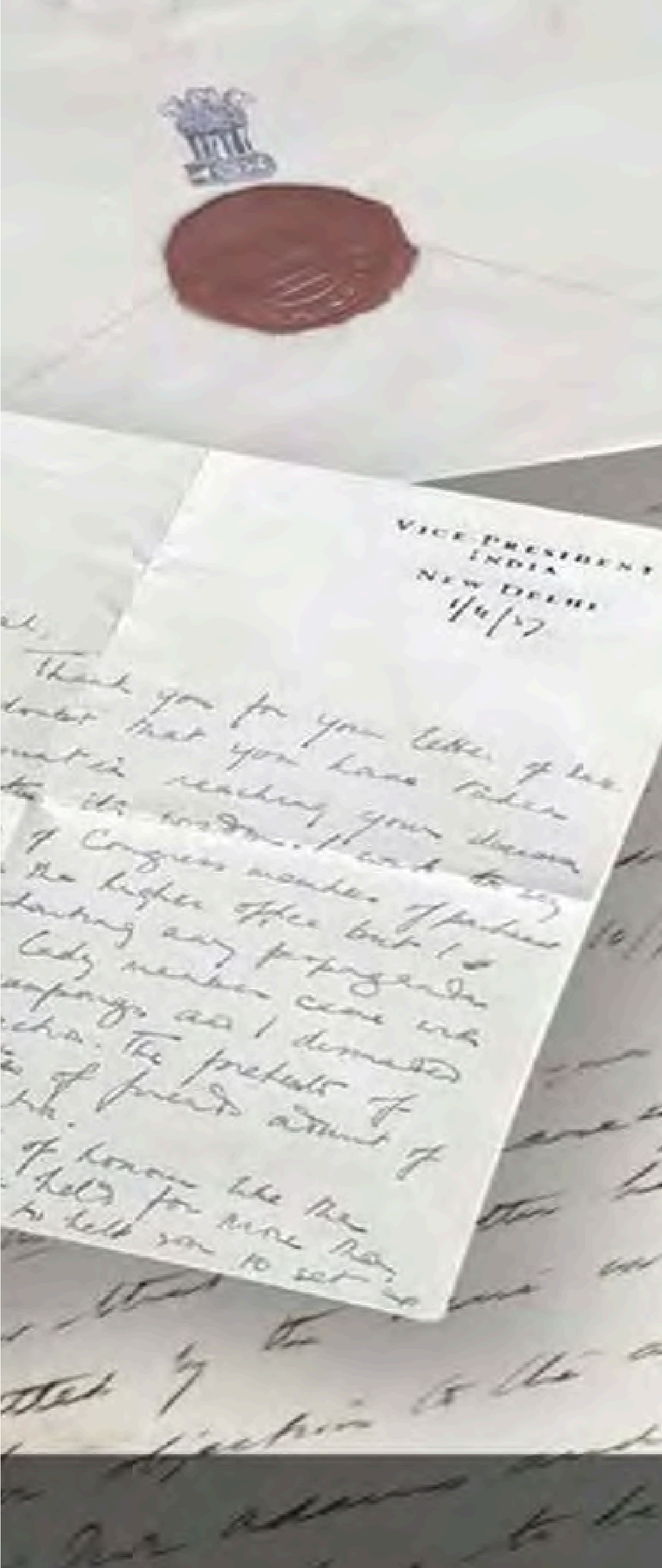
Archives of Contemporary India

 Research

The Archives of Contemporary India (ACI) has acquired a valuable collection of digital audio recordings created by Professor Debarati Banerjee, featuring in-depth interviews with participants and families involved in the historic Chipko Movement in Uttarakhand's Tehri Garhwal region. Alongside these recordings, ACI is producing full transcriptions to enhance accessibility for researchers, educators, and the public. By capturing personal narratives and lived experiences, this initiative safeguards an important chapter in India's environmental history, highlighting the movement's profound social and ecological impact.

This effort directly supports the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The Chipko Movement remains a landmark example of grassroots action influencing policy, inspiring communities to defend their environment and protect natural resources.

As part of its commitment to fostering dialogue on sustainability, ACI will host Dr. Shekhar Pathak, a renowned historian, publisher, and environmental activist, for a special talk in September 2025. Drawing from decades of research and fieldwork, Dr. Pathak will explore postcolonial social movements and the evolving environmental and social challenges in Uttarakhand. His talk will offer insights into the intersection of community resilience, ecological preservation, and grassroots activism in the Himalayan region—strengthening public engagement with the historical roots and contemporary realities of climate action in India.



Entrepreneurship And Modern Skills



Teaching

The Centre for Entrepreneurship offers a forward-looking curriculum that equips students with the skills and mindset required for the future of work. A strong emphasis is placed on technology and data fluency, with courses such as AI and Technology for Entrepreneurs, Technology and Product Management, Data and the Digital Economy, Financial Analytics using AI, and Business Applications of Data Science.

Alongside this technical foundation, students build essential business acumen through courses in Marketing, Business Strategy, Accounting and Financial Statements, and Strategies for Revenue Leadership, while quantitative skills are developed through Quantitative Problem-Solving with Excel and Quantitative Methods for Entrepreneurs.

The curriculum also prioritises innovation and personal growth, with offerings like Creativity and Design Thinking, Venture Design Lab, and the Life Design Lab, fostering creative problem-solving and meaningful career pathways. Ethics and social responsibility remain central, reflected in courses such as Law and Lawyerly Thinking, Technology Law and Policy, Social Entrepreneurship & Impact, Impact Investing, and ESG and Climate, preparing students to become responsible leaders.

Students can further specialise through advanced courses including Service Excellence, Digital Ecosystem of India, Jugaad and the Tech Enterprise, Fundamentals of Investing, Private Equity and Venture Capital, Branding and Consumer Behaviour, and Integrated Digital Marketing Strategy.

Co-curricular Courses: Arts, Language, and Creative Expression



Teaching

Ashoka University offers a vibrant range of co-curricular courses that encourage students to explore cultural traditions and creative expression beyond the classroom. Language and cultural immersion are central, with courses such as Qissebazi: Urdu Through Storytelling, Exploring Telugu: From Script to Expression, Popular Reading in Hindi: From Naagraj to Gundaraaj, Brajbhasha: Language of the Poets in Courts, Culture, and Cinema, and Kashmiri through Literature. The performing arts are celebrated through courses like Mayurbhanj Chhau: Martial Dance, Weaving Stories in Odissi, Punjab de Rang: Regional Dances, and Bharatanatyam: A Glimpse, which build both physical and expressive skills. Visual and creative arts find expression through hands-on workshops including The Power of Puppets: Telling Stories that Matter to Us, Art-making through the Prism of Collage, Exploring Expression through Textile Art, and Pottery: Semantics and Practice. Together, these offerings create an educational experience that nurtures both intellect and imagination.



Nurturing Sustainable Futures



Partnerships

The Office of Sustainability empowered young minds of the Lodha Genius Program through a Sustainability Workshop, emphasizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and hands-on design thinking. The workshop explored themes like SDGs, COP29 insights, and their interconnections with the grade 9 and 10 students. Interactive learning methods, such as storytelling and group activities, facilitated active engagement, while participants developed problem-solving skills through citizen science projects. The program concluded with action planning, and students presented innovative solutions, with several teams earning recognition for their impactful contributions to sustainability.



Advancing Global Education through India-US Collaboration



The Office of Global Education, in collaboration with the US Embassy, organised a two-day Capacity Building Workshop focused on strengthening internationalisation in Indian higher education. Aligned with SDG 4, the workshop promoted inclusive and globally engaged learning environments while also addressing access challenges in mobility (SDG 10) and fostering international academic cooperation (SDG 17).

Designed for faculty, international office professionals, and administrators, the workshop explored strategies for embedding global perspectives into curricula, enhancing two-way student mobility, and building institutional readiness. Key sessions addressed outcome-based curriculum design, India-U.S. mobility best practices, and overcoming challenges in academic collaboration. Highlights included discussions on making India a destination for U.S. study abroad, rethinking partnerships beyond MoUs, and designing long-term models for student exchange. By fostering co-creation, inclusivity, and intercultural competencies, the workshop reinforced Ashoka’s role in shaping globally connected education ecosystems in India.



Vivek Srivastava
Director, Office of Academic Affairs

“Ashoka University is deeply committed to advancing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through its academic offerings, research, and student engagement. Central to this commitment is the integration of sustainability and environmental consciousness into the curriculum, particularly through Environmental Studies and allied disciplines. By drawing on diverse disciplines, spanning the sciences, social sciences, and humanities, Ashoka ensures that students develop interdisciplinary perspectives and holistic solutions to sustainability challenges.

The SDG-aligned courses at Ashoka University seek to: knowledge and critical thinking, research and innovation, ethical leadership and socio-economic responsibility, global citizenship grounded in ecological balance and social justice.

A broad range of courses across multiple departments, including Environmental Studies, Biology, Economics, Political Science, Sociology, Entrepreneurship, and Literature, have been offered over the years. These reflect Ashoka’s dedication to preparing students to contribute meaningfully to the global sustainability agenda.”

Improving Teacher Uptake of Effective Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) Instruction



In the study ‘Improving Teacher Uptake of Effective Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) Instruction’, the Centre for Social and Behaviour Change (CSBC) and Central Square Foundation (CSF) examine behavioural barriers that hinder teacher adoption of practices under the NIPUN Bharat Mission. Despite the provision of training and materials, uptake remained limited.

The study was conducted in Sitapur and Hardoi districts of Uttar Pradesh and tested two interventions: a WhatsApp-based chatbot summarising lesson plans and micro-practice videos demonstrating effective pedagogy. A randomised controlled trial evaluated their impact on knowledge, attitudes, and instructional practices. Results showed no significant improvements in primary outcomes, though the chatbot slightly improved perceived teaching norms. Assistant Teachers in Sitapur showed some gains in confidence and tool adoption, while Shiksha Mitras reported modest motivational shifts. The study emphasises the need for context-specific, behaviourally-informed strategies and reveals greater retention and effectiveness of chatbot interventions over video-based methods.

Global Academic Immersions and International Opportunities



Visiting Student Programme: Fostering Global Exchange



Partnerships

Ashoka's Visiting Student Programme (VSP) continued to strengthen international academic exchange in 2025, welcoming 14 students from across the world to spend a semester immersed in Ashoka's liberal arts curriculum and vibrant campus life. Students joined from partner universities such as Monash University, HEC Paris, Sciences Po, and the University of Zurich, alongside non-partner institutions including Ruhr University Bochum, UNSW Sydney, and Lewis & Clark College. Their presence enriched Ashoka's classrooms and campus community, fostering dialogue and cross-cultural learning. Between June and August, Ashoka also hosted short-term visiting students from King's College London, Durham University, Cornell University, Smith College, and Kirori Mal College. These students engaged in summer courses, research collaborations, and cultural immersion activities, positioning Ashoka as a dynamic hub for international learning experiences.

Since its inception, the VSP has hosted more than 140 international students from over 20 global institutions, underscoring Ashoka's growing reputation as a destination for those seeking to study the South Asian context through a liberal arts lens. These mobility initiatives highlight Ashoka's commitment to equitable access, strategic global partnerships, and academic diversity—preparing students to address pressing global challenges with empathy, insight, and innovation.

Understanding the Motivations and Challenges of ARPs in Uttar Pradesh



In the diagnostic report, the Centre for Social and Behaviour Change (CSBC), in collaboration with the Language and Learning Foundation (LLF), explores the behavioural barriers faced by Academic Resource Persons (ARPs)—a crucial link in India’s teacher mentoring ecosystem. The study examines how ARPs can be better supported to strengthen foundational literacy and numeracy outcomes in government schools.

Through in-depth conversations with ARPs and Block Academic Coordinators (BACs), six key themes emerged: roles and responsibilities, training, skills, relationships with teachers, motivation, and technology use. Barriers include cognitive overload, vague responsibilities, theoretical training, weak feedback practices, and strained teacher relationships. The report offers actionable levers such as streamlining administrative tasks, providing time management support, offering practical training, and improving feedback tools. By addressing these behavioural gaps, the study highlights ways to empower ARPs, ultimately enhancing classroom outcomes and advancing foundational education goals.

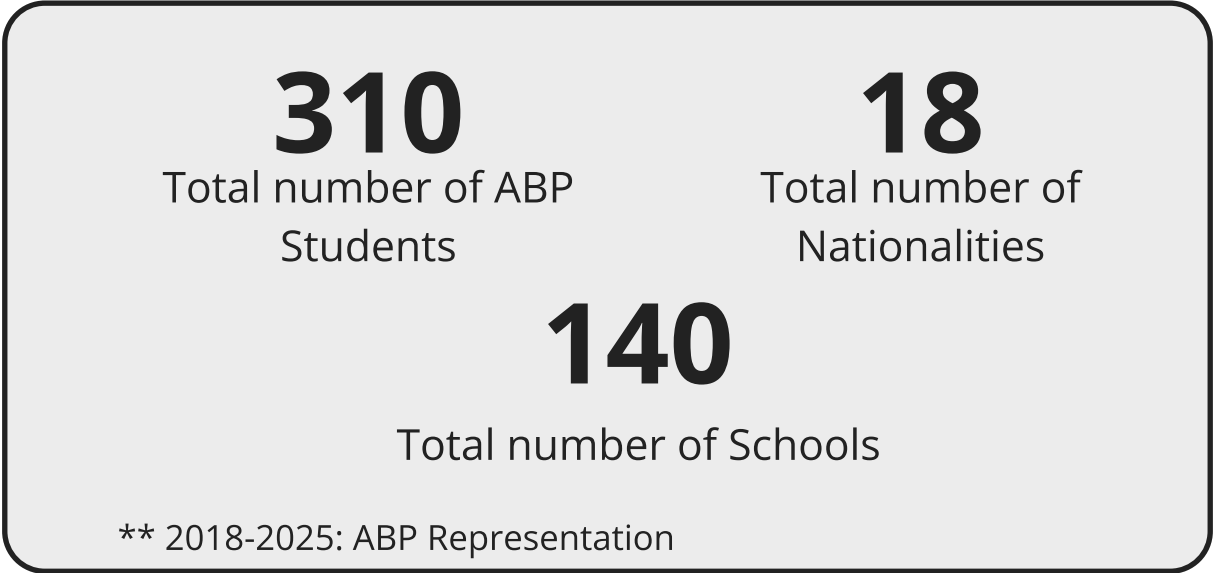
Academic Bridge Programme



The Academic Bridge Programme (ABP), launched in 2018, is a fully funded, three-week residential initiative designed to support students from disadvantaged backgrounds in Ashoka University’s incoming undergraduate cohort. Held annually before orientation week, the programme provides an immersive on-campus experience that helps students transition smoothly into the university’s academic and residential life.

ABP addresses language, educational, and experiential gaps by equipping participants with essential academic skills, confidence, and community support. Through tailored sessions, workshops, and mentorship, it prepares students to engage meaningfully with Ashoka’s rigorous curriculum while fostering a sense of belonging in the university’s diverse ecosystem.

Since its inception, ABP has hosted 310 students representing 18 nationalities and 140 schools, reflecting the university’s commitment to equity and access in higher education. By prioritising inclusivity, the programme not only empowers first-generation and under-resourced students but also enriches Ashoka’s learning environment by bringing diverse perspectives into the classroom.





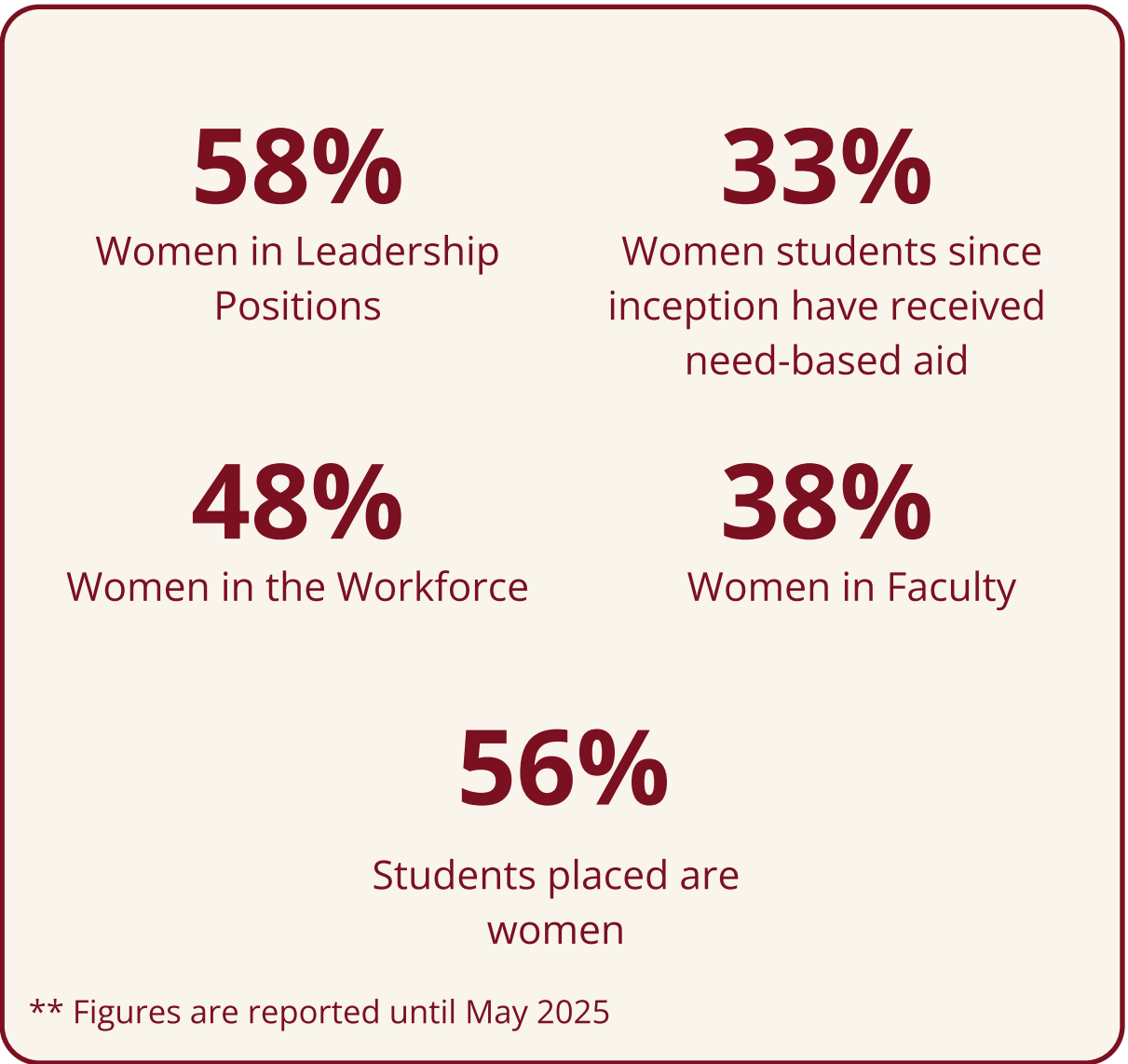
ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS



Gender on Campus



Ashoka University is committed to fostering an inclusive campus environment that upholds the principles of equity, diversity, and gender justice. Through policies, awareness programs, and student-led initiatives, the University works to ensure equal opportunities in academics, leadership, and campus life. Safe spaces and grievance redressal mechanisms are in place to address concerns, while workshops and dialogues encourage critical engagement with issues of gender and identity. By integrating gender sensitivity into teaching, research, and community engagement, Ashoka strengthens its role as a campus where all individuals can thrive with dignity and respect.



From Transport to Childcare, Wages to Skilling: How Public Policy Can Boost Indian Women's Workforce Participation



Research

The policy brief by Akshi Chawla, Director of the Centre for Economic Data and Analysis (CEDA), addresses the persistent gender gap in India's labour force participation, despite the country entering a demographic phase with the world's largest working-age population. As of 2023–24, nearly two-thirds of Indian women aged 15 and above were not part of the labour force, and even highly educated or trained women face disproportionately low participation and earnings. The brief argues that economic growth alone hasn't translated into opportunities for women due to both supply-side barriers (like unpaid care responsibilities) and demand-side constraints (like legal restrictions, lack of workplace safety, or wage discrimination).

To correct these structural inequalities, the brief outlines a set of public policy interventions: removing legal restrictions on women's employment, providing affordable housing near industrial areas, investing in safe transport and childcare infrastructure, ensuring equal and living wages, improving sanitation facilities, and offering gender-sensitive and modern skill training. The brief emphasises that enabling women's economic participation is not just a matter of equity but a prerequisite for India to harness its full economic potential.

Agriculture, Electrification and Gendered Time Use in Rural Bangladesh



Research

In the paper, Digvijay Singh Negi, Associate Professor of Economics, with his collaborators, investigates how access to electricity reshapes labor participation and time allocation in rural households, particularly across gender lines. Using panel data from the Bangladesh Integrated Household Survey (BIHS), the research explores the impacts of electrification on economic roles within the household.

The study finds that men in electrified households shift toward non-farm employment, while women increase their involvement in agriculture, marking a trend of feminization of agriculture. Women also spend less time on domestic chores and caregiving, reallocating it toward farming and leisure activities like watching television. Notably, access to electricity is linked with greater female participation in household decision-making, especially in farm-related and financial matters.



Student Initiatives towards Gender Equality and Empowerment



Campus

Ashoka Women in Finance is dedicated to building a network of women with a shared interest in the finance industry with the primary focus bring bridging the gender gap by providing a platform where members can gain the knowledge, skills, and resources needed to succeed in this field. Their aim is to empower women to take charge of their financial futures and create a supportive environment where we uplift and inspire one another. Ashoka Women in Business & Leadership equips aspiring female professionals with skills, mentorship, and a strong network for career growth. The Feminist Collective organizes events to promote awareness around feminism, intersectionality, and gender issues, providing a safe environment for dialogue and mutual support among students.

Constraints on Firms for Providing Safer Workplaces for Female Workers



This research, led by Anisha Sharma, Associate Professor of Economics, along with her collaborators, investigates why many firms in India do not invest in safer workplace environments for women, despite the potential benefits such as higher female labor force participation and improved productivity. Although the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act (SHWA) was passed in 2013 to mandate workplace safety measures, compliance remains low. Through a survey of FICCI-member firms, the researchers explore firms’ awareness of SHWA, their level of compliance, and the constraints they face in hiring and retaining female employees—particularly regarding the implementation of gender sensitisation programs, complaint mechanisms, and safety audits.

To understand what prevents firms from making these investments, the team runs two experimental interventions: one provides information about female job-seekers’ preferences for workplace safety and amenities; the other gives details about SHWA’s legal requirements. They then measure whether this information increases firms’ willingness to act—for instance, by attending a webinar hosted by Safecity or investing in safety audits. The findings will offer important insights for policymakers into whether informational or financial barriers are holding firms back and how these vary by firm size, industry, or leadership. The project is funded by PEDL, coordinated by the Centre for Economic Policy and Research (CEPR).



Anisha Sharma
Associate Professor of Economics

“Our research explores how safer and more inclusive workplaces can enable women to participate fully in India’s labour markets and contribute to economic growth. Female labour force participation in India remains low, and workplace safety concerns are a significant barrier. Through surveys and large-scale randomized controlled trials, we examine how sexual harassment prevention policies, training, and awareness initiatives influence firm practices, worker well-being, and women’s willingness to enter and stay in the workforce. This evidence is crucial for policymakers seeking to expand female labour force participation—which is comparatively very low in India. Safer workplaces don’t just protect existing female workers; they attract more women, including skilled women, creating a pathway toward inclusive economic growth and gender equity.”

Laws Mandating Prevention of Sexual Harassment at Workplace and Female Employment



Kanika Mahajan, Associate Professor of Economics and her collaborators examine the impact of the 2013 Prevention of Sexual Harassment (POSH) Act on female employment in India. While the Act was designed to provide women with safer workplaces through mandatory complaint mechanisms and preventive measures, it also introduced higher compliance costs for firms with 10 or more employees.

Using nationally representative individual-level employment data and firm-level manufacturing data, the researchers apply a difference-in-differences approach to assess whether these legal obligations unintentionally discouraged firms from hiring women. By comparing employment trends in firms above and below the 10-worker threshold before and after the Act’s implementation, the study evaluates whether such protective legislation might have had unintended negative consequences on women’s participation in the formal workforce.

Gender Gaps in Informal Sector Entrepreneurship in India



Research

Sneha Mariam Thomas, a Senior Research Analyst in her analysis for the Centre for Economic Data and Analysis (CEDA), uses data from the Annual Survey of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises (ASUSE) to explore the evolving landscape of women's entrepreneurship in India's informal economy. While women continue to power markets, roadside stalls, and home-based workshops, they remain underrepresented in business ownership and enterprise expansion. As of the latest ASUSE data, women own 27% of proprietary establishments, up from 24% three years ago, signalling slow but steady progress. However, the nature of women-led enterprises reveals stark disparities. Most women operate own-account establishments—small, solo-run businesses without hired workers and are 29 times more likely to do so compared to running businesses with employees. Men, by contrast, are more likely to lead ventures that generate employment. Sectorally, manufacturing stands out, hosting nearly twice as many women-owned establishments as trade and services, challenging common assumptions about where women entrepreneurs are concentrated. The analysis, 'Gender gaps in informal sector entrepreneurship in India' highlights both the gains and persistent gaps in women's economic participation, revealing the need for targeted support, credit access, and ecosystem development to enable women not just to start, but to scale their enterprises and generate employment within the informal economy.

Gendering South Asian History, 1200-1800



Teaching

Deepashree Dutta, Visiting Faculty of History, teaches this course that uses gender as a lens to explore medieval and early-modern South Asia. The curriculum examines how masculinity and femininity were shaped in relation to kingship, court culture, and domestic life. It also investigates the political roles of royal women and the lived experiences of non-royal groups such as concubines, labouring women, and eunuchs.

Kingship and Courtly Culture in the Early Modern World



Teaching

The course is taught by Pratyay Nath, Associate Professor of History. This course examines how gender shaped the performance of sovereignty and power in royal courts between 1500 and 1800. Students explore questions of gender and authority, such as the ways Queen Elizabeth's gender complicated her rule in Tudor England. By analysing the dynamics of court society, the course highlights how gender historically intersected with the highest levels of political power.

Cinemas of India: A Feminist Gaze



Teaching

Aakshi Magazine, Visiting Faculty of Media Studies, teaches this course that goes beyond women's representation on screen to explore the gendered dynamics of labour in the Indian film industry. Drawing on feminist production studies, students examine a wide spectrum of film practitioners, paying special attention to often overlooked forms of work. Topics include stardom, the figure of the "woman filmmaker," and the ways a 'female gaze' is articulated in both mainstream and alternative Indian cinema.

Gender, Sexuality, and Culture



Teaching

Patrick W. Beckhorn, Visiting Professor, led this course offered by the Sociology and Anthropology department, which introduces gender and sexuality studies through the lens of cultural anthropology with a focus on South Asian contexts. Through readings, films, and discussions, students explore how social practices and institutions like the family and the state construct and regulate gender and sexuality. The course provides a strong foundation for understanding cultural diversity in gender, drawing on key insights from South Asian scholarship.

Studies In Film: Bollywood and Gender



Teaching

Geetanjali Singh Chanda, Associate Professor of English, offers this course, which provides a concise history of Bombay cinema, focusing on gender and cultural identity. Students explore how key historical moments have shaped ideas of Indianness and gender awareness. By examining the ideologies of gender, nationalism, and sexuality embedded in popular films, students develop critical media literacy skills to analyse, question, and challenge mainstream cultural representations of gender.

Gender and the Social Arena



Teaching

Rita Brara Mukhopadhyay, Visiting Faculty of Sociology and Anthropology, leads this course that offers a journey through influential essays reshaping how we understand gender. Covering topics from long-term kinship structures to the portrayal of women in Bollywood and contemporary queer issues, the curriculum challenges traditional social science frameworks. Through this exploration, students gain a deeper, more nuanced understanding of gender's role in society, emphasising its affective and liberatory potential.

Too Good to Be True? Steadily Rising Female Labour Force Participation Rates In India



Research

This article by Ashwini Deshpande, Professor and Head, Department of Economics, critically examines the recent rise in India's female labour force participation rate (FLFPR), questioning whether it signals a genuine economic transformation. Drawing from multiple data sources—including the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), Consumer Pyramids Household Survey (CPHS), the Annual Survey of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises (ASUSE), and administrative data from EPFO and MSME—the article confirms that the upward trend, especially in rural areas, is real and not a result of definitional or measurement changes. However, it highlights that this rise is largely concentrated in unpaid or low-productivity work, such as agriculture and own-account activities, with little evidence of increased earnings, formal employment, or job quality for women. While the gender gap in labour force participation has narrowed since 2017–18, it remains significant by global standards. The author concludes that despite a notable increase in women's participation, particularly in rural India, it would be premature to celebrate this as a transformative economic shift, as deep structural challenges like the lack of decent, well-paying jobs for women persist.

Female Sterilisation in India: Prevalence, Informed Choice and Regret



Research

Advaith Jayakumar from Centre for Economic Data and Analysis (CEDA) investigates the dominance of female sterilisation in India's contraceptive landscape. While overall contraceptive use rose from 40.7% in 1992–93 to 66.7% in 2019–21, most of this increase is due to female sterilisation, which grew from 26.8% to 37.9%. However, many women were not fully informed—only 58.7% were told about side effects. Around 5% of sterilised women reported regret, especially those sterilised young, with one or no children, or not employed. India now accounts for nearly half of global female sterilisation cases. The article highlights stark regional, religious, and educational inequalities. Southern states like Andhra Pradesh have higher sterilisation rates and lower regret, while northeastern states like Ladakh and Manipur report higher regret despite low usage. Muslim women had lower sterilisation rates but more regret. Less educated and unemployed women were more likely to be sterilised and to regret it. Jayakumar stresses the need for informed choice, better access to alternative methods, and greater male participation in contraception to ensure reproductive rights and reduce the burden on women.

Restart: Women, Career Breaks and Employer Response



Research

Kanika Mahajan, Professor of Economics, in her study, investigates labour market discrimination against Indian women re-entering the workforce after career breaks due to caregiving responsibilities. The study distinguishes between women with continuous work histories and those with gaps, using a correspondence study experiment to assess employer behaviour.

By sending out fictitious job applications with similar qualifications, the study finds that women who had taken a career break received 49% fewer callbacks than those with continuous employment. This penalty was more pronounced in skill-intensive sectors like finance than in generalist sectors like HR. Interestingly, listing upskilling certifications did not significantly improve outcomes. The penalty was also higher in smaller firms and in northern India, where gender norms tend to be more regressive.

Navigating Sex, Sexuality, and Law



Teaching

CSGS has developed “Mapping Sexuality in India”, a digital archive of significant legal judgments on sexual justice. In partnership with external experts and the Young India Fellows developed The Sexual Justice Project, a podcast series with guests like Indira Jaising and Dr. Mrinal Satish, discussing legal intersections of gender and sexuality.

How Does Labour Force Participation Vary Across Indian States?



Research

Ananta Bhushan, a postgraduate student at Ashoka University, in her analysis of Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2022–23 data published by the Centre for Economic Data and Analysis (CEDA), explores the striking inter-state variations in labour force participation rates (LFPR) across India, with a focus on gender dynamics and workforce composition. The findings show that some of India’s smallest states by population—Sikkim (76.6%), Himachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Meghalaya, and Arunachal Pradesh—had the highest LFPR, while Bihar recorded the lowest LFPR at 49.7%, followed by Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, and Jharkhand. The study highlights distinct rural-urban patterns: Sikkim led rural LFPR, while Nagaland topped urban LFPR; Bihar ranked lowest in both categories. Delving deeper, the analysis examines gender gaps, self-employment, and workforce composition, uncovering regional disparities in women's participation in the labour market. By surfacing these state-wise and gendered patterns, the research contributes towards the goal of ensuring women’s full and effective participation in the workforce and to address regional and structural barriers to equitable labour force inclusion.

Transformative Arts and Research Initiatives Fellowship



Partnerships

The Transformative Arts and Research Initiatives Fellowship (TAARIF), launched in 2023 by the Centre for Studies in Gender and Sexuality, serves as a platform for early-career trans* scholars to engage with queer methodologies and explore research paths that move beyond mainstream narratives. Designed to challenge universalising views of queer subalternity, the fellowship creates space for voices and perspectives often overlooked in dominant discourses. The second edition, held in March 2024, brought together three fellows, Simran Tapaswi, Riza/Rahul VC, and Aditya Vikram Shrivastava, each bringing unique research interests and lived experiences to the programme.

Over four months, the fellows received structured mentorship and guidance from Dr. Arunima Theraja and leading scholars including Anjali Arondekar, Agnieszka Graff, and Gayle Salamon. The programme offered workshops on research writing, methodology, publication, and abstract development, equipping fellows with both academic and practical skills. Their research addressed critical and underexplored themes, from anti-gender mobilisation in Kerala to re-imagining “trans*” through the kothi identity, and reframing dysphoria as a form of disorientation within gendered spaces.

Strengthening the Implementation of the POSH Act through Data

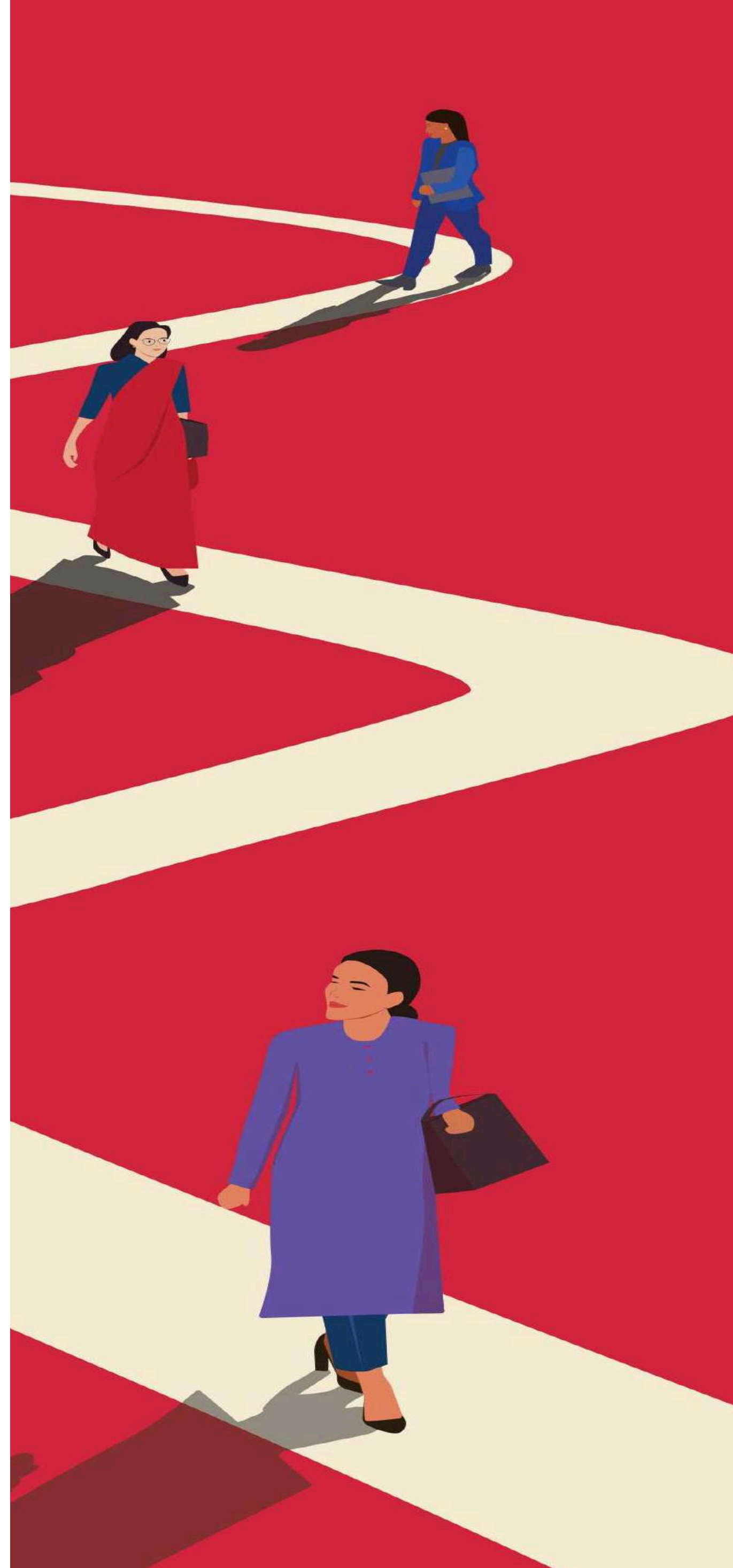


Research

Akshi Chawla, Director of the Centre for Economic Data and Analysis (CEDA), authored the policy brief “Strengthening the Implementation of the POSH Act – The Critical Role of Data.” The brief examines a decade of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013, with particular focus on compliance, reporting, and the role of data in strengthening protections.

Analysing disclosures from 300 listed companies on the National Stock Exchange over 11 years, the study finds that while reported complaints have increased steadily since the Act came into effect, resolution rates have lagged, leading to rising pending cases. Strikingly, complaints are concentrated in a handful of large companies, while many mid-sized and smaller firms consistently report zero cases, raising questions about the robustness of compliance mechanisms.

The study argues that the absence of a centralised, accessible dataset undermines the law’s potential. It highlights the need to leverage mandatory disclosures, improve reporting mechanisms, and create incentives for genuine compliance. Strengthening transparency and data use is critical to ensuring safe workplaces, advancing gender equality, and cultivating inclusive organisational cultures.



The Returnship Road



Partnerships

The Returnship Road, a report by the Centre for Economic Data and Analysis (CEDA) in collaboration with the Godrej DEI Lab, explores how structured returnship programs can help women re-enter the workforce after career breaks—usually due to marriage, childbirth, or caregiving responsibilities. The report highlights how India's female labour force participation has remained alarmingly low despite improvements in education and fertility rates, largely due to entrenched gender norms, workplace biases, and a lack of flexible job opportunities. Returnships aim to address these barriers by offering women project-based internships or direct-hiring pathways, alongside support systems like mentoring, training, and flexible working models.

Drawing on case studies from companies like Wipro, Zoho, HDFC Bank, Nomura, Titan, and Razorpay, the report shows that returnees are often highly motivated, loyal, and skilled—making them valuable assets for businesses. Companies that have invested in these programs report higher retention, strong performance, and increased engagement from women employees. The report points out that upskilling and even part-time experience during a career break are often dismissed by employers. To overcome these issues, the report recommends skill-based hiring practices, clearer returnship structures, strong managerial support, and gender-equity-driven compensation frameworks. It emphasises that returnships are not charity or special treatment but essential equity measures to level the playing field.

Empowering 2 Lakh Women Entrepreneurs with JEEViKA



Partnerships

The Centre for Social and Behaviour Change (CSBC), in partnership with JEEViKA—the State Rural Livelihoods Mission of Bihar—and Bandhan Konnagar, is advancing entrepreneurship as a pathway out of generational poverty. A central feature of this initiative is the Satat Jeevikoparjan Yojana (SJY), where over 5,500 coaches provide personalised mentoring to first-time entrepreneurs, known as SJY Didis, through home visits and weekly sessions over 24 months.

To strengthen this support system, CSBC conducted a field diagnostic in Gaya District in 2022, observing interactions between Master Resource Persons (MRPs) and SJY Didis. Combined with a literature review, the study identified key coaching needs such as confidence-building, goal-setting, networking, problem-solving, and negotiation. Based on these insights, CSBC piloted a coaching toolkit in Nalanda District in 2023, training 25 coaches with new materials, including a motivational video and tutorials on essential entrepreneurial skills. The prototype was refined through 2024 and has so far reached 76 MRPs, with plans for scale-up to all 5,500 coaches.

By integrating behavioural science into grassroots mentoring, this initiative is set to empower over 2 lakh women entrepreneurs, driving financial resilience and community transformation.

Bano Iron Naari: Turning Awareness Into Action for Women's Health



Partnerships

The Bano Iron Naari campaign encouraged adolescent girls and young women in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar to tackle anaemia by getting screened. Using the TRACO model (transfer of creative ownership), the campaign engaged over 130 influencers on Instagram along with celebrities like Sara Ali Khan on YouTube, leveraging aspirational framing for diverse age groups. The initiative achieved 186 million impressions, with more than 100,000 individuals taking the anaemia quiz linked to the campaign.

By combining creative storytelling with mass digital outreach, the campaign turned anaemia awareness into a mainstream health conversation, motivating young women to recognise symptoms and take proactive health actions.



Integrating Anaemia Awareness Into Skill-Building Programmes



Partnerships

The Centre for Social and Behaviour Change (CSBC), in partnership with the Nimaya Foundation, conducted a research study to evaluate the impact of embedding anaemia awareness into skill-training curricula on encouraging health-seeking behaviours among young women. The study engaged 1,000 participants of Nimaya's Smart Fellowship: Workplace Skills for Success programme in Lucknow, a fellowship designed to equip women with critical workplace and digital skills through experiential learning such as workplace simulations and case studies.

Recognising that anaemia significantly affects productivity and long-term health outcomes, CSBC worked to weave health awareness into the fellowship's core curriculum. Narratives and interactive content were developed to highlight how anaemia can act as a barrier to both personal well-being and professional success. By integrating these insights into existing training modules, the programme provided a dual benefit: equipping participants with employability skills while simultaneously promoting proactive health behaviours.

The study assessed whether this integrated approach motivated participants to take steps such as undergoing anaemia testing. By combining health education with career readiness, the initiative demonstrates the potential of skill-building platforms to address pressing public health challenges in parallel with advancing women's empowerment.





ENSURE AVAILABILITY AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF WATER AND SANITATION FOR ALL



Rainwater Harvesting



Fifteen rainwater harvesting pits have been built within the campus to recharge the groundwater levels. Through these pits, harvested water is fed into the ground, which helps in retaining the groundwater levels. Each zone has one harvesting pit with a desilting chamber. Appropriate preventive maintenance is in place to ensure these pits work efficiently.

Campus Sewage Treatment Infrastructure



Ashoka has two STP plants (100 KLD and 300 KLD) to treat sewage wastewater and make it fit for further use. All the wastewater generated from buildings, the dining hall, and other sources is collected and treated in our sewage treatment plant (STP) at desired parameters set up by the Central Pollution Control Board in NABL-accredited labs on a monthly basis. The STP plants use the Moving Bed Biofilm Reactor (MBBR) system, the latest technology, for the treatment of wastewater. The treated water is tested for the prescribed limits as per the EP Act 1986 for pH levels, suspended solids, chemical oxygen demand, biochemical oxygen demand and oil & grease. 32,963KL of water is generated from two STPs annually on campus and is reused in irrigation throughout the year across campus.

Law & Economic Development In India: Behavioural Approaches



Vikramaditya Khanna, Professor of the University of Michigan Law School, and Pavan Mamidi, Director of the Centre for Social and Behaviour Change, offered the course “Learning in Context: Behavioural Science Through Experiential Practice” to examine the intersection of law, behavioural science, and economic development in India. Students explored how legal frameworks and behavioural insights shape policy effectiveness, compliance, and development outcomes. The course contextualised India’s legal system through a behavioural lens, highlighting how judicial interpretations and social norms influence change. In Varanasi, students engaged with the Dom community at Manikarnika Ghat to understand informal social contracts governing cremation practices, revealing their economic, environmental, and cultural implications, particularly on the Ganga River. A floating seminar titled “Shaping Societies” fostered dialogue on social norms and sustainability. Additionally, a session on the Namami Gange programme, in collaboration with the Ministry of Jal Shakti, examined environmental governance, community participation, and large-scale water management. This experiential course bridged theory and practice, offering students grounded insights into law, behaviour, and sustainability.



Pavan Mamidi
Director
Centre for Social and Behaviour Change

"Effective environmental policy emerges at the confluence of legal frameworks, behavioural insight, and systems thinking. Experiential learning enables us to see how culture, law, and lived experience interact giving us a more holistic understanding of what makes environmental interventions succeed or fail."

Environmental Economics



Kavita Sardana, Visiting Faculty in the Economics Department, leads this course that provides an economic framework for managing environmental goods like water. It covers market failures such as externalities and the challenges of managing public goods. Students explore various policy tools for resource allocation and methods to measure the value of environmental goods, offering an economic perspective on water governance.

Jal Jeevan Mission



Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) seeks to not only provide functional household tap connections to all rural households by 2024 but also seeks to promote holistic management of local water resources. Centre for Social and Behaviour Change is a knowledge partner on this project and their mandate is to design the evaluation strategy for the behavioural component of JJM, analyse evaluation data and recommend corrective or alternative interventions and provide strategic inputs to partner organisations working on interventions and/or communication targeted at the behavioural change in JJM.



Improving Efficiency of Water Use on Campus



The University is located in the northern part of India, a region that has witnessed a sharp decline in the groundwater table over the years. In an attempt to reduce its water footprint, Ashoka strives to reduce, reuse and recycle every drop of water used on campus. The wastewater from the kitchen is passed through various grease traps and is further fed into the water treatment plant. The wastewater coming from the toilet is connected to the sewage treatment plant (STP). This recycled water is further used for irrigating the lawns and green areas and cleaning the solar panels on the campus. Our housekeeping team is equipped with specialised cleaning machines that not only decrease the effort required for manual cleaning but also the amount of water required for cleaning purposes. Most taps, faucets and showers are fitted with water aerators for regulating the flow of water for efficient consumption and reduction of water wastage. Similarly, urinals run on a sensor-based water flow mechanism. The irrigation system is designed in such a way that allows us to utilise water without any wastage. Our sprinkler water system allows uniform distribution of water with high efficiency.

Designing Porous Organic Polymers (POPs) to Trap/Capture Harmful and Heavy Salts from Water Bodies, Making the Water Bodies Usable



This ongoing research by Vidya Avasare, Professor of Chemistry in collaboration with IISER Pune, focuses on improving water quality by separating and capturing harmful anionic moieties such as nitrates and sulphates from water bodies, aligning with SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation. The research funded by DST-India utilizes covalent organic frameworks (COFs), covalent organic polymers (COPs), and porous organic polymers (POPs) to enhance the biochemical oxygen demand (BOD) of aquatic systems. By designing efficient POPs capable of trapping heavy and harmful salts, the project aims to make contaminated water bodies safer and more usable.

Monitoring University's Water Footprint



All water requirements of Ashoka University's campus are met through the HUDA water supply system. Well-calibrated water flow meters have been installed at sources to measure and evaluate the daily/monthly water consumption. Installation of separate meters for water used in drinking, cooking, horticulture, flushing, cleaning and washing is being considered. The total volume of water used on campus in 2024 was 1,82,264 KL.





ENSURE ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE, RELIABLE, SUSTAINABLE AND MODERN ENERGY FOR ALL



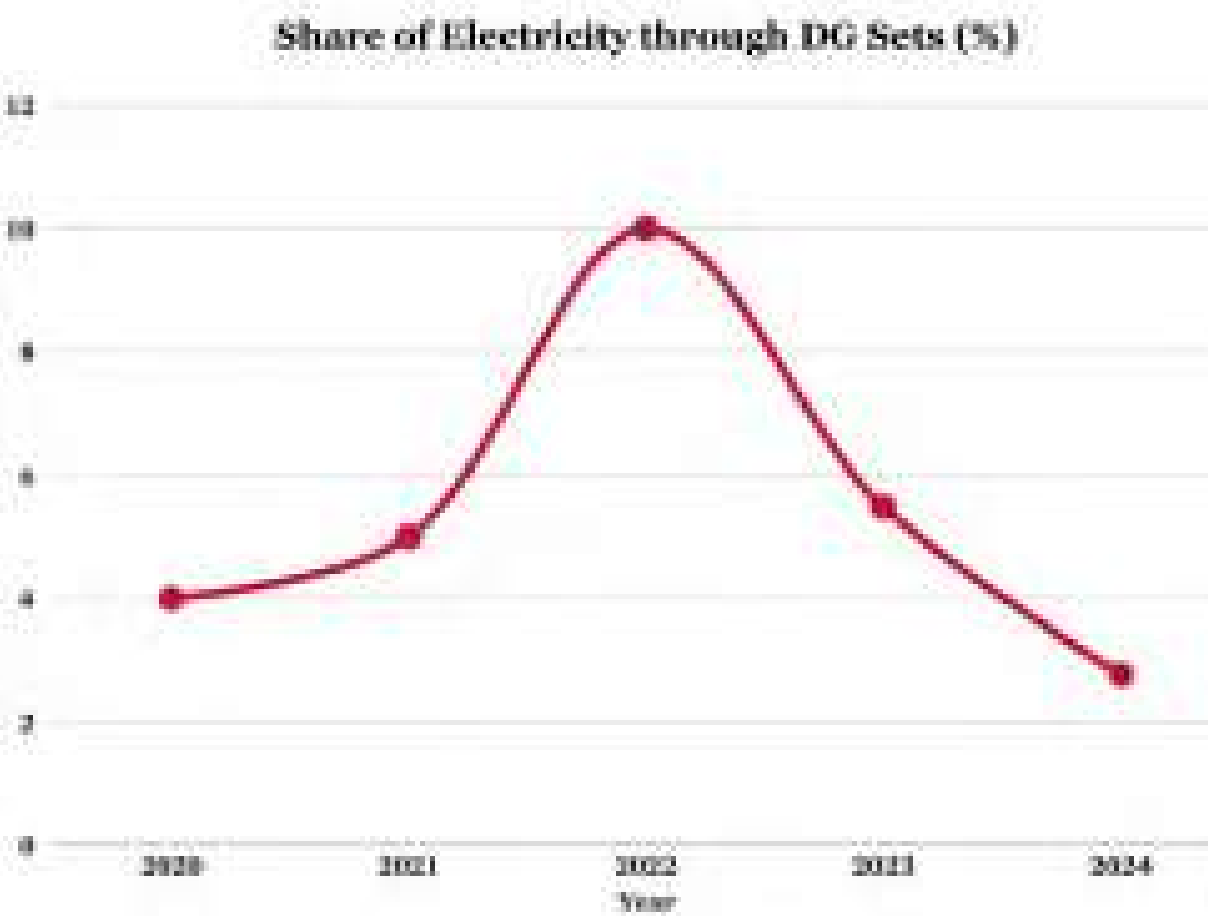
Energy Backup Infrastructure



In the event of a blackout or outage from the State Electricity Board, Ashoka’s DG sets provide 100% power backup. We have a total of 5 DG sets (four 750 kVA and one 500 kVA). Adherence to all Pollution Control Board norms is ensured while operating the DG sets. DG sets are tested for carbon emission at periodic intervals in accordance with the Pollution Control Board. Over the years, the share of energy from DG sets has reduced significantly. With the increase in solar power generation capacity, we have been able to generate greener energy and reduce our dependence on fossil fuels.

Share of Electricity through DG Sets

Electricity Units for EB are based on monthly electricity board invoices



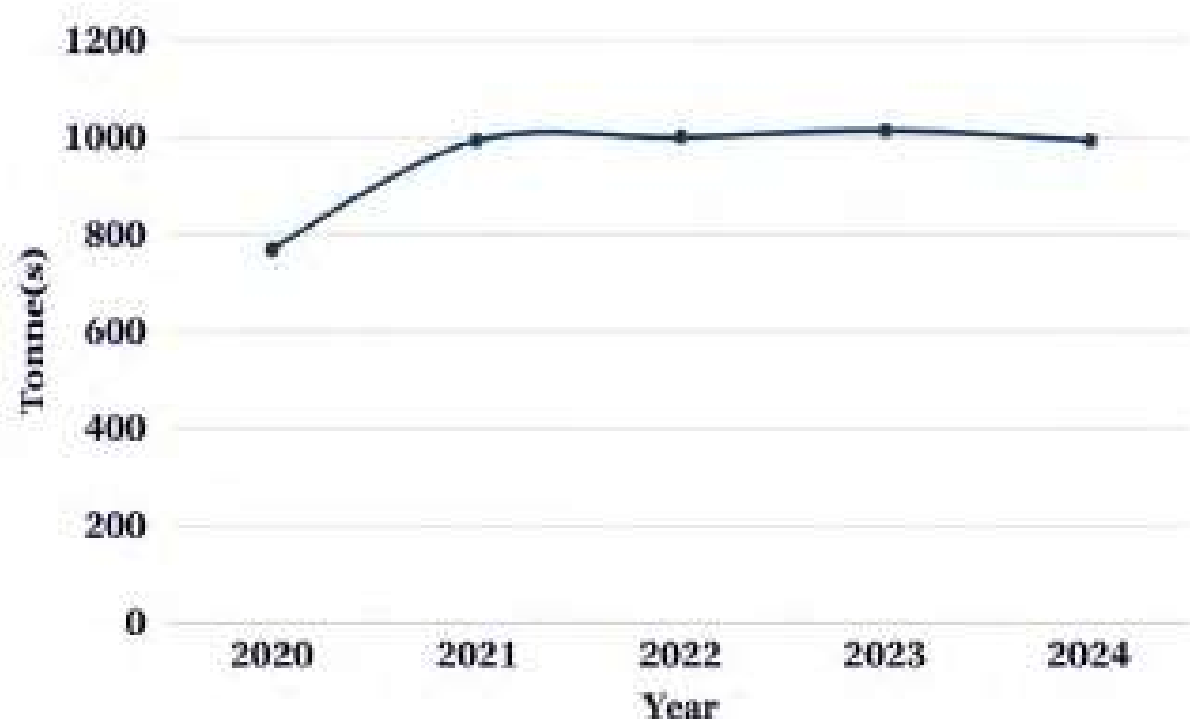
On-campus Energy Generation



In order to reduce its carbon footprint, the University has taken several measures. Net Zero Energy Building is one of the major initiatives led by the University. Under this initiative, Ashoka plans to become self reliant in energy production and consumption.

At present, a small amount of electricity used in the operations is generated internally using renewable energy sources like solar. Ashoka has installed 893 kW of solar power panels utilising all available surfaces, such as the rooftops and car parking area to harvest solar energy. Through these panels, we are able to meet about 13% of the campus power requirements. We are also aggressively exploring offsite solar farms for generating solar power. The government's policy of buying back the extra electricity produced through the decentralised grids has not been implemented yet, thereby leading to a delay in expanding the current solar production capacity.

On-Campus Solar Energy Generation (MWh)



Topics In Chemistry



Taught by faculty from the Department of Chemistry, this foundational course provides the scientific basis necessary for developing clean energy solutions. The curriculum covers the study of how the interaction of electrons plays a crucial role in the transformation of substances, which is fundamental to energy conversion. By exploring concepts such as thermodynamics, kinetics, and catalysis, the heart of chemistry, the course equips students with the knowledge required to understand and innovate in fields like renewable energy.

Designing of Nonprecious Metal Pincer Complexes for the formation of Methanol from Carbon Dioxide



This ongoing research by Vidya Avasare, Professor of Chemistry, addresses CO₂ capture and mitigation. It focuses on developing non-precious metal pincer complexes, particularly Mn, Fe, and Ni, with NNN-type ligands, for the efficient conversion of CO₂ into methanol. The research funded by SERB-CRG also explores heterogeneous catalysts to enhance methanol formation using water and hydrogen, aiming to create an energy-efficient process for sustainable fuel production. The generated methanol is envisioned as a potential clean fuel to drive future vehicles, contributing to reduced carbon emissions and promoting greener energy solutions.

Monitoring & Reducing Campus Energy Consumption



Ashoka University understands that educational research development requires significant dependence on natural resources including water and energy. Electricity is essential for the lighting of several academic and non-academic buildings, including the library, common areas and pathways, among several others. The University currently has a high dependence on the electricity supplied from external sources, such as the power plants operated by the state and private companies. At Ashoka, the electric power is supplied from Uttar Haryana Bijli Vitran Nigam (UHBVN). The supplied voltage of 11KV is brought down to a low voltage using step-down transformers. We also maintain a power factor at 0.99 on each EB bill to reduce the power and energy losses in the power line and transformer.

In addition, the "Annual Environmental Sustainability Report 2024" highlights Ashoka's commitment to reducing energy consumption and carbon emissions through renewable energy sources, efficient building designs, and minimised use of diesel generators. As the campus expands, we are extending these sustainable practices, including further solar installations and eco-friendly transport options like CNG shuttle bus connectivities and carpooling. By tracking Scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions through GHG Protocols, we continually refine our approach to energy efficiency and work toward a more sustainable future.

Greener Grids, Healthier DISCOMs: The Case for Rooftop Solar Panels



Research

This policy brief, written by students of Ashoka in collaboration with the Economics Department, highlights the urgent financial and operational challenges faced by India's public electricity distribution companies (DISCOMs), which suffer from inefficiencies, outdated infrastructure, and rising losses. The authors propose a combined solution: mandating rooftop solar panels for certain residential, commercial, and industrial buildings, while creating an incentive-based policy framework for public DISCOMs to support and implement this transition. Rooftop solar installations—especially when net-metered—can reduce distribution costs, lower consumer bills, and decrease dependence on fossil fuels.

To make this policy work, the authors recommend scaling up government subsidies, enforcing installation mandates for larger establishments, and incentivising DISCOMs through grants and faster subsidy disbursement based on performance. The proposed reforms aim to modernise India's power infrastructure, reduce AT&C (Aggregate Technical and Commercial) losses, empower consumers with cleaner energy, and ultimately make DISCOMs financially viable while supporting India's broader renewable energy and climate goals.

Computational Design of Silicon-Substituted Cyclo[18]Carbon Catalysts for Sustainable Ammonia Production



Research

Sourav Pal, Professor and Head of the Department of Chemistry, focused on developing alternative catalysts for nitrogen activation and ammonia synthesis. His work aims to replace the highly energy-intensive Haber process with more sustainable methods. Using computational density functional theory (DFT), the team studies silicon-substituted cyclo[18]carbon (C17Si) as a promising catalyst.

Although cyclo[18]carbon has been theoretically studied for some time and only recently synthesised in the gas phase, this research explores how substituting silicon improves its ability to activate molecular nitrogen (N₂) and form ammonia precursors through successive hydrogen additions. The study shows that C17Si-N₂ adducts can be converted to ammonia precursors under moderate temperature and pressure, providing a more energy-efficient route for ammonia production. This ongoing research, published in ChemPhysChem (2023, 2024), aims to contribute to cleaner nitrogen fixation technologies.

Non-Precious Transition Metal Pincer Complexes for Sustainable Hydrogen Production



Research

Vidya Avasare, Professor of Chemistry, focuses on designing cost-effective and efficient catalysts for clean hydrogen production using formic acid and methanol as hydrogen storage materials. Her research centres on non-precious transition metal pincer complexes, which offer adjustable properties and high durability. These complexes provide a promising alternative to precious metals by maintaining efficiency while lowering environmental and economic costs.

Using computational chemistry and density functional theory (DFT), the team explores how these catalysts work by studying their catalytic mechanisms, identifying active sites, and understanding structure-function relationships. This knowledge helps optimise the catalysts' performance for practical use. Ultimately, the research aims to support sustainable hydrogen production, contributing to decarbonization and the global shift towards a hydrogen-based energy economy.

Harnessing Sunlight for Green Power



In the study “Harnessing Sunlight for Green Power: The Potential for Behaviour Change and Rooftop Solar Panels,” Vikrom Mathur, Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Social and Behaviour Change, and his team examine the behavioural dynamics influencing rooftop solar adoption in Indian households. With electricity and heat production accounting for the largest share of carbon emissions in India, rooftop solar emerges as a powerful low-carbon solution—capable of reducing nearly 1 tonne of CO₂ annually per household system.

Fieldwork conducted in Ahmedabad and Surat reveals several behavioural and structural barriers to solar adoption, including limited awareness, high upfront costs, complex purchase processes, and disorganized vendor networks. However, factors such as peer influence, trusted brands, and government subsidies facilitate adoption.

The study underscores the transformative potential of household solar energy in cutting emissions and improving air quality. It calls for behavioural interventions and policy support to accelerate India’s transition to decentralized clean energy.

High Throughput COF Discovery to Capture CO₂ Using Machine Learning Models



This research project by Vidya Avasare, Professor of Chemistry aims to develop a machine learning (ML) model to design and screen covalent organic frameworks (COFs) for efficient CO₂ capture under varying pressures. High-level Density Functional Theory (DFT) calculations are used to train the model, enabling accurate predictions of COF activity and capture capabilities. The research funded by Mphasis Ashoka focuses on creating an extensive experimental database of CO₂ capture capacities from synthesized COFs, which will serve as a blind dataset to test the model. Insights gained from this analysis will help identify ideal adsorption properties and accelerate the development of next-generation COF materials. Ultimately, this work seeks to enhance carbon capture technologies by combining advanced computational modelling with data-driven machine learning approaches.



Biomimetic Catalysis for Green Hydrogen Production



Munmun Ghosh, Assistant Professor of Chemistry in her research focuses on developing sustainable materials to electrochemically split water and produce green hydrogen, a clean energy carrier with the potential to decarbonise multiple industries. Inspired by natural catalytic systems, the team designs and synthesises biomimetic catalysts that can operate efficiently and cost-effectively, offering a viable alternative to precious-metal-based systems.

This research combines principles of chemistry, materials science, and renewable energy engineering to address one of the key challenges in the global energy transition: producing hydrogen without carbon emissions. By advancing catalyst design for high-performance, low-cost hydrogen generation, the work contributes directly to scaling green energy technologies in support of SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy.

Energy Transition Financing



Partnerships

In the project “Energy Transition Financing,” Dr. Anandajit Goswami, Research Fellow at Ashoka Centre for a People-Centric Energy Transition (ACPET) is funded by HSBC and explores how financing can enable a just and inclusive shift to clean energy in India’s journey to a net-zero economy by 2070. The study distinguishes between two interconnected dimensions of the transition: household-level rural energy access and utility-level decarbonisation pathways.

By analysing decentralised, solar-based business and philanthropic models in laggard and aspiring districts of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Jharkhand, the project investigates how off-grid communities can gain access to reliable electricity and livelihood opportunities. In parallel, it examines the decarbonisation pathways of DISCOMs such as Tamil Nadu Power Distribution Corporation Limited and Tata Power, assessing how utilities can adapt financing structures and operations for clean energy integration.

The findings are designed to inform both grassroots electrification models and large-scale grid transformation. This dual perspective produces two policy roadmaps: one addressing institutional and business model gaps in clean energy financing for unserved villages, and another guiding DISCOMs on short-, medium-, and long-term challenges in clean energy adoption. The study not only highlights financing and service challenges but also provides actionable solutions for a people-centric, inclusive clean energy future.



Transforming Lives and Livelihoods in Coal Mine-Affected Communities



Led by Vaibhav Chowdhary and the team at the Ashoka Centre for a People-Centric Energy Transition (ACPET), with support from HSBC and implementation partner Ek-Gaon, this study explores pathways for socio-economic and energy transition in Rajhara, a coal mine-affected region of Jharkhand. It examines three community-focused interventions: a solar-based lift irrigation system, the formation of a Farmer Producer Organisation, and household cooking practices to inform clean energy solutions. Through a mixed-methods approach combining household surveys, interviews, and participatory assessments, the study highlights both opportunities and challenges in building resilient post-mining livelihoods. The irrigation initiative repurposes abandoned mine water bodies, with early results showing farmers' optimism about income gains and crop diversification, though governance mechanisms require strengthening. The Farmer Producer Organisation has been formally registered but needs greater farmer participation, institutional clarity, and stronger market linkages to realise its potential. The clean cooking study reveals continued dependence on traditional fuels due to affordability constraints, with women bearing the brunt of fuel collection and smoke exposure. Despite these challenges, strong interest among self-help groups suggests community-led approaches could drive adoption of cleaner alternatives.



Vaibhav Chowdhary
Director, Ashoka Centre for a
People-centric Energy Transition

"At ACPET, we believe the transition to a sustainable future must be both people-centric and grounded in evidence-based research. Our work consistently bridges cutting-edge economic modelling, academic perspectives and policy engagement to address some of the most pressing energy challenges of our time, from coal phasedown, critical mineral recovery and energy security, energy financing and energy access to the social impact of energy transition.

By aligning our research with the SDGs, ACPET contributes not only to advancing India's development pathways but also to shaping global conversations on how to achieve growth that is inclusive, equitable and environmentally responsible. Whether it is SDG 7 on affordable and clean energy, SDG 13 on climate action, or SDG 10 on reducing inequalities, our goal is clear: to produce actionable insights that empower decision-makers and communities alike to navigate the complexities of the energy transition with fairness, innovation and foresight."

Modelling Energy Systems for a Low-Carbon Economy



In the project "Modelling Energy Systems for a Low-Carbon Economy," Ilika Mohan, Research Manager at the Ashoka Centre for a People-Centric Energy Transition (ACPET), explores how rigorous energy-economic modelling can inform India's pathway towards sustainable growth. The study distinguishes between short-term renewable capacity targets for 2030, the national development vision of Viksit Bharat by 2047, and the long-term low-carbon target of 2070. By developing in-house modelling tools such as the India Energy Security Scenarios (IESS 2070) and the Energy Futures Lab, the project aims to co-design models with policymakers that provide consolidated, forward-looking policy guidance. This framework supports the creation of India's Energy Outlook—a comprehensive assessment of the energy sector with medium- to long-term transition pathways, future projections, and sectoral strategies. The findings are expected to catalyse faster investment decisions, drive cleaner technology adoption, and bridge existing governance and knowledge gaps. By combining research-based evidence with participatory model-building, the project positions itself as a crucial enabler of transformative reforms for a just, inclusive, and low-carbon economy.

ACPET–NITI Aayog Research Partnership on Energy Transition



Partnerships

The Ashoka Centre for a People-Centric Energy Transition (ACPET) has partnered with NITI Aayog to support India in achieving a sustainable, secure, and low-carbon growth trajectory while balancing the twin imperatives of economic development and clean energy targets for 1.4 billion citizens.

The collaboration focuses on advanced energy and climate modelling to inform national and state-level net-zero pathways. It investigates the techno-economic viability of India's transition by assessing critical mineral dependencies—such as lithium, cobalt, nickel, titanium, and rare earth elements—while analysing policy scenarios for resource efficiency and sustainable mineral management. Given India's heavy reliance on imports for 30 critical minerals deemed vital for economic development and national security, the research highlights strategies for reducing vulnerabilities through efficient management and long-term planning.

The partnership also examines the impact of energy choices on human health, the environment, and India's Mission LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment) within net-zero frameworks. Outcomes include developing actionable policy recommendations, improving energy scenario tools like IESS 2070, and engaging stakeholders to enhance evidence-based decision-making. Through this joint initiative, ACPET and NITI Aayog are shaping pathways that align India's clean energy ambitions with inclusive and sustainable development.





PROMOTE SUSTAINED, INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH, FULL AND PRODUCTIVE EMPLOYMENT AND DECENT WORK FOR ALL



Clubs and Societies



Enactus drives social impact through sustainable business projects. The club creates employment opportunities for underprivileged women, empowering them to develop and market products that leverage their creative skills. Committed to responsible consumption and economic empowerment, Enactus has partnered with NGOs for projects like Swachh and Lakeer, providing marginalised communities with sustainable income sources by producing handcrafted items, including organic soaps, candles, masks, and diaries. These initiatives promote environmental responsibility, economic independence, and inclusive growth. Neev is a community engagement club run by the students of Ashoka. They work towards providing academic peer mentorship support to students from Asawarpur village. They have also started a Women For Women programme, which provides women from Asawarpur a platform to interact and discuss pertinent issues ranging from sanitation to effective financial management. They are also working on a programme to promote small businesses in Asawarpur within the university community.

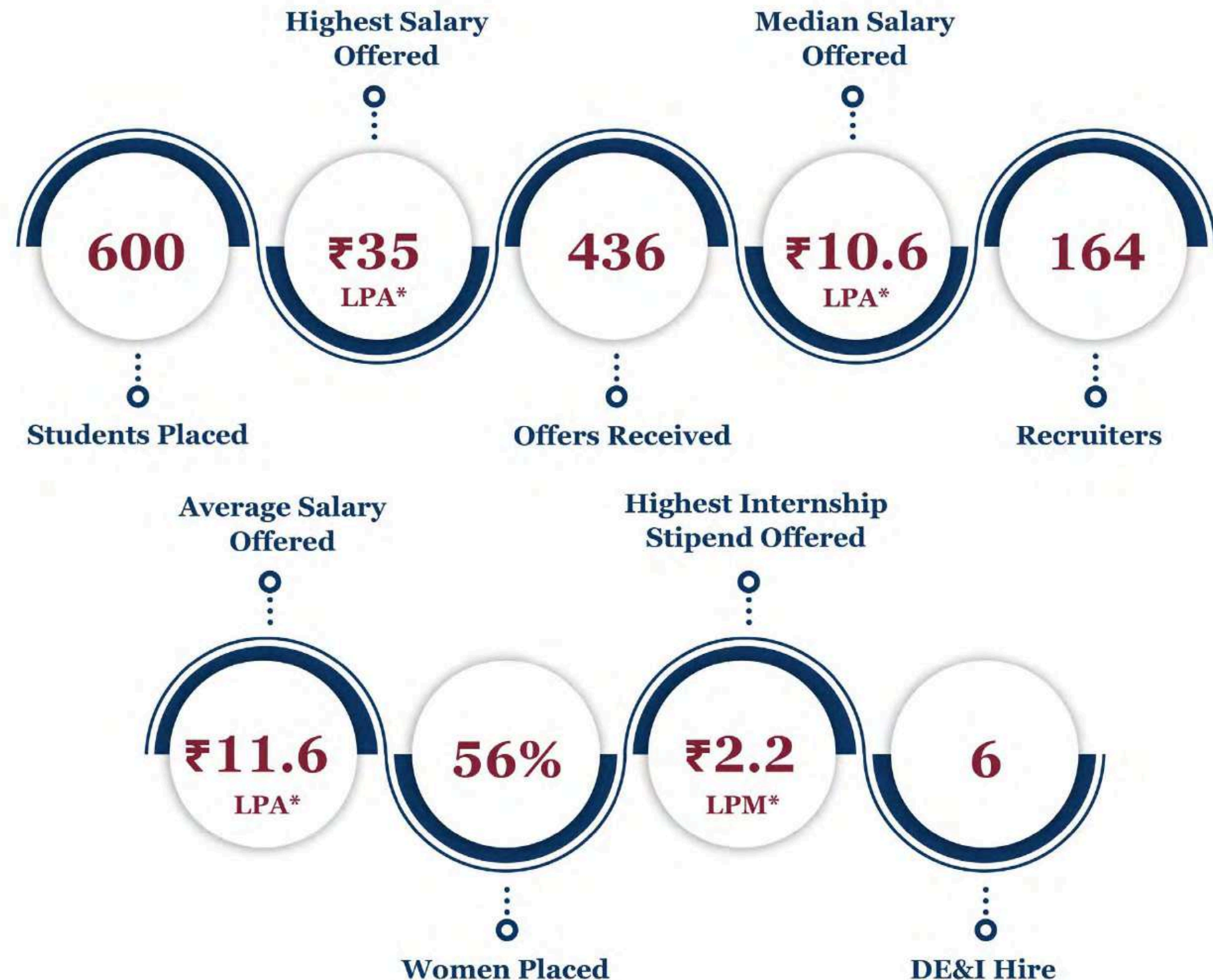


Priyanka Chandhok
Vice President,
Career Development Office &
Office of Post Graduate Studies

"We care deeply about where our students go and how they grow. At Ashoka University, career readiness goes beyond employability—it is about enabling students to find purpose and create impact. The Career Development Office (CDO) and the Office of Postgraduate Studies (OPGS) prepare graduates for meaningful, inclusive, and future-ready work. Acting as a bridge between academia and industry, the CDO ensures equitable access to job opportunities aligned with students' skills and interests. The OPGS provides one-on-one counselling for higher education, guiding students toward admissions to top universities and prestigious scholarships.

Over the past decade, we have moved beyond transactional recruiter-student interactions to build long-term partnerships where employers mentor, collaborate, and co-create roles. Through targeted mentoring and workshops on case studies, resumes and interviews, students gain the agility and confidence to thrive in a rapidly evolving economy. In close collaboration with faculty, alumni, and employers, we continue to ensure that students translate their academic strengths into workplace success."

ASHOKA IN NUMBERS



**The figures are based on the Academic Year 2024-2025

TOP RECRUITERS









**Top Recruiters in the Academic Year 2024-2025

Value Systems as Foundations for Decent Work



Ashoka University embeds the principle of decent work within its organisational ethos, guided by values that reinforce accountability, inclusivity, and excellence. The institution encourages its community to be mission-driven, to think strategically by challenging conventional approaches, to act authentically with transparency, to take accountability for goals, to build collaboration across stakeholders, and to deliver excellence through process-oriented and resource-optimised outcomes. Together, these values shape a workplace culture that prioritises integrity, purpose, and high standards. Complementing these value systems, Ashoka’s institutional policies establish a structured framework to safeguard the rights and well-being of its employees. Financial aid policies and salary advance guidelines provide stability during exigencies, while promotion and internal mobility pathways ensure transparent career progression. Work hours and attendance guidelines, leave and relocation policies, and probation processes set fair conditions of employment. Codes of conduct and grievance redressal mechanisms embed accountability and ethical practice, while supportive practices such as buddy guidelines, induction, housing, and travel policies strengthen belonging and access to resources. Ashoka’s Employee Value Proposition further articulates its commitment to care, wellbeing, and connection; growth and adaptability; and purpose and impact. Collectively, these systems and policies institutionalise decent work and reaffirm Ashoka’s responsibility as an equitable employer.

Learning and Development as Drivers of Growth



Ashoka University places learning and development (L&D) at the centre of its organisational ethos, reflecting its commitment to excellence, inclusivity, and innovation. The L&D agenda nurtures every employee’s potential by combining world-class resources, customised training, and structured career pathways. Comprehensive learning pathways provide employees—from frontline teams to senior leaders—with access to training tailored to each career stage. Foundational programmes build essential skills, while advanced workshops prepare managers and leaders to drive institutional impact. Global-standard resources such as certifications on edX, the Ashoka Executive Certification for Administrators, and AXA Climate School enable employees to develop future-ready skills and explore cross-functional opportunities. Complementing these are career progression initiatives like Rise, Ascend, and Soar, which reinforce transparency, mobility, and leadership development. By embedding continuous learning into its culture, Ashoka strengthens individual capacity while advancing its mission to build impactful leadership through education.



Ambica Chaturvedi
Vice President, Human Resources

"At Ashoka, we see work as a journey of purpose and growth. Our aim is to ensure that every individual feels respected, supported, and connected, no matter their role. When people feel safe and trusted, they bring not only their skills but also their passion and creativity to the community. That is when work becomes meaningful — for the individual and for all of us together."

Ensuring Safe and Inclusive Workplaces through POSH Training



Ashoka University upholds its commitment to creating a secure and equitable workplace by institutionalising mandatory Prevention of Sexual Harassment (POSH) training for all employees and faculty members. These regular trainings are designed not only as compliance measures but also as proactive efforts to embed respect, dignity, and equality within the organisational culture. The sessions educate participants on their rights, responsibilities, and available reporting procedures, ensuring that every individual is equipped to recognise and address inappropriate behaviour.

Policies to Facilitate Adjustment to Globalisation



Research

Prachi Mishra, Professor of Economics, along with her collaborators from the International Monetary Fund, explores how labour market policies can help workers adapt to the disruptive effects of globalisation and technological change. Using cross-country data and two major case studies—the rise in Chinese imports in the 2000s ("China shock") and the shift to electric vehicle production in Europe—the authors show that while globalisation yields broad economic benefits, it also causes uneven labour market outcomes. In particular, trade shocks tend to increase job separation rates for certain groups, such as prime-age men in manufacturing, leading to political backlash against trade and globalisation.

The study finds that countries with stronger labour market policies—both active (training, job search support) and passive (unemployment benefits)—experience less severe labour disruptions and reduced anti-trade sentiment. These policies help lower the "transition costs" for displaced workers, making globalisation more politically sustainable. The authors argue that investing in labour market support is essential to ensure inclusive growth, preserve public support for open trade, and manage the workforce transitions brought on by global economic changes.

Inattention, Emotions, and Norms in Team Performance: Theory and Evidence



Research

Led by Pavan Mamidi, Director of the Centre for Social and Behaviour Change, this project, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation explores how emotions and workplace norms shape behaviour in teams. Through pre-registered lab experiments with 522 participants in India and 377 in the UK, the study examines the role of guilt-aversion, shame-aversion, and social norms in influencing team members' effort choices.

The research builds a rigorous beliefs-based model, tested across four treatments designed to isolate the effects of these emotions and norms. The findings provide deeper insights into how individuals behave in team settings and highlight the importance of social and emotional drivers in shaping workplace performance.

With implications for organisational design and management practices, this study offers valuable guidance for optimising teamwork in firms and beyond, wherever humans collaborate to achieve shared goals.

Deposit and Credit Reallocation in a Banking Panic: The Role of State-Owned Banks



Research

Prachi Mishra, Professor of Economics, with other collaborators, investigates the effects of a banking panic in India during the 2008 financial crisis, where depositors shifted funds from private banks to state-owned banks (PSBs), perceived as safer. While this movement stabilised depositor confidence, it led to significant credit misallocation. Private banks that lost deposits tightened lending and improved credit quality, but PSBs, flush with new deposits, expanded lending with weaker credit discipline, leading to an increase in non-performing assets (NPAs) over time.

At the firm level, companies that previously borrowed from run-affected private banks saw credit shrink, while those gaining access to PSB credit experienced lower productivity, weaker financial performance, and reduced capital and sales growth. The aggregate result was a 17% decline in productivity, driven by inefficient credit reallocation rather than an increase in financial access or quality. Misallocated credit can stifle innovation, hinder job creation, and slow firm growth, especially in developing economies. The paper highlights the importance of strengthening financial institutions and ensuring that public sector safety nets do not come at the cost of long-term economic efficiency.

The Agricultural Productivity Gap: Informality Matters



Research

This paper by Bharat Ramaswami, Professor of Economics and his collaborator explores the agricultural productivity gap (APG) in India by distinguishing between the formal and informal non-farm sectors. Traditionally, APG literature compares productivity between agriculture and non-agriculture, often showing that non-agricultural sectors are far more productive. However, this approach ignores significant heterogeneity within the non-agricultural sector. This paper decomposes the non-farm sector into formal and informal segments and finds that while productivity is substantially higher in the formal sector, the gap between agriculture and the informal non-farm sector is small or negligible once differences in work hours, human capital, and labor's share of value added are accounted for.

By the use of the macroeconomic and household survey data, they show that 40-50% of India's non-farm workforce is in sectors no more productive than agriculture, especially where informal employment exceeds 83%. The observed large productivity gap is largely driven by the small but economically significant formal non-farm sector. The analysis supports the idea that the core economic dualism in developing countries is not merely between agriculture and non-agriculture, but more crucially between informal and formal employment sectors. These findings have implications for development policy, particularly around labour mobility, employment transitions, and structural transformation.

The Politics of the Paycheck Protection Programme



Research

Prachi Mishra, Professor of Economics, with her collaborators, examines how political partisanship influenced the allocation of loans under the U.S. Paycheck Protection Programme (PPP), a central component of the government's COVID-19 economic relief strategy. The study uses detailed data on political contributions made by employees of lending institutions to measure the partisan leanings of banks. Surprisingly, the findings reveal that Republican-leaning lenders increased their lending during the second phase of the PPP, which was implemented under the Biden administration. This behaviour is interpreted as a reflection of these lenders viewing the program as a legacy of the Trump administration, and thus continuing their participation despite political misalignment with the current government.

The paper further demonstrates that this partisan misalignment led to meaningful real-world outcomes, such as increased payroll support and a higher number of loans in Republican-leaning areas. The effect was most evident in loans issued to small and first-time borrowers—cases where loan officers had greater discretion. The research highlights that rank-and-file employees, rather than executives, played a key role in driving this behavior, emphasizing the operational impact of individual political beliefs. Through this work, Mishra contributes to our understanding of how politics can influence financial systems and the effectiveness of public policy during crises.

Economic Crisis and Different Solutions



Research

Two papers by Prachi Mishra, Professor of Economics, with her collaborators, examine how economies adapt under crisis conditions—one focused on U.S. inflation dynamics, the other on global credit during COVID-19. In *The Rise and Retreat of US Inflation: An Update*, the authors revisit the surge of 2021–22 and its subsequent decline. They show that inflation was driven largely by sector-specific shocks and supply disruptions rather than labour market tightness, with traditional indicators like the vacancy-to-unemployment ratio overstating pressures. Crucially, inflation fell without a rise in unemployment or wage collapse, challenging the Phillips Curve framework and underscoring the need for flexible, data-dependent monetary policy.

Complementing this, *What Policy Combinations Worked?* analyses data from 49 countries to evaluate coordinated fiscal, monetary, and prudential responses during COVID-19. The study finds that broad, comprehensive “all-out” policy packages supported significantly stronger bank lending, especially under uncertainty or financial stress, highlighting the importance of scale and coordination rather than reliance on a single instrument.

Together, the studies show how adaptive, well-calibrated policy can stabilise economies in crisis—preserving credit access, containing inflation, and supporting resilience without derailing growth.

International Trade



Taught by Abhishek Rai, Assistant Professor of Economics, this course examines why countries trade, how the benefits and costs are distributed, and how trade patterns have changed over time. It blends theory and evidence, covering the Ricardian model of comparative advantage, the Heckscher-Ohlin framework, and the effects of trade policy on welfare. The course provides a comprehensive understanding of the forces that shape sustainable global economic growth.

Indian Macroeconomy and Financial Markets



This course, offered by Prachi Mishra, Professor of Economics, offers a deep dive into India’s macroeconomy and financial markets, examining their transformation over the last five decades from modest growth rates in the 1970s to rapid expansion in recent years. It covers key themes such as economic growth, inflation, interest rates, fiscal policy, external trade and capital flows, and the functioning of financial markets. Students will explore both historical trends and current challenges, while also developing a forward-looking perspective on India’s economic trajectory. Practical skills are a core component: participants will work with real-world data using Excel and STATA, and tackle problems that mirror those faced by policymakers. By the end of the course, students will be equipped to analyse complex macro-financial issues in the Indian context and form evidence-based opinions on future developments.

Essentials of Technology Product Management and Demystifying Family Businesses



Offered by the Centre for Entrepreneurship, these courses prepare students to engage with two pivotal drivers of today’s economy—technology products and family enterprises. Essentials of Technology Product Management equips students with the skills to identify customer needs, shape product vision, and collaborate across functions to design, launch, and scale digital products, building capacity for leadership in the tech-driven business landscape. Demystifying Family Businesses explores the vital role of family-run enterprises in employment and growth, from small firms to major conglomerates. Students examine their distinct dynamics, opportunities, and challenges, gaining a nuanced understanding of how to work within or lead such institutions. Together, the courses cultivate versatile professionals ready to navigate both innovation-driven and tradition-rooted business environments.

Workshop: ESG and All That



The Office of Sustainability, in partnership with The Future Founders Co., organised a two-day interactive workshop on ESG Fundamentals, Careers, and Building Personal Values in Sustainability on March 6–7, 2025. The workshop introduced students to the evolving landscape of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG), highlighting that sustainability is a multidisciplinary field open to individuals from diverse academic backgrounds. Sessions explored key ESG principles, including Scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions, and the frameworks shaping sustainable business decisions. Emphasis was placed on the idea that there is no single pathway or degree required to enter the ESG space—what truly matters is passion, adaptability, and a commitment to driving meaningful change. The workshop also featured a panel discussion where professionals shared insights into careers in sustainability and consulting. Their experiences reinforced the message that career paths in ESG are rarely linear, and the coming decade will bring significant opportunities for those who remain curious and committed.



How Labour Force Participation Rates in India Vary Across Age Groups



This article by Akshi Chawla, Director of Centre for Economic Data and Analysis (CEDA) and collaborators, investigates how labour force participation in India varies across age groups, with a focus on gender differences and rural-urban divides, using data from the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2022-23. While 58.3% of Indians aged 15-59 were part of the labour force, participation rates are not uniform. Men's participation becomes nearly universal after age 25, but women's labour force participation (LFPR) is much lower and more variable, peaking at just over 50% in the 40-44 age group. The authors link this trend to early marriage and childbearing responsibilities that disproportionately affect women in their 20s, resulting in reduced LFPR during key early career years. The article also reveals a growing rural-urban gap in female participation, driven by a rise in self-employment among rural women aged 40 and above, especially as own-account workers. Urban women, in contrast, have seen declining access to regular salaried jobs. Unemployment is highest among youth, particularly urban women aged 20-24, whose unemployment rate reached 31.7% in 2022-23. This reflects both a lack of decent work opportunities and gendered hiring biases. Overall, the study highlights how age, gender, and location intersect to shape labour outcomes.

Ashoka University Honoured for Safe Working Environment



Ashoka University's commitment to health, safety, and well-being was recognised by the Labour Department, Government of Haryana, with the Runner-Up Best Safe Working Condition Award. The accolade acknowledges the University's efforts to maintain the highest safety standards across both operational spaces and under-construction sites, ensuring a secure and responsible working environment. This recognition highlights Ashoka's proactive approach to workplace safety through strict adherence to regulatory compliance, adoption of innovative practices, and continuous monitoring of health, safety, and environmental measures. By integrating safety into every stage of construction and campus operations, the University reinforces its responsibility towards the welfare of workers, staff, and the larger community. The award not only validates Ashoka's systematic efforts but also strengthens its mission to create a safe, inclusive, and sustainable campus environment. It serves as a reminder that building a world-class university goes hand in hand with protecting the people who sustain it.



The Contractualisation of the Workforce in India's Factories Continues



This article, written by Kulvinder Singh, Research Analyst in the Centre for Economic Data and Analysis (CEDA), investigates the growing trend of contractualisation in India's formal manufacturing sector over the past two decades. Using data from the Annual Survey of Industries (ASI), it reveals that the share of contract workers has risen sharply—from 23.1% in 2002-03 to 40.2% in 2021-22—even as the total number of factory workers more than doubled. This trend suggests a structural shift in employment practices where firms increasingly prefer contract labour for flexibility and cost-cutting, often at the expense of job security and worker benefits. The analysis also highlights regional and sectoral disparities in contract labour usage. Rural factories, capital-intensive industries (like petroleum and transport equipment), and certain states such as Tripura and Bihar report significantly higher shares of contract workers. In contrast, sectors like textiles and states like Kerala and Tamil Nadu maintain lower levels. The piece links these trends to changes in labour regulation, judicial decisions, and pro-employer policies, raising concerns about the erosion of decent work standards.

Inflation and Labor Markets: A Bottom-Up View



Prachi Mishra, Professor of Economics, with her collaborators in this paper, investigates how local labor market tightness drives inflation in the U.S. services sector. By leveraging proprietary microdata from Homebase, which captures wage and employment information across millions of U.S. service-sector workers, they analyse the relationship between wage growth and service inflation at the Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) level. Using a Local Projection Instrumental Variable (LP-IV) approach, they find that tighter labor markets — indicated by higher vacancy-to-unemployment ratios — significantly increase wage growth, which in turn raises services inflation with a lag of several months.

Their findings suggest that local labor market conditions, particularly in the post-pandemic period, were the dominant driver of services inflation in the U.S. between Q3 2022 and Q1 2023. A key insight is the nonlinear nature of this wage-price pass-through, which becomes stronger as labor markets grow tighter. These results have major implications for monetary policy and inflation targeting, highlighting the persistent inflationary pressures that can arise even when headline inflation seems to moderate, especially in labour-intensive sectors like services.

Are Manufacturing Jobs Growing or Declining? Here's What the Data Shows



PC Mohanan, Chairman of the Kerala State Statistical Commission and former Acting Chairman of the National Statistical Commission (NSC), addresses the complex question of whether manufacturing jobs in India are growing or declining by triangulating insights from three key datasets: the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), the Annual Survey of Industries (ASI), and the Annual Survey of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises (ASUSE) in this CEDA research piece. While some reports suggest a rise in manufacturing employment across both factory and unregistered sectors, concerns persist regarding the quality of employment, particularly the nature of jobs driving recent increases in workforce participation—especially among women. Mr. Mohanan's analysis critically evaluates these contrasting narratives by examining the structure and compatibility of the three datasets, offering a data-driven perspective on India's manufacturing employment trends. This research interrogates not only the quantity of manufacturing jobs, but also their stability, formality, and overall quality—essential indicators for promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

Central Bank Intervention and Bank Liquidity: Evidence from the Paycheck Protection Programme



This paper by Parush Arora, Assistant Professor of Economics, talks about how the Federal Reserve's Discount Window (DW) influenced bank lending behaviour during the COVID-19 crisis, using loan-level data from the Paycheck Protection Programme (PPP) as a natural experiment. The authors find that large banks that borrowed from the DW significantly expanded their PPP lending, nearly doubling the number of loans issued during the program's initial phase, when long-term funding was not yet available. In contrast, small banks showed little to no change, possibly due to stigma, higher fixed costs, or sufficient liquidity reserves. By using past DW usage as an instrumental variable, the study establishes a causal link between DW borrowing and loan expansion among large banks. The findings highlight the DW's crucial role in providing emergency liquidity during systemic shocks and underscore the importance of reducing barriers to access such facilities.

The Agricultural Productivity Gap: Informality Matters



Research

This paper by Bharat Ramaswami, Professor of Economics and his collaborator explores the agricultural productivity gap (APG) in India by distinguishing between the formal and informal non-farm sectors. Traditionally, APG literature compares productivity between agriculture and non-agriculture, often showing that non-agricultural sectors are far more productive. However, this approach ignores significant heterogeneity within the non-agricultural sector. This paper decomposes the non-farm sector into formal and informal segments and finds that while productivity is substantially higher in the formal sector, the gap between agriculture and the informal non-farm sector is small or negligible once differences in work hours, human capital, and labor's share of value added are accounted for.

By the use of the macroeconomic and household survey data, they show that 40-50% of India's non-farm workforce is in sectors no more productive than agriculture, especially where informal employment exceeds 83%. The observed large productivity gap is largely driven by the small but economically significant formal non-farm sector. The analysis supports the idea that the core economic dualism in developing countries is not merely between agriculture and non-agriculture, but more crucially between informal and formal employment sectors. These findings have implications for development policy, particularly around labour mobility, employment transitions, and structural transformation.

Economic Crisis and Different Solutions



Research

Two papers by Prachi Mishra, Professor of Economics, with her collaborators, examine how economies adapt under crisis conditions—one focused on U.S. inflation dynamics, the other on global credit during COVID-19. In *The Rise and Retreat of US Inflation: An Update*, the authors revisit the surge of 2021–22 and its subsequent decline. They show that inflation was driven largely by sector-specific shocks and supply disruptions rather than labour market tightness, with traditional indicators like the vacancy-to-unemployment ratio overstating pressures. Crucially, inflation fell without a rise in unemployment or wage collapse, challenging the Phillips Curve framework and underscoring the need for flexible, data-dependent monetary policy.

Complementing this, *What Policy Combinations Worked?* analyses data from 49 countries to evaluate coordinated fiscal, monetary, and prudential responses during COVID-19. The study finds that broad, comprehensive “all-out” policy packages supported significantly stronger bank lending, especially under uncertainty or financial stress, highlighting the importance of scale and coordination rather than reliance on a single instrument.

Together, the studies show how adaptive, well-calibrated policy can stabilise economies in crisis—preserving credit access, containing inflation, and supporting resilience without derailing growth.

Empowering Those Who Sustain Us: Training Ashoka's Housekeeping Team



Partnerships

The Office of Sustainability, in collaboration with Saahas Zero Waste, launched Swachhata Jagrukta Karyashala, as part of Earth Day 2025. This workshop was a four-part Training and Awareness Programme on Waste Management for Ashoka University's housekeeping staff recognising their pivotal role in building a greener, cleaner campus. Through interactive sessions, field-based learning, and reflective discussions, the programme equipped the team with practical knowledge and confidence to lead sustainable practices.

Structured around key themes waste segregation, field application, dialogue and reflection, and feedback for continuity the sessions combined theory with real-world insights, including a case study from Saahas Zero Waste. This step-by-step approach ensures long-term ownership and adoption of effective waste management practices.



From Dusk Till Dawn: The Impact of Lifting Night Shift Bans on Female Employment

 Research

In their paper “From Dusk Till Dawn: The Impact of Lifting Night Shift Bans on Female Employment,” Bhanu Gupta, Professor of Economics, and the collaborators explore how removing gender-based restrictions can influence women's participation in the workforce. The study focuses on labour law reforms across Indian states that lifted the prohibition on employing women in night shifts at factories.

Using firm-level panel data and a dynamic difference-in-differences approach, the authors find a significant rise in both the number and share of female workers in large firms following the regulatory change. These effects are most pronounced in export-oriented sectors and regions with tighter labour markets. Their findings highlight the role of legal and policy reforms in enhancing gender inclusion in formal employment. By eliminating restrictive laws, firms gain greater flexibility in hiring practices, while women access broader employment opportunities—marking a step forward in reducing gender disparities in the labour market.

‘Tension se Raahat’: Well-being at the Workplace

 Campus

The Ashoka Centre for Well-Being organised the “Tension se Raahat” workshop series to promote holistic well-being among the university's support staff. The initiative engages dining staff, housekeeping teams, and security personnel, recognising their vital role in sustaining the daily operations of the campus. A last session focused on the security team, whose vigilance ensures the safety of the Ashoka community. The workshop provided a supportive space for participants to share experiences, reflect on challenges, and explore strategies for managing stress. Through interactive activities and group discussions, staff members were encouraged to tap into their creative and spatial intelligence, moving from their routine state of “saavdhan” (attention) to moments of “vishraam” (relaxation).

By celebrating the contributions of security personnel and equipping them with tools to navigate workplace stress, the initiative reaffirmed their importance within the university community. The “Tension se Raahat” series highlights Ashoka's commitment to fostering empathy, respect, and collaboration, while cultivating a culture of collective care and well-being.





BUILD RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE, PROMOTE INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE INDUSTRIALIZATION AND FOSTER INNOVATION

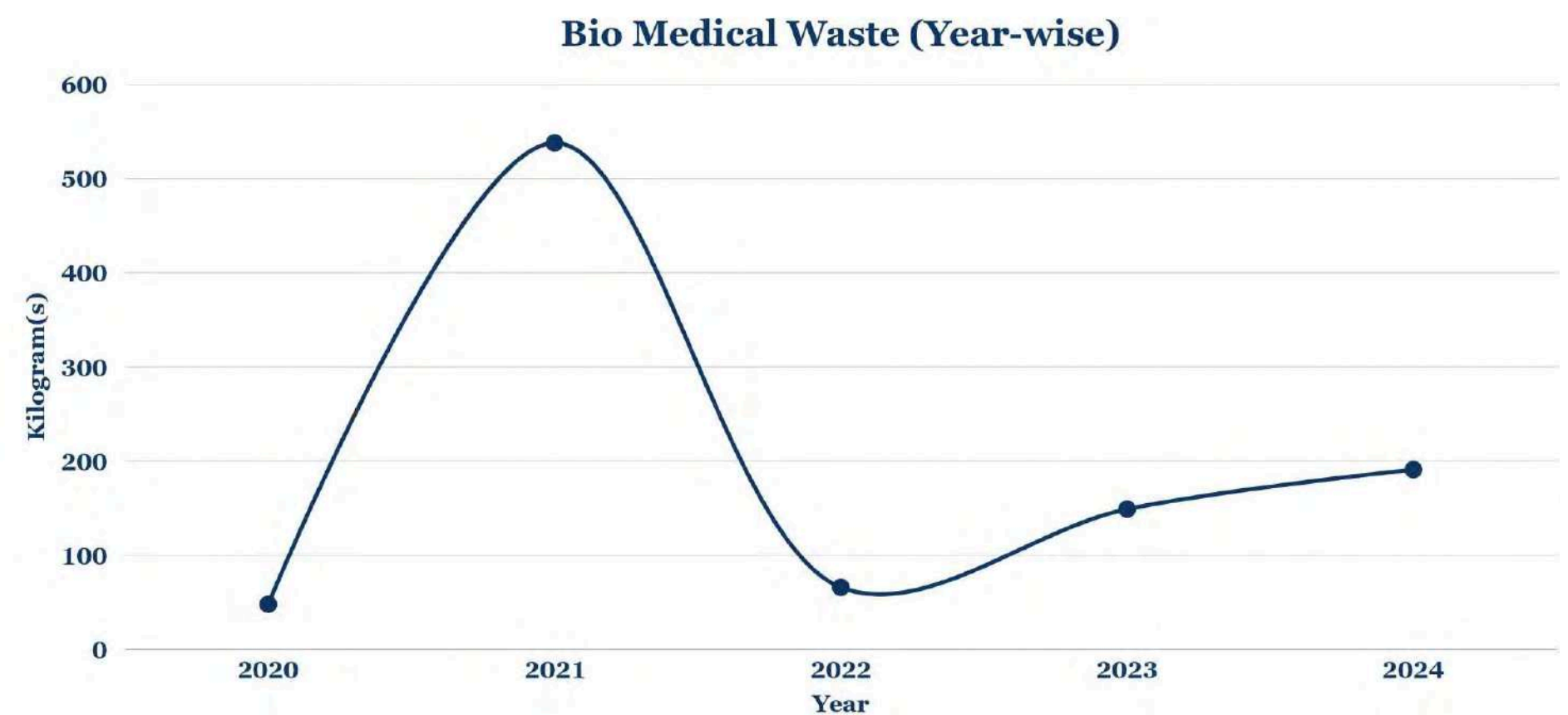
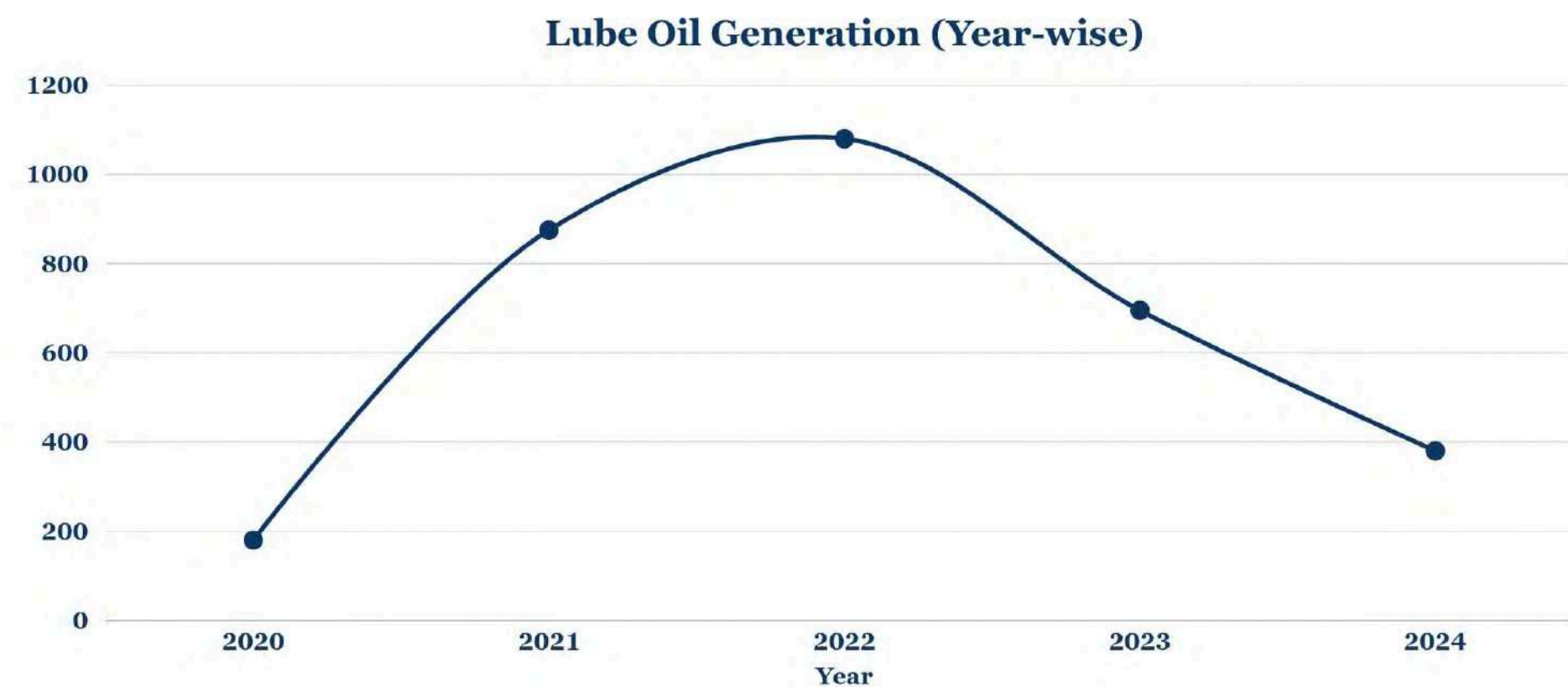
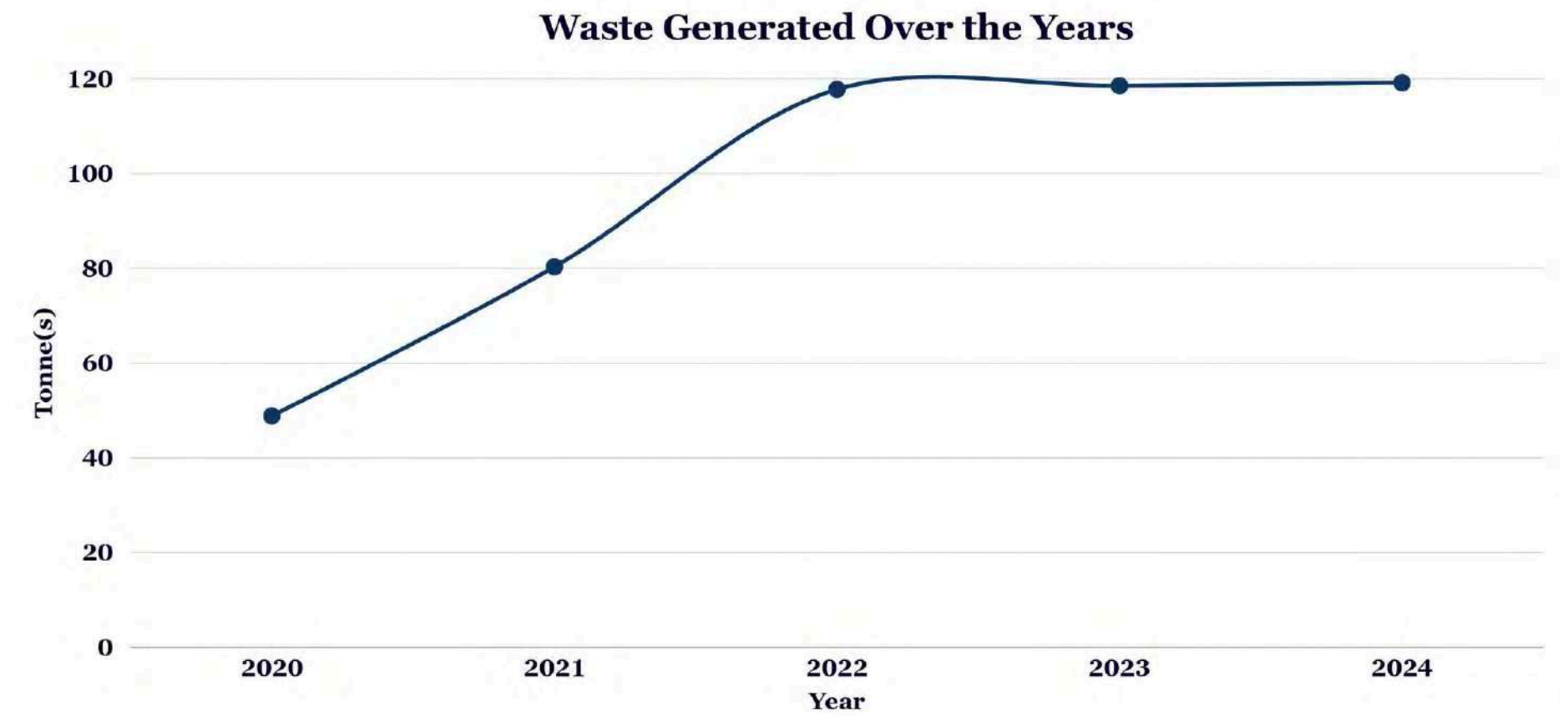
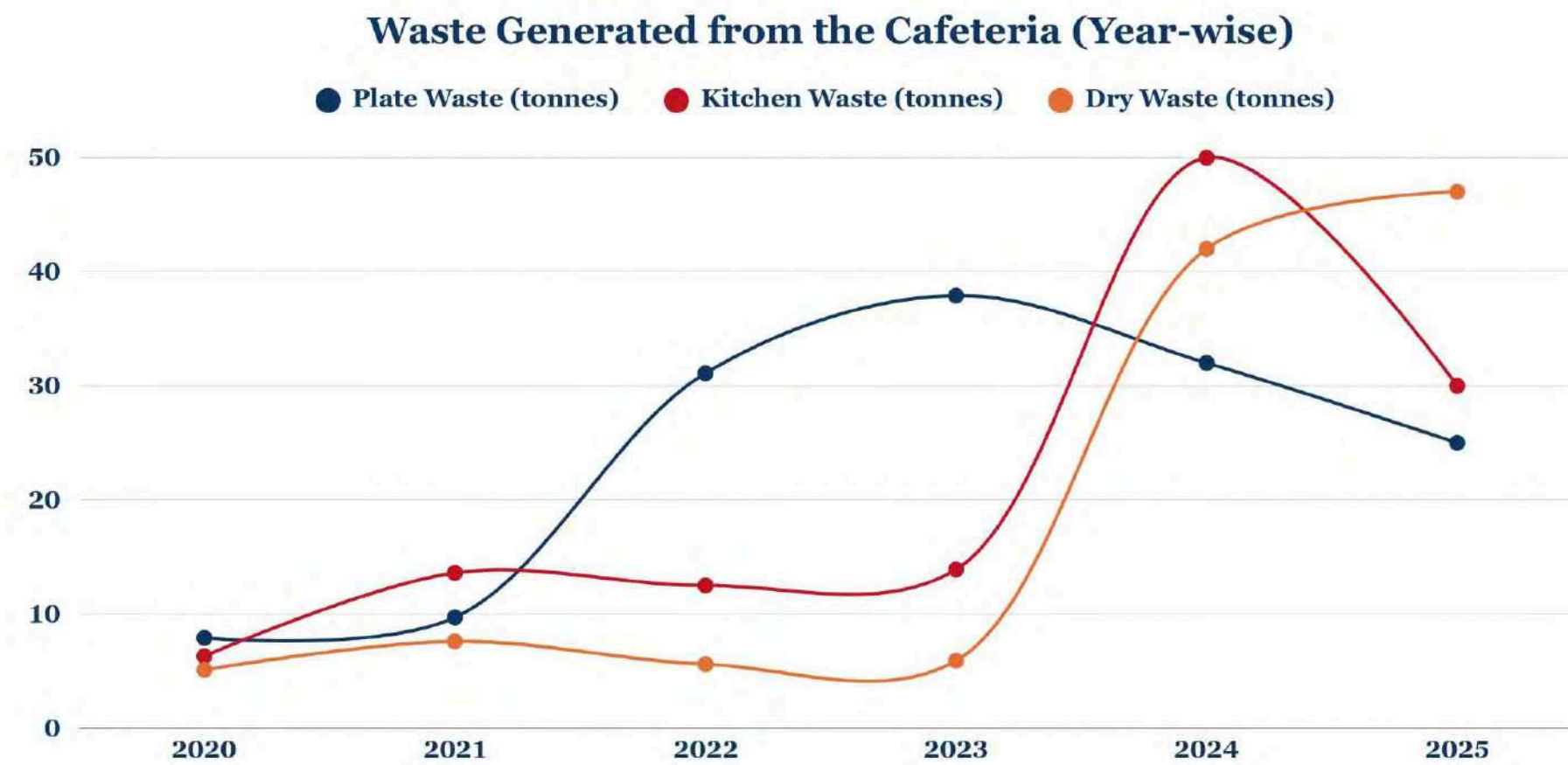


Waste Management



Ashoka University has established a comprehensive waste management system that integrates composting, wastewater treatment, waste segregation, and responsible disposal across its campus. The composting facility processes 500 kg of organic waste daily, converting it to compost within 10 days to support the campus nursery, fostering a circular economy. Two sewage treatment plants using MBBR technology handle 100 KLD and 300 KLD of wastewater, repurposing it for irrigation, solar panel cleaning, and other non-potable needs. The Female Health Unit has recycled over 54,000 sanitary pads using the PadCare system, reducing landfill impact and emissions. E-waste is responsibly managed in partnership with certified recyclers and supported by a campaign with Livegreen@Ashoka, Tarang, and Attero to minimize electronic waste hazards. Biomedical waste is also managed in compliance with regulations through a government-authorized firm, underscoring Ashoka University's dedication to resource efficiency and sustainable infrastructure planning.

ASHOKA IN NUMBERS



*Figure 2 waste details include waste bins deployed across the Campus and are inclusive of plastic bottles, paper, foil, food waste (tiffin, fruit peels and skin, food outlets waste)

**This does not include newsprint, A3, A4 printing paper & cafeteria waste of any sort which is captured separately

Pause and Practice: Does it Help Build Confidence?



In the study “Pause and Practice: Does it Help Build Confidence?” Sneha Shashidhara, Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Social and Behaviour Change and collaborators explore how active learning can bridge the digital divide in financial inclusion. Although digital financial systems offer accessible and secure services, many users in India remain hesitant to adopt them due to low confidence in navigating smartphone interfaces or payment apps. Through a lab-in-the-field experiment, the research tested whether embedding practice opportunities in instructional videos for QR code transactions could improve user’s confidence and task performance. Participants who practised along with the video demonstrated significantly higher accuracy and self-assurance compared to those who passively viewed the instructions. These findings highlight the importance of interactive, step-by-step learning approaches to build digital literacy, recommending active interventions be prioritised over passive ones.



Himanshu Sachdev
Vice President, Operations

"At Ashoka, operations go beyond maintaining infrastructure; they nurture safety, sustainability, and community well-being. From green energy to safe transport, nutritious and balanced meals, and inclusive workspaces, every effort is aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals to create a campus where people and the planet thrive together."

Integrated Design for Sustainable Infrastructure



By assessing environmental impacts early, the university ensures all buildings are aligned with sustainability goals. Most of the academic buildings have an eco-friendly design with open corridors. Key features like double-walled structures, shadow-based cooling, and traditional "jaali" designs minimize energy demands, while open corridors enhance natural ventilation. Air conditioning use is limited to select areas, with a maintained temperature standard of 26°C to conserve energy. Rainwater harvesting pits address water scarcity, and electric vehicle charging stations support clean transportation. As the campus expands, these practices will extend to new developments, reflecting Ashoka’s commitment to building resilient, sustainable infrastructure.

Ashoka Mobile App: A One-Stop Platform for Campus Life



Launched in 2024, the Ashoka Mobile App serves as an integrated digital platform designed to simplify campus life. It offers a range of features including a weekly dining menu and a transaction tracker that enables students to monitor their dining usage and expenses with ease. The app also provides a complete directory of campus outlets, ensuring quick access to services and resources. In addition, it functions as a central hub for community life by sharing updates on past and upcoming university events, fostering connectivity and engagement across the Ashoka community.



Franco-Indian Campus Project



The Franco-Indian Campus Project emerged from a consortium agreement between Université Côte D’Azur (UCA), Ashoka University, Indian Institute of Science (IISc Bangalore), and Indraprastha Institute of Information Technology (IIIT Delhi). It brings together the multidisciplinary expertise of these four partners to provide advanced teaching, research, and training opportunities at the Master’s and PhD levels. The project is anchored in three key geographical hubs Delhi (National Capital Region), Nice Sophia Antipolis, and Bangalore each supported by strong Technopolis ecosystems. Beyond its core partners, the project draws on a wide network of associated collaborators, including national research institutions, incubators, clusters, hospitals, and private companies. Together, they aim to bridge the gap between research, training, and innovation, with a shared mission of addressing critical societal health challenges.

AI-Powered Analysis of Multiparameter Flow Cytometry Data for Indian Clinical Laboratories



This project, funded by Mphasis, is developing an artificial intelligence platform to automate and standardise the analysis of complex flow cytometry datasets commonly generated in Indian clinical laboratories. By doing so, it aims to improve the speed, accuracy, and consistency of diagnostics for diseases such as cancer, where precise immune profiling is essential. The project has validated a prototype algorithm and demonstrated its potential to reduce manual interpretation variability. A collaboration with Max Hospitals is planned to refine and deploy this tool in clinical settings, ultimately enhancing diagnostic efficiency at scale.

Infosys Foundation Advanced Chemical Biology Laboratory



The Infosys Foundation Advanced Chemical Biology Laboratory in collaboration with Infosys Foundation – the philanthropic arm of Infosys is an advanced research facility in the development process, to offer cutting edge research instrumentation capabilities in chemistry and biological research. This includes capabilities including Field Emission Scanning Electron Microscopy, Nuclear Magnetic Resonance Spectroscopy, Single Crystal X-Ray Diffractometry, Imaging Mass Cytometry, and Spatial Genomics Platform.



Built Environments, Design and the Architectural Imagination



Teaching

Priyani Roy Choudhury, Visiting Faculty of Visual Arts, teaches this course on city-building during the Sultanate and early Mughal periods. The curriculum views architecture not only as a technical achievement but also as a cultural expression of power and wealth. By bringing together architectural, visual, and textual sources, students explore how spatial imagination contributed to the creation of resilient and meaningful urban infrastructures.

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Introduction to Health Informatics



Teaching

The course offered by Vibhu Agarwal, Visiting Faculty of Professional and Executive Development Programme and Rintu Kutum, Faculty Fellow in the Computer Science Department, provides an in-depth introduction to Health Informatics, focusing on how patient health data is captured, safeguarded, and utilised to drive innovation in patient care and research. Students gain foundational knowledge of electronic medical records (EMR), electronic health records (EHR), interoperability standards (SNOMED CT, ICD10, HL7/FHIR), and data models essential for healthcare systems. The curriculum integrates technology-focused modules with innovation-driven applications, covering topics such as machine learning, artificial intelligence in healthcare, clinical decision support, and clinical trials. Hands-on programming sessions enable students to develop components of synthetic EHR systems using open-source technologies.

By the end of the course, students will understand the functioning of health informatics systems from multiple perspectives (hospital administration, clinicians, and patient care), appreciate study design methodologies (prospective vs. retrospective, experimental vs. observational), apply statistical and causal inference methods, and explore advanced approaches for integrating and analysing multimodal health data.

Auctions with Resale and Correlated Signals



Research

The paper by Sanyyam Khurana, Assistant Professor of Economics, investigates how different auction formats perform in terms of seller revenue when bidders have correlated signals and there is the possibility of resale. It compares several auction types—first-price, second-price, and all-pay variants—with and without resale opportunities. The study shows that when resale is allowed, and bidders' values are correlated, all-pay second-price auctions with resale yield the highest expected revenue for the seller.

The main contribution of the paper is to show that allowing resale and accounting for time delays between initial allocation and resale changes bidder behaviour and outcomes. Specifically, the paper introduces a novel environment where winning the auction depletes the value of the good for the losing bidder, and resale occurs under common knowledge of valuations. It demonstrates that in such settings, revenue rankings across auction types shift significantly compared to standard models. The all-pay second-price auction with resale dominates all other auction formats, both in resale and non-resale scenarios.

Innovation, Technology, and Sustainable Enterprise



‘Jugaad and the Tech Enterprise’ and ‘Financial Analytics and Artificial Intelligence’ are the courses offered by the Centre for Entrepreneurship, which brings together innovation, technology, and sustainability in enterprise and finance. The first, examined the principles of frugal innovation in high-tech sectors, showing how resource-constrained contexts can inspire efficient, low-cost solutions with high social and industrial impact. Through case studies and projects, it cultivated an entrepreneurial mindset that advances technology while promoting sustainable industrialisation. The second, taught by Tushar Jaruhar, Visiting Faculty, Department of Entrepreneurship, explored how technology and big data are reshaping the finance industry. Students engaged with algorithms and AI applications in stock prediction, fraud detection, and credit assessment, using a project-based approach to gain practical skills. Together, the courses prepared students to apply creativity, analytics, and technological tools to address evolving global challenges with innovative and sustainable solutions.

Inefficiency in Agricultural Production: Do Information Frictions Matter?



Digvijay Singh Negi, Associate Professor of Economics, and his collaborators, in their study examined the effectiveness of ICT-based agricultural extension in rural Bangladesh. Using the rollout of Krishi Call Centers and variation in mobile phone access, the study finds that villages with phone services saw a 50% reduction in plot-level inefficiency, especially among rainfed farms. The researchers show that this improvement was driven by increased use of inputs like fertilizers, pesticides, and family labor, and that remote farmers—often underserved—benefited the most. The study also highlights significant spillover effects through local geographic networks, underscoring the value of combining ICT interventions with community-based diffusion to improve agricultural productivity.



Ekanto Ghosh
Assistant Director
InfoEdge Centre for Entrepreneurship

“We at the InfoEdge Centre for Entrepreneurship are deeply committed towards the achievement of the SDG 9 by promoting innovation and entrepreneurship at Ashoka and within the startup ecosystem to achieve a truly global, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth. While we Inspire students to appreciate Entrepreneurship as a life choice, we also Inculcate an Entrepreneurial Mindset and equip them with the relevant resources and tools to be Entrepreneurial and Intrapreneurial in all spheres of life. The Centre supports the entrepreneurial journeys of students and alumni at every stage of their journey to contribute towards true economic and social transformations.”



Co-building Interdisciplinary Sciences and Research at Ashoka University



Ashoka University has entered into a strategic partnership with Axis Bank to strengthen its PhD, Post-Doctoral, and research programmes through the initiative Co-building Interdisciplinary Sciences and Research at Ashoka University. Under a newly signed MoU, Axis Bank has committed INR 104 crores over four years, supporting the creation of advanced scientific facilities and enhancing Ashoka’s research ecosystem. The programme aims to build excellence in interdisciplinary education by expanding fellowships, funding cutting-edge research, and establishing shared laboratories for Neurosciences, Behavioural Studies, and Physics. These state-of-the-art facilities will enable scholars and faculty to pursue high-impact research on critical global issues such as climate change, public health, energy sustainability, and human behaviour, fostering cross-disciplinary innovation in fields ranging from green energy and astronomy to behavioural biology and fluid dynamics. By offering competitive fellowships and advanced infrastructure, the initiative will help attract and retain top-tier researchers in India, positioning Ashoka as a hub for world-class science and interdisciplinary inquiry while strengthening the country’s capacity for innovation and knowledge creation.

World Health Summit Regional Meeting



Ashoka University, through the Koita Centre for Digital Health (KCDH-A), co-hosted the World Health Summit Summit Regional Meeting 2025 held for the first time in India from April 25–27 in New Delhi alongside NIMS University and Manipal Academy of Higher Education. Themed “Scaling Access to Ensure Health Equity,” the summit drew over 5,000 participants, 160+ sessions, and 950+ speakers from 54 countries, focusing on advancing digital health, AI futures, health diplomacy, and innovation in public health. Over three days, KCDH-A played an active role by shaping critical conversations through thought leadership and moderating sessions. Notably, Koita Centre faculty led panels such as “Scaling Access to AI-Powered Diagnostics for Improved Health Equity” and “Digital Health Accreditation for Advancing Quality, Standardisation, and Excellence” By convening policymakers, researchers, clinicians, technologists, and public leaders, the event reinforced KCDH-A’s commitment to fostering an inclusive, evidence-based digital health ecosystem. The summit catalysed innovation and cross-sector dialogue, reinforcing India's leadership in shaping equitable health solutions across the region.





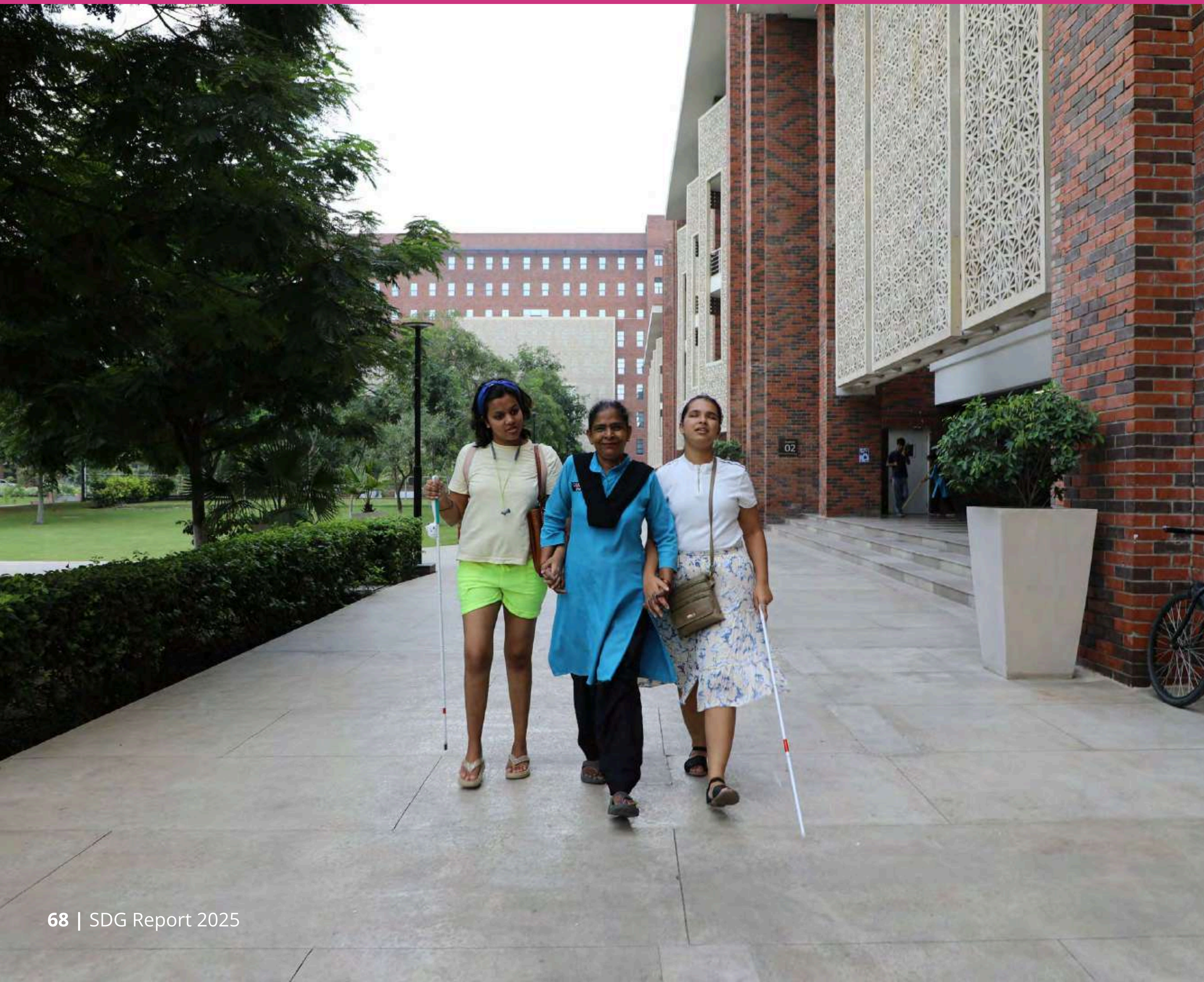
REDUCE INEQUALITY WITHIN AND AMONG COUNTRIES

Special Olympics Bharat - Ashoka Chapter

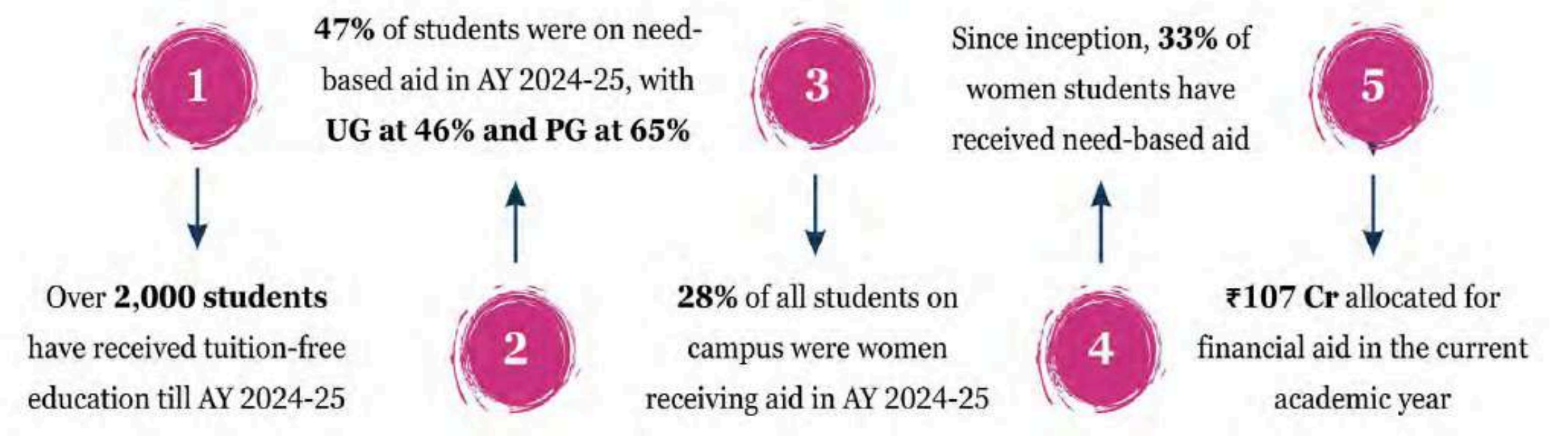
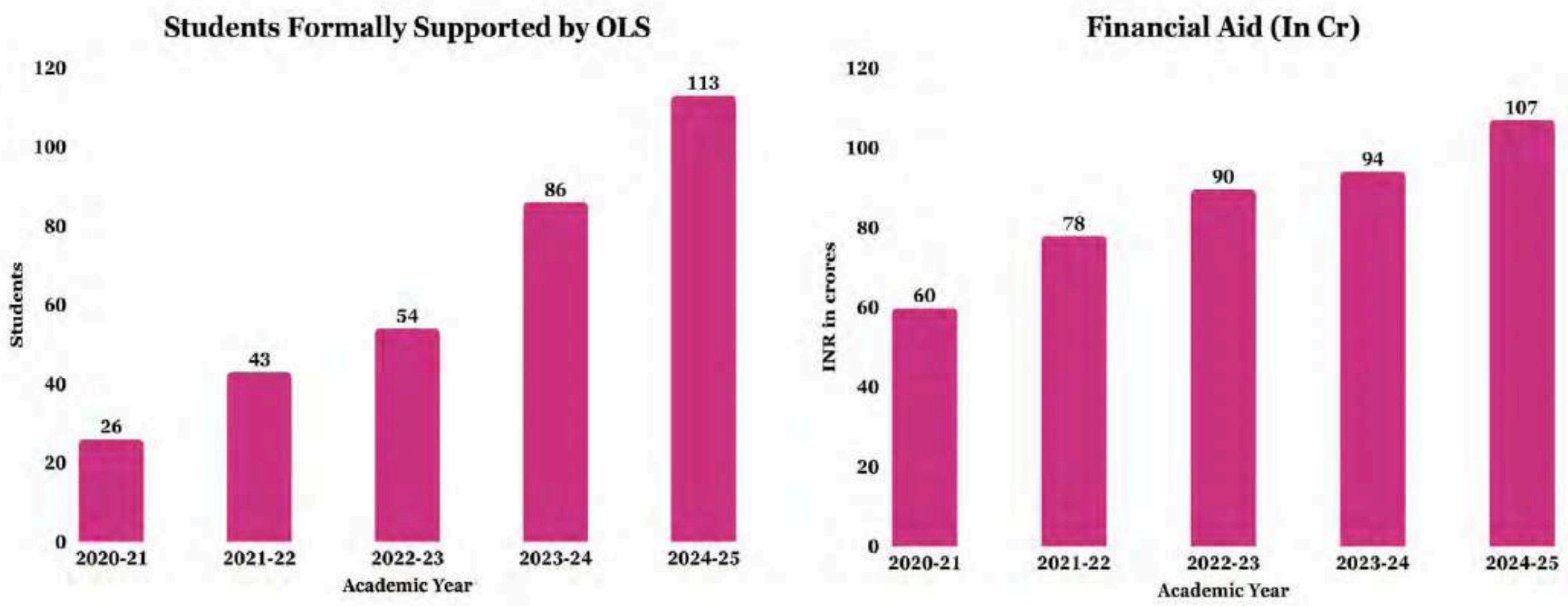


The Special Olympics Bharat Ashoka Chapter (SOBAC) works to promote inclusivity, celebrate abilities, and raise awareness about intellectual disabilities through sports and community engagement. With a strong focus on fostering physical activity, mental well-being, and equal opportunities, its initiatives align with SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities). SOBAC's programming spans awareness events, workshops, and inclusive sports activities. The ADHD Awareness Day, organised with the Ministry of Community Wellbeing, created a safe and empathetic space for dialogue on neurodiversity. The Zumba Workshop with RVM School students, conducted with the Abhinaya Dance Society, encouraged joyful physical activity and bonding across communities. Pre-Samarasa initiatives such as the Bocce Ball Evening and a Sports Evening with the Ashoka SDG Club introduced adaptive games like blind football, ensuring accessibility and participation for all. The flagship event, Samarasa – Ashoka's first inclusive sports festival, brought together over 200 participants from schools and colleges. In collaboration with the Sports Ministry, Jazbaa – The Cultural Ministry, and Anitya, the festival hosted competitions in football, bocce ball, basketball, and blind chess, highlighting the power of sports to break barriers and build community.

SOBAC's contributions were recognised with three Student Exceptional Awards for promoting adaptive sports, improving accessibility, and fostering an inclusive culture.



ASHOKA IN NUMBERS



Clubs and Societies



Ashoka’s student societies actively work toward gender justice, inclusion, and global engagement. The Feminist Collective fosters awareness around sexism and equity through campaigns, creative sessions, and critical dialogue. Ashoka Women in Business and Leadership empowers students through mentorship and events such as View from the Top, spotlighting accomplished women leaders. Her Campus Ashoka provides a global platform for women’s voices in storytelling and lifestyle writing, amplifying issues of wellness, culture, and identity. Together, these societies create inclusive spaces that reduce inequalities, promote gender equity, and foster cross-cultural partnerships rooted in respect and representation.

Gold Medal at National Para Swimming Championship



Roshni Patra, a first-year psychology student won the gold medal in the 50-metre freestyle at the 23rd National Para Swimming Championship, representing Maharashtra. Visually challenged since birth, Roshni began swimming in 2017 to improve her fitness and has since become a serial winner, securing eight national gold medals across four championships. Her journey reflects both resilience and advocacy, as she calls for better support for athletes with special needs, particularly women. Ashoka’s accessible infrastructure and inclusive learning environment have supported her aspirations, making her achievement a symbol of perseverance and equity.

Globalisation Shocks and Ethnic Politics in India



In the study “Globalisation Shocks and Ethnic Politics: Evidence from India’s Trade Liberalisation and the Emergence of Caste-Based Parties,” S.K. Ritadhi, Assistant Professor of Economics, along with collaborators, examines how unanticipated globalisation shocks influence ethnic politics. The research focuses on India’s 1991 trade liberalisation episode and its relationship to the rise of caste-based political parties. By combining industry-level tariff changes with pre-liberalisation employment patterns across districts, the study measures regional exposure to tariff reductions. The findings reveal that districts experiencing greater declines in trade protection showed significantly higher electoral support for caste-based parties. This effect was strongest in areas with lower levels of urbanisation, limited educational attainment, and higher concentrations of historically marginalised caste groups.

The analysis further demonstrates that, following trade liberalisation, wage declines were disproportionately concentrated among rural workers, less-educated populations, and marginalised castes. These groups, adversely affected by globalisation, shifted their political support to parties representing their caste-based interests. The study highlights the unequal distributional consequences of trade reforms and their influence on shaping identity-based politics in India.

Fair Allocation with (Semi-single-peaked) Preferences Over Location and Quantity



Mihir Bhattacharya, Associate Professor of Economics and his collaborator in this paper examine how to fairly allocate a divisible, heterogeneous resource such as land or time among agents who care about both the location and quantity of their share. The authors introduce a novel framework of semi-single-peaked preferences, where agents have a most-preferred quantity at each location, and more is not always better. Within this structure, they characterise allocation rules that are both envy-free and Pareto efficient. To do this, they propose the Balanced Curve Allocation (BCA) rule, which uses balanced indifference curves to define the feasible region of fair and efficient outcomes.

This paper presents that while the BCA captures all possible envy-free and efficient allocations for two agents, no such rule can also be strategy-proof, meaning agents may have incentives to misreport preferences. The paper offers further insights for extending these results to multiple agents and emphasises the model’s relevance to practical problems like land division and time-slot allocation. By moving beyond standard assumptions of monotonicity and convexity, this work contributes a more realistic and flexible approach to fair division theory.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in the Private Sector Domestic Grant-Making Philanthropic Landscape



Amod Khanna from Centre for Social Impact and Philanthropy, in this research paper, examines how domestic grant-making philanthropic organisations in India approach Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in their workspaces. Drawing from academic discourse, practitioner arguments, and empirical data, the paper assesses the policies, practices, and organisational culture that foster DEI. It highlights that while many philanthropic organisations may lack formal DEI policies, they often embed its principles through organisational values, codes of conduct, and targeted initiatives—especially in gender diversity. The study underscores two primary justifications for DEI: the social justice argument, rooted in fairness and human rights, and the business case, which links diversity to better engagement, innovation, and organisational success. The study concludes that India’s philanthropic sector has begun its DEI journey but must broaden its scope to address all forms of diversity, deepen equity and inclusion practices, and adopt measurable frameworks for sustained progress.

The Indian Anthropocene: The Social Experience of Heat, Dust, and Rain



In the study ‘The Indian Anthropocene: The Social Experience of Heat, Dust, and Rain’, Amita Baviskar, Professor of Environmental Studies and Sociology and Anthropology, explores how urbanisation and industrialisation are reshaping the everyday experience of natural elements in India. The study distinguishes between heat, dust, and rain as cultural and social phenomena, revealing how human activities intensify vulnerabilities and inequalities. By analysing these elements through the lens of cultural politics, Baviskar finds that heat has become stratified, with urban elites turning to air conditioning while traditional, sustainable practices for coping with heat are sidelined. Dust, once seen as part of the natural environment, is now reframed as pollution, especially in cities like Delhi—yet public mobilisation against its health impacts remains limited. Rain, historically tied to agriculture and daily rhythms, is increasingly marked by unpredictability and extreme events, disrupting livelihoods and emotional connections to nature. The study not only illuminates the lived experience of the ‘Indian Anthropocene’ but also advances understanding of how climate change interacts with inequality, culture, and social resilience in India.

Do Minimum Wages Reduce Inequality? Evidence from India



In their paper, ‘Do Minimum Wages Reduce Inequality? Evidence from India’, Kanika Mahajan, Professor of Economics and other collaborators, examines the role of minimum wage policies in addressing wage disparities across India. Using nationally representative data on employment and earnings, they document a decline in wage inequality over the past two decades. Their study investigates whether increasing minimum wages for the lowest-skilled workers contributed to this trend. By analysing regional variations in wage policy, the authors find that a 1% rise in minimum wages led to a 0.17% increase in wages for those in the lowest income quintile. This effect diminishes in higher quintiles and is negligible for top earners. Importantly, their counterfactual analysis reveals that rising minimum wages account for 26% of the reduction in inequality from 1999 to 2018. The study underscores the importance of wage regulation in promoting fairer economic outcomes and reducing structural disparities.



Coping with Heat: Lessons from South Asian Urban Life



Amita Baviskar, Professor of Environmental Studies and Sociology and Anthropology, in her project, examines how urban residents in South Asia have adapted to the seasonal extremes of the subcontinent, particularly the challenges of intense heat. The research explores how exposure to extreme weather intersects with poverty and vulnerability in both homes and workplaces, highlighting the everyday strategies people have developed to cope with discomfort. By combining archival research with oral history testimonies, the project documents practical, place-based solutions from the past—turning lived experience into a valuable resource for architects, urban planners, and policymakers. The ultimate goal is to inform designs and strategies that can help cities adapt to a hotter future, advancing multiple Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including health, gender equality, clean energy, sustainable cities, and climate action.

Pricing Theory and Public Policy



Teaching

This course, offered by Sneha Bakshi, Assistant Professor of Economics, examines the principles and applications of pricing across various market structures, including monopoly, oligopoly, and competitive markets. It explores price discrimination, collusion, discounts, promotions, and the use of pricing strategies in specific industries. A key focus is the application of price as a policy instrument to address market failures, improve resource allocation, and incentivise target products, suppliers, or consumers.

Students gain both theoretical foundations and practical analytical skills to assess pricing decisions in different contexts. By the end, students develop the ability to analyse pricing strategies, understand their policy implications, and apply economic reasoning to real-world pricing problems.

Studies in World Literature: African Modernities



Teaching

S Satish Kumar, Visiting Faculty of English, teaches this course on African Modernities under the Studies in World Literature program. It interrogates the unequal representation of Africa in global discourse, moving beyond reductive binaries of victimhood and resilience. Centring the novel as a vehicle for modernity, the curriculum examines Africa's complex colonial and postcolonial histories, offering students a nuanced understanding of the continent's diverse lived realities while challenging entrenched narrative inequalities.

Environment and Social Exclusion



Teaching

Taught by Mukul Sharma, Professor of Environmental Studies, this elective examines the intersections of environment, social exclusion, and justice, with a focus on race, caste, and class. Using social exclusion as a framework, the course analyses environmental inequality, conflicts, and rights. It highlights the structures and processes that limit certain groups' access to environmental resources and entitlements, shedding light on persistent forms of social disadvantage across societies.

Refugees, Migrants, Citizens: A Global History of Human Rights in the Twentieth Century



Teaching

Pallavi Raghavan, Assistant Professor of International Relations, teaches this course on the global history of human rights in the twentieth century. Focusing on refugees, migrants, and citizens, it examines how national sovereignty and universal human rights intersect in shaping modern migration regimes. By analysing how states granted rights unevenly based on nationality, the course highlights the central role of these dynamics in producing and sustaining global inequality.

Borders, Citizenship, and Belonging



Teaching

The course is taught by Swargajyoti Gohain, Associate Professor of Sociology and Anthropology investigates borders not only as territorial boundaries but also as cultural, symbolic, and bodily constructs that produce inequality. It focuses on populations who cross borders or live outside territorial confines, showing how their actions challenge narrow political definitions of belonging. Students examine how borders shape citizenship laws and reinforce divisions of class, gender, and religion, gaining insight into how boundaries are contested and redefined.

Ties that Bind: Communities and Collective Action



Teaching

Kaustav Chakrabarti, Assistant Professor of Political Science, leads this course examining how communities mobilise collective action to voice their demands and address inequality. Covering both classical and contemporary examples from villages caught between rebels and militaries to neighbourhood groups organising petitions the course highlights how trust, close-knit networks, and norms of solidarity empower communities to challenge power structures and fight for their rights.

Disability Inclusion in Campus Recruitments



The Office of Learning Support is driving systemic change in accessibility and inclusion through research, alliances, and national initiatives. In collaboration with AZ Research and Bank of America, OLS conducted a landmark study assessing corporate recruitment practices for persons with disabilities (PwDs) and the challenges faced by premier institutions in placing students with disabilities. Building on these insights, Ashoka relaunched the Inclusive University Alliance (IUA) in August 2025, bringing together leading institutions such as IIT Kanpur, IIM Bangalore, and IIIT Delhi to co-create frameworks, resources, and best practices for inclusive education—aligned with SDGs 4, 10, and 16.

Since 2023, OLS has convened the annual Conclave on Inclusive Higher Education, which has grown into a national movement. Conclave 3.0 (2025) marked two milestones: the launch of IUA and the debut of IdeaPal, an open-source repository for sharing and scaling inclusive practices. Alongside these initiatives, OLS has conducted extensive training sessions for students, fellows, faculty, and staff, fostering awareness and action around learning, inclusion, and diversity. Looking ahead, OLS plans to expand its College Readiness Program, strengthen assistive technology adoption, promote peer-led learning models, and deepen partnerships with corporates and policymakers—creating sustainable pathways for accessible and inclusive higher education.



Reena Gupta
Senior Director
Office of Learning Support

“I have had the privilege of leading the Office of Learning Support (OLS) with the belief that inclusion is not an add-on but central to higher education. Our work contributes directly to SDG 4 on Quality Education and SDG 10 on Reduced Inequalities, and every initiative is a step toward building a more equitable academic space at Ashoka.

Over the years, we have combined individual student support with systemic change. From disability-inclusive campus recruitments and executive function coaching to assistive technologies and accessible spaces, our aim has been to ensure that students with disabilities can thrive with dignity and independence. Our impact also extends beyond Ashoka. Through conclaves, white papers, training sessions, and collaborations with employers and policymakers, we have been able to influence policies, share models of practice, and inspire institutions across India to prioritise inclusive education and employment. It has been especially meaningful to witness the steady growth in students supported by OLS—each story a reminder of why this work matters. Looking ahead, my hope is to keep pushing the boundaries of accessibility, build more allies, and create a campus culture where every learner feels seen and heard.”

Advancing Disability Inclusion through Corporate and Academic Partnerships



In partnership with V-shesh Learning Services, Spandan Inclusion and Accessibility Consultancy Services, and Bank of America, the Office of Learning Support (OLS) developed a Corporate Toolkit designed to make campus recruitment more inclusive for students with disabilities. By addressing misconceptions, identifying systemic gaps, and building supportive ecosystems, the toolkit fosters long-term change in hiring practices across industries.

To complement this effort, OLS expanded collaborative platforms through Idea Labs, working with institutions such as IIM Ahmedabad, Krea University, and Azim Premji University to co-create solutions on reasonable accommodations, accessible libraries, and assistive technology. The relaunch of the Inclusive University Alliance (IUA) at Conclave 3.0 in 2025 further established a national framework for scaling these practices. Alongside these structural initiatives, OLS introduced Samaras, Ashoka’s first inclusive sports festival, and launched the Executive Function Coaching Programme in 2024, which has already delivered over 280 sessions to support resilience, time management, and independent learning among students. Together, these initiatives mark a significant step towards embedding accessibility and inclusion into higher education and beyond.

Conclave 2.0: Building Foundations for Inclusive Higher Education



Research

In September 2024, Ashoka University's Office of Learning Support (OLS) hosted Conclave 2.0, advancing the conversations on disability inclusion in higher education initiated at Conclave 1.0 in 2023. The gathering brought together over 100 stakeholders from government, academia, and industry to strengthen frameworks for building inclusive higher education institutions (HEIs). The conclave was built on the White Paper released in 2023 and focused on four themes: creating support structures and reasonable accommodation frameworks, enhancing accessibility of libraries and educational content, facilitating access to assistive technologies, and enabling faculty as agents of inclusive teaching.

Speakers from national bodies, including the Association of Indian Universities, the Ministry of Higher Education, and the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, emphasised urgent priorities such as addressing policy gaps, reducing dropout rates, scaling teacher training, improving digital and library accessibility, and moving from a welfare-based to a rights-based approach under the 2016 RPwD Act. A baseline mapping report, *Access to Higher Education: An Unresolved Challenge for Students with Disabilities*, was also released, highlighting systemic barriers and program design recommendations for HEIs. Conclave 2.0 reinforced the importance of collective action, policy advocacy, and sustained partnerships, laying the groundwork for an evolving consortium on inclusive higher education in India.





MAKE CITIES AND HUMAN SETTLEMENTS INCLUSIVE, SAFE, RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE



Clubs and Societies



Campus

Ashoka University's creative and performing arts societies serve as vibrant platforms for cultural expression, dialogue, and collaboration. Abhinaya blends Indian and Western dance forms to celebrate rhythm and storytelling, while Vistaar unites voices through choirs, a cappella, and its popular Battle of the Bands. Siyahi builds campus-wide arts culture with installations and the Art Mela, complemented by Caperture's visual storytelling, Mad Batter's collaborative baking, CLAD's explorations in fashion, and the Art and Design Collective's workshops. Together, these societies enrich campus life with imagination and inclusivity.

Parallely, the Rotaract Club and Ruhi Club extend Ashoka's ethos of service and empowerment to the wider community. Ruhi further strengthens campus inclusivity by offering English language training to support staff. Collectively, these initiatives foster resilient, inclusive communities both within and beyond Ashoka.

Community Engagement



Campus

Ashoka University, through its Special Projects team, prioritised support for neighbouring schools and community well-being in Asawarpur. In collaboration with the student-led Neev club, infrastructure improvements were made in the schools. Similarly, the Office of Sustainability donated books to establish a school library, fostering education and sustainable community engagement.

Critical Review of Sustainability Model of Ashoka University



Sustainable Development (SD) is the universal essentiality of present times, and universities have a critical role in implementing this initiative through their functioning, policies and practices. It is with this view that Ashoka Science Policy Initiative conducted a comprehensive study to critically review the sustainability model of Ashoka University that approaches its commitment through sustainability-focused courses, research, and operations. They find that since its inception, the University has implemented strategies and taken initiatives directed towards ensuring affordability and access, well-being and welfare, diversity and inclusion, as well as outreach and engagement of its community, i.e. students, faculty, and staff. The pedagogy, courses, curriculum, activities taught/undertaken at the University have been designed to promote sustainability in exchanging knowledge, communication, research and teaching.

Rainwater Harvesting: Nurturing Groundwater



To combat water scarcity, Ashoka has implemented 15 rainwater harvesting pits strategically placed across the campus. Regular maintenance ensures these pits effectively recharge groundwater, and each pit includes a chamber for silt removal. By allowing rainwater to seep into the ground, campus actively contribute to maintaining groundwater levels.

Sustainable Transportation



While complex interventions like installing solar panels are critical in reducing the electricity usage, it is equally important to focus on soft interventions to reduce energy consumption. In our endeavour to move towards a greener growth path, we have adopted greener transportation alternatives to our campus. We strongly encourage our employees to carpool and use public transportation, such as the metro, and we have also implemented last mile connectivity with the CNG Shuttle service. The University has also made efforts to encourage bicycles and battery-operated cars for mobility and transportation of people and goods within the campus.

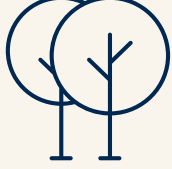


Bhaskar K Mishra
Vice President, Special Projects

“At Ashoka University we walk the talk on sustainability by following the best practices for the environment such as rain water harvesting, using grey water for irrigation, recycling food waste for compost, and EV Vehicle charging. We measure in-house campus AQI, and compare with our surroundings through CPCB portal, and take active steps to mitigate the same such as overhead sprinklers, tree washing, subsidised masks for students, faculty and staff, and FOC for all outsourced staff.”



13 Acre
Green Area in Campus



1918
Trees on Campus



2.24 tCO²
Per Capita Carbon Footprint



ACO⁴
Platinum Rating by Indian Green Building Council

Greener Cooling in Indian Cities



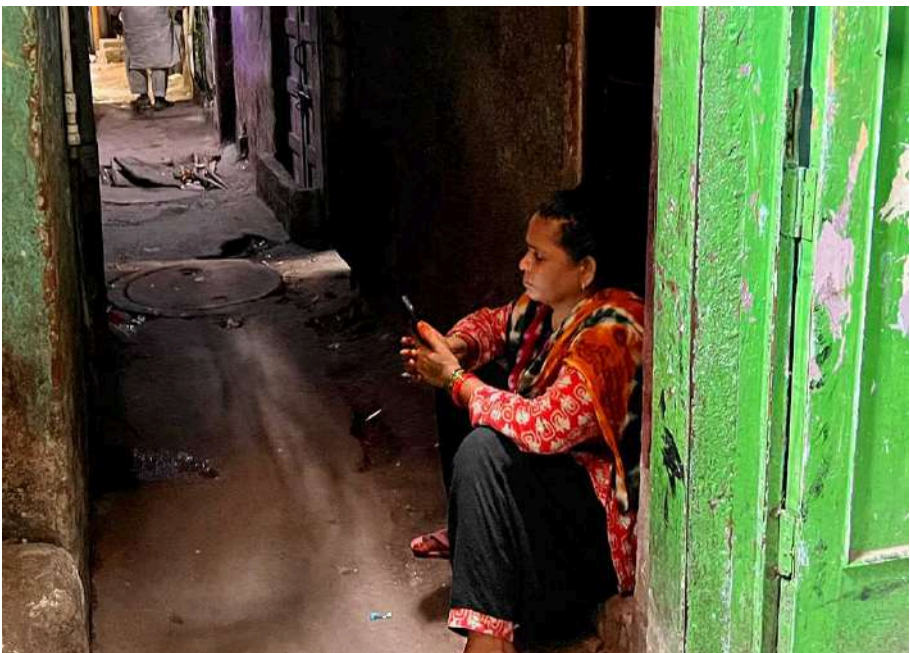
In the study ‘Greener Cooling in Indian Cities: The Potential for Behaviour Change and Usage of Air Conditioners’, Vikrom Mathur, Senior Research Fellow, Centre for Social and Behaviour Change et al., investigate the role of household choices in shaping urban energy consumption and climate outcomes. While India’s AC ownership has tripled since 2010, a large gap persists between access to energy-efficient technologies and their actual use. Despite national efforts like the India Cooling Action Plan and minimum energy performance standards, many consumers still prefer less efficient appliances. The study, based in Delhi, highlights three critical behaviours for sustainable cooling: adopting 5-star-rated ACs, using ACs at optimal settings, and conducting regular maintenance. Findings reveal behavioural and financial barriers—including misperceptions about star ratings, lack of awareness, and upfront costs—that hinder adoption. The research emphasises the need for targeted behavioural interventions and policies to increase the uptake of efficient cooling technologies and promote sustainable energy use in Indian cities.



Behind the Purdah



In the essay ‘Behind the Purdah’, Amita Baviskar, Professor of Environmental Studies and Sociology and Anthropology, examines the intersecting realities of gender, class, and climate in Delhi’s working-class neighbourhoods. The study highlights the purdah—not only as a curtain moderating heat and airflow but as a cultural technology enforcing modesty and domesticity for women. Through vivid depictions of single-room dwellings, stifling summers, and improvised forms of thermal comfort, Baviskar contrasts the resilience of working-class bastis with the insulated comforts of Delhi’s elite. Here, the dupatta and the stove placed by the doorway reveal how gender roles and household practices adapt to material and cultural constraints. By integrating voices of young women from the Ankur Writers Collective, the work foregrounds lived experiences that oscillate between irony, endurance, and aspiration. The essay not only illuminates how climate, class, and patriarchy shape daily life but also underscores women’s agency in narrating and negotiating these boundaries.



Healing Earth Conference 5.0



The fifth edition of Healing Earth, the flagship annual conference of the Centre for Climate Change and Sustainability (3CS), was held virtually on 7 and 8 May 2025. Themed ‘Biodiversity in a Changing World’ and ‘We Need to Talk About Water’. The conference brings together a panel of prominent researchers, practitioners, academics, environmental activists, and thought leaders to discuss two exigent global and national environmental challenges: biodiversity loss and water insecurity. It has convened discussions on the multifaceted impacts of climate change on natural environments, public health, and affected communities while also focusing on emerging solutions, adaptation practices, and the challenges associated with the climate crisis. This platform is dedicated to fostering critical dialogues about the repercussions of the climate crisis on our contemporary world.



Building a Sustainable Campus: Waste Management Initiatives



The Office of Sustainability contributed significantly to campus operations by introducing sustainable event guidelines, advising on the phase-out of plastic water bottles, and optimising waste bin placement for effective waste management. In collaboration with the Operations Department and the student-led Environment Ministry, a comprehensive 3-bin waste segregation system has been installed across key campus locations, including eateries, residences, and academic spaces. E-waste bins have also been strategically placed to encourage responsible disposal. These efforts are supported by targeted awareness campaigns to eliminate mixed waste and promote source-level segregation. Alongside, Project Plastic—led by the Environment Ministry, Rotaract, and Enactus—seeks sustainable alternatives to single-use plastics. Together, these initiatives reflect Ashoka University’s step-by-step approach toward achieving holistic waste management and a sustainable campus ecosystem.



Sonepat and its Surroundings: Sites and Sights



This course connects students with their immediate environment to study the evolution of human settlements through archaeological and historical landscapes. With regular field visits, students explore Sonipat and its surroundings, gaining hands-on training in site exploration and learning to relate findings to soil, location, and river proximity. The course is led by Kalyan Sekhar Chakraborty, Assistant Professor and Head of the History Department, who guides students in preserving local cultural heritage and understanding community development.



Anthropology of Disaster and Vulnerability



This course, offered by Professor Mitul Baruah, Associate Professor of Sociology and Anthropology and Environmental Studies, centers on making human settlements safe and resilient by reconceptualising risk, disaster, and vulnerability in the Anthropocene. Drawing on political ecological scholarship, it explores disasters as a social calculus, affecting both causes and consequences. Focusing on how climate change increases vulnerability and deepens social inequity, especially in the Global South, students engage with case studies and field trips to develop a critical perspective on urban hazards.

Mapping Environmental Change: Concepts and Skills



Madhusudan MD, Visiting Professor of Environmental Studies, teaches Mapping Environmental Change: Concepts and Skills. This course equips students with the technical expertise needed for sustainable urban planning and resource management. Alongside grappling with the conceptual challenges of monitoring environmental change, students gain hands-on experience in geospatial analysis and remote sensing. Lab sessions train them to work with planetary data and craft compelling, data-driven narratives of environmental shifts, skills crucial for building resilient and sustainable communities.

Student Engagement in Circular Economy and Sustainability Discourses



Partnerships

The Office of Sustainability at Ashoka University has been steadily fostering a culture of mindful and sustainable practices through collaborative, hands-on initiatives. Project Pulp, developed in partnership with LiveGreen@Ashoka and the AU SDG Society, is a testament to this effort. By transforming campus paper waste into the Pulp Notebook now available at merchandise stores the project demonstrates how simple, circular economy principles can create tangible change. Project Pulse brought together students and the Ashoka Marketing Club to amplify sustainability conversations. Through interviews with faculty and staff, this initiative shared diverse perspectives, encouraging thoughtful discussions around environmental challenges. Similarly, Project Sustained marked an important step toward aligning education with sustainability by mapping Ashoka's academic curriculum to the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), providing valuable insights for future learning strategies. The Ashoka Smart Protein Project, in collaboration with The GFI, introduced the campus community to alternative proteins, sparking awareness about sustainable food systems through policy talks and discussions. Alongside this, Project Plate to Planet engaged students, faculty, and staff in promoting mindful food consumption, embedding sustainability into daily campus life. These initiatives reflect the Office of Sustainability's purposeful dedication to engaging the Ashokan students in hands-on projects that inspire meaningful steps toward a more sustainable future.

UNLEASH Hacks: Innovation for Sustainable Livelihoods



Partnerships

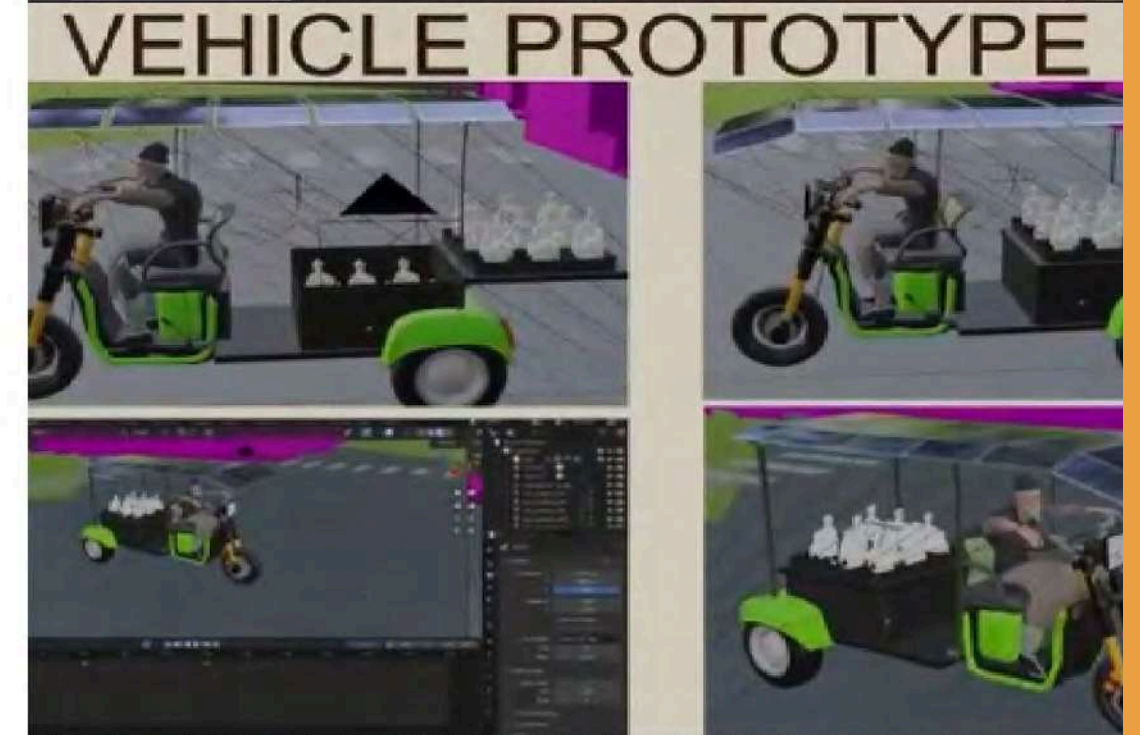
The Office of Sustainability organised the UNLEASH Hackathon for Sustainable Livelihoods. This online innovation sprint brought together young changemakers to design creative solutions addressing SDGs 8, 12 and 13. Over two days of intensive collaboration, participants developed ideas that reimagined artisan supply chains, promoted sustainable products from agricultural residue, and proposed alternatives to resource scarcity. The winning team presented an innovative approach using electric mobility to strengthen market linkages for artisans, standing out for its creativity and impact. The hackathon underscored the role of youth-led innovation in advancing sustainable livelihoods, while demonstrating the importance of collaboration, mentorship, and design thinking in tackling pressing global challenges.

Modern Megacities in History and Theory



Teaching

Gaurav C. Garg, Assistant Professor of History, offers this course on the history and social science of modern cities and urbanisation. Focusing on the rise of megacities, urban centres with populations exceeding 10 million, it examines the global, regional, and local forces that have shaped their growth, resilience, and dynamism. The course also asks what it means to live amid such vast concentrations of people and capital, directly engaging with the challenge of making human settlements inclusive and sustainable.



ENSURE SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION PATTERNS



Ashoka Farm Fresh



Ashoka Farm Fresh, initiated in 2016 by Vanita Shastri, Rashmi Singh, Sunita Bansal and a passionate group of wardens and students, focuses on growing seasonal organic vegetables fulfilling their love for gardening. What began with small-scale farming in thermocol boxes has expanded across various residence halls (RHs), with produce grown in the grassy areas of RH1, RH2, and RH3. The farm grows a wide range of local and exotic vegetables, all free from synthetic fertilizers and pesticides, ensuring the food is pure and fresh. The initiative also includes fruit trees and medicinal plants, promoting sustainable food practices and healthy living among students.

Clubs and Societies



Several student-led initiatives drive environmental awareness and sustainable practices on campus. Untangled, the crochet club, embraces slow, mindful creation and sustainable crafting through stitching circles and collaborative projects. Enactus Ashoka channels entrepreneurship towards impact with projects such as Ambika, Kaarigari, and Lakeer, addressing challenges like plastic recycling, women's empowerment, and educational equity. Through workshops, showcases, and community engagement, these societies embed sustainability into creative, entrepreneurial, and everyday practices, advancing responsible consumption, climate action, and environmentally conscious living across the campus.

Mechanistic Inquisition on the Reduction of C17Si(NH2)2 to NH3: A DFT Study



Research

Sourav Pal, Professor and Head of the Department of Chemistry, along with his collaborators, presents a computational investigation into an alternative pathway for ammonia synthesis, a compound critical to global food production. Conventional ammonia production through the Haber-Bosch process is highly energy-intensive and contributes substantially to greenhouse gas emissions. This study focuses on a silicon-substituted cyclo[18]carbon compound (C17Si) capable of binding nitrogen and reacting with hydrogen to form ammonia.

The density functional theory (DFT) analysis reveals that two hydrogen molecules are required to release two molecules of ammonia, with the catalyst undergoing in situ regeneration to sustain the cycle. Although several steps in the reaction exhibit relatively high activation barriers and demand moderate to high temperature and pressure, the overall process is thermodynamically favourable. These findings suggest a promising direction toward more energy-efficient and environmentally sustainable ammonia production.



Sourav Pal
Professor and Head
Department of Chemistry

“Chemical sciences, as a discipline, can provide sustainability by mitigating air pollution, providing catalysis for sustainable processes and renewable energy, helping achieve net zero carbon. Chemistry today can bring in a sustainable tomorrow.”

Branding and Consumer Behaviour



Teaching

Vani Gupta Dandia, Visiting Faculty in the Centre for Entrepreneurship, teaches how iconic brands are built and how smart marketers influence consumer behaviour. Central to the theme of responsible consumption, it provides students with a critical understanding of the mechanisms driving consumption patterns. By learning what makes brands strong and how consumer habits are shaped, students become equipped to analyse, critique, and design strategies that encourage more sustainable consumer choices.

Greener Palates in Urban India



Research

In the study ‘Greener Palates in Urban India: The Potential for Behaviour Change and Low Carbon Food Choices’, Vikrom Mathur, Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Social and Behaviour Change and collaborators, examine how changing dietary habits in urban India are contributing to rising food-related emissions. With growing urbanisation and rising incomes, especially among high-income groups, food consumption patterns are shifting toward resource-intensive items like meat, dairy, and processed foods. Based on fieldwork in Delhi and Bengaluru, the study identifies five key behaviours that can promote low-carbon consumption: purchasing locally sourced food, adopting plant-based diets, choosing seasonal and fresh over processed food, and practising efficient consumption. It also maps the behavioural barriers and enabling factors tied to these practices. The research calls for targeted behavioural interventions and informed policy actions to reshape food choices. Promoting sustainable consumption habits is essential to mitigating emissions and building climate-resilient urban food systems.

Art, Storytelling, and Sustainability



'The Power of Puppets: Telling Stories that Matter to Us' and 'Exploring Expression through Textile Art' were creative practice-based courses that embedded sustainability into artistic expression. The first workshop encouraged students to repurpose everyday materials—such as newspapers, paper cutouts, and found objects—to design puppets and sculpt imaginative worlds. By transforming discarded items into storytelling tools, it fostered awareness of upcycling and responsible consumption. The second course introduced textiles as an art medium, guiding students to experiment with mixed-material processes and sustainable practices such as natural dyeing. By using environmentally responsible alternatives to conventional techniques, students developed artistic skills while engaging with principles of sustainable production. Together, the courses offered immersive, hands-on experiences where creativity and sustainability intersected, equipping students to reimagine art-making as both expressive and environmentally conscious.

Behavioural Economics to Address Policy Challenges



This course, offered by the Young India Fellowship Department, introduces the field of applied behavioural economics, with a specific focus on how insights about human decision-making can be used to design better public policies. It examines why individuals and communities often make choices that deviate from standard economic predictions and explores practical interventions that have been implemented in areas such as sustainability, poverty reduction, and public health. By analysing real-world cases, students gain an understanding of the tools behavioural economists use, the subtle changes in context that can shift behaviour, and the ethical considerations in influencing choices at a policy level.

Resource Economics



Digvijay Singh Negi, Associate Professor of Economics, offers this course on the economics of resource management. Students examine recent empirical evidence on the causes of natural resource exploitation and the social and economic consequences of environmental degradation. With a strong focus on empirical models, the course equips students to critically analyse the sustainable use of resources, highlighting its importance as a cornerstone of responsible production.

Education New Zealand's Sustainability Carnival



The Office of Sustainability represented Ashoka University at the inaugural Sustainability Carnival: Think New, Sustainable Tomorrow, hosted by Education New Zealand at the High Commission Gardens, New Delhi. The event, which marked the launch of Aotearoa New Zealand's Sustainability Guide for the education sector, provided a platform for advancing the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Ashoka highlighted its commitment to SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production through student-led initiatives and institutional innovation. The Rotaract Club presented their impactful projects, while LiveGreen@Ashoka showcased Project Pulp, which creatively repurposes used campus paper into recycled notebooks. The InfoEdge Centre for Entrepreneurship (CFE) further demonstrated Ashoka's role in supporting sustainability-driven startups.



Human Dimensions of the Blue Horizon



Research

This project, led by Divya Karnad, Associate Professor of Environmental Studies and Ana Nuno, Principal Investigator at NOVA University, addresses the challenge of Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, which threatens marine biodiversity, undermines conservation in Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), and endangers the livelihoods and food security of coastal communities. Large MPAs are particularly vulnerable to incursions from IUU fishing, often originating from neighbouring countries. The project emphasises the need to integrate social and behavioural insights into marine policy and conservation, exploring the drivers of fisher non-compliance, the effectiveness of deterrence measures, and the barriers to evidence-based enforcement. By engaging a diverse network of researchers, policymakers, fisheries managers, government bodies, and fisher communities, the initiative seeks to generate practical, behaviourally informed strategies to curb IUU fishing across the British Indian Ocean Territory and other protected jurisdictions in the Indian Ocean. The findings will provide critical guidance for strengthening the resilience of MPA management and inform global conservation practices where illegal fishing remains a persistent threat. The project is supported by the Bertarelli Foundation.

A summer of Discontent for India's Soybean Farmers



Research

Akshi Chawla, Director Centre for Economic Data and Analysis (CEDA), in this paper reflects how both global and domestic systems of soybean production and pricing are becoming unsustainable. The current fall in soybean prices—driven by global overproduction and weak demand—has resulted in Indian farmers earning less than the Minimum Support Price (MSP), despite rising cultivation costs. Policies that prioritise cheaper imports and consumer relief, such as the extension of low import duties on edible oils, further discourage local production. This creates a system where consumption is sustained at the expense of producers, violating the SDG 12 principle of equitable and responsible supply chains. Additionally, soybean's long shelf life offers potential to reduce post-harvest losses, a key SDG 12 target. However, due to market volatility and loan burdens, farmers are often forced to sell immediately, undermining the benefits of storability. The mismatch between expanding cultivation and declining profitability reflects poor alignment between production planning and sustainable resource use. Without reforms to ensure fair pricing and responsible market interventions, the current trajectory threatens both environmental and economic sustainability in India's agrarian sector.

Cinemas of the World



Teaching

Monia Acciari, Visiting Fellow of Media Studies, offers Cinemas of the World, a course that examines global cinema through themes of sustainability, urban life, and cultural preservation. Students analyse how films portray migration, housing inequality, cityscapes, and heritage, encouraging critical reflection on the challenges of rapid urbanisation and the vision of more inclusive and resilient communities.

Assignments are designed and submitted digitally, reducing the environmental footprint while fostering media literacy through digital catalogues and presentations. A special lecture on Film Archives under the Permafrost, inspired by Dawson City: Frozen Time, highlighted the preservation of cultural memory in the face of climate change and environmental forces, raising awareness about the importance of sustainable archival practices. By linking cinematic narratives with pressing environmental and social concerns, the course equips students to engage critically with film while adopting responsible academic habits and an appreciation of cultural preservation in a global context.

Eco-friendly Practices and Organic Farming Initiatives



The InfoEdge Centre for Entrepreneurship (CfE) has taken a significant step towards sustainable practices by replacing plastic nameplates with eco-friendly name tag holders made from recycled cardboard. These products are designed in-house and crafted by a cottage industry vendor, promoting environmentally conscious production. Additionally, CfE incubated Basillia Organics & Gud Mom, founded by Shubham Oswal, which connects over 8,000 farmers to organic farming methods and provides consumers with natural, healthy products. This initiative supports responsible consumption and production and fosters sustainable agricultural practices, contributing to environmental conservation and supporting local economies.



Embedding Sustainability in Research Laboratory



Aligned with responsible resource use, the Biology Department incorporates sustainable practices in laboratory teachings, focusing on reducing and reusing materials to minimize waste. Dr. Laasya Samhita's lab, for instance, emphasizes the reuse of glassware and plasticware in experiments, instilling a consciousness towards resource efficiency among students. Additionally, this approach encourages the careful handling of materials to reduce biohazard waste, promoting responsible and safe practices in biological research while fostering sustainable resource management in scientific education.

Advancing Sustainable IT Practices



Ashoka University integrates sustainability into IT operations through initiatives that reduce e-waste and optimise energy use. Lamp-based projectors have been replaced with laser projectors, and e-waste bins—set up with the Office of Sustainability—ensure proper disposal of cables and connectors. User education campaigns promote reduced and double-sided printing, while the use of a battery tester has cut AA/AAA battery consumption by 40%. All batteries and e-waste are disposed of responsibly, in line with environmental norms. Further efforts include adopting universal Type-C laptop chargers, enabling sleep mode on devices, and consolidating servers to create an energy-efficient virtualised data centre.





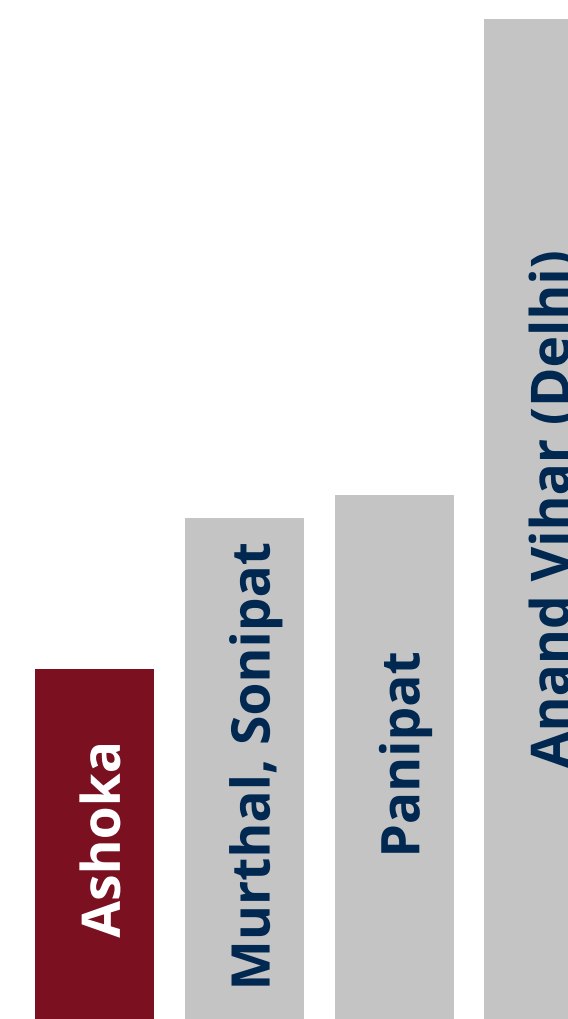
TAKE URGENT ACTION TO COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE AND ITS IMPACTS



On-Campus Air Quality Management



To effectively monitor and combat the changes in the air quality of the Sonipat region, Ashoka University has been measuring PM 2.5, PM 10 and AQI (air quality index) on a daily basis. The data recorded on campus is compared with nearby locations, such as Murthal, Panipat and Delhi (Anand Vihar). The values of the nearby places are taken from the CPCB (Central Pollution Control Board) site, while our data is recorded from equipment installed on our campus. The data is updated daily and monitored closely, especially as the air quality deteriorates seasonally for various reasons. Further, we ensure that the right systems, machinery and processes are in place which helps us in meeting the PCB norms and allows us to play our role in mitigating air pollution.



Comparative AQI Dashboard



Gautam Menon
Dean, Research and
Professor of Physics and Biology

“The Paris Agreement of 2015 aimed to limit global warming to below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, while making strenuous efforts to limit warming to 1.5°C. But 2024 was the hottest year on record, exceeding this threshold for a full year. It seems inevitable, given backsliding on climate pledges, that humankind is entering uncharted territory climate-wise.

Climate change is not simply warming: It implies an increase in extreme events, droughts and food insecurity, climate-induced migration and an expansion of disease range for vector-borne diseases.

To give up is to doom future generations to a world that is far more unpredictable and dangerous. It is more urgent now than ever before to communicate, mitigate and adapt to the consequences of human-induced climate change. 3CS, through its flagship Healing Earth meeting, its emphasis on interdisciplinary approaches and its insistence on the importance of climate communication and sustainable behaviour, is well-placed to address this challenge.”

Student Environment Ministry



The Environment Ministry at Ashoka University has made significant strides in promoting sustainability through a combination of policy review, waste management improvements, and creative community engagement. Over the past year, it reviewed institutional policies, identified key focus areas such as energy use, waste segregation, biodiversity, and water conservation, and implemented initiatives like a three-bin segregation system, a plastic bottle recycling program with 77% compliance, and disposable waste audits across campus eateries. The ministry also introduced battery-testing devices, and awareness campaigns promoting repair over disposal. Engagement efforts included Sip n Paint sessions, a thrift store, and the Green Wall project. Building on this foundation, future plans focus on reducing single-use items, expanding repair and recycling culture, adopting eco-friendly technologies, and embedding sustainability into everyday campus practices.



The Centre for Climate Change and Sustainability (3CS)



3CS provides a collaborative hub to bring together members of the Ashoka University community who share a collective passion for studying, communicating, and mitigating the far-reaching consequences of future climate change on society, health, and the environment. Drawing upon Ashoka's extensive research and policy expertise, 3CS is guided by a vibrant intellectual community of committed scholars within Ashoka, as well as outside. The centre is committed to conveying the urgency of climate change and the need for sustainable practices. Using creative platforms including social media, blogs, artistic expressions, music, and podcasts, 3CS engages and mobilises support for what it does.

GIS Support Hub



Research

In this interdisciplinary initiative GIS Support Hub is co-led by Meghna Agarwala, Professor of Environmental Studies, and Aalok Thakkar, Professor of Computer Science integrate geospatial technologies, ecological expertise, and computational methods to tackle environmental challenges through high-impact, India-specific research. Affiliated with the Centre for Climate Change and Sustainability, this project addresses forest fires, hydrology, and biodiversity.

Forest fire research includes developing classification systems tailored to Indian forests, examining Himalayan fire dynamics, and analysing lightning-induced ignition patterns to inform mitigation strategies. In hydrology, the team maps flood-prone regions in Bihar via satellite imagery and estimates groundwater recharge in North Bengal to support sustainable water management. Their biodiversity work involves acoustic analysis of wildlife populations, especially in Orissa, and conservation planning in the Eastern Himalayas and Arunachal Pradesh.

Geo-statistical Modelling for Carbon Capture Technology



Research

The Darjeeling Revival Project, led by Aalok Thakkar, Professor of Computer Science and supported by Roshni Agarwal and Vedant Gautam, is an interdisciplinary initiative funded by Alt Carbon to explore natural carbon sequestration via Enhanced Rock Weathering (ERW) in the Eastern Himalayas. The project focuses on basalt and silicate-rich rock dust to capture atmospheric CO₂, enrich degraded soils, and boost crop yields—especially in the tea-growing regions of Darjeeling.

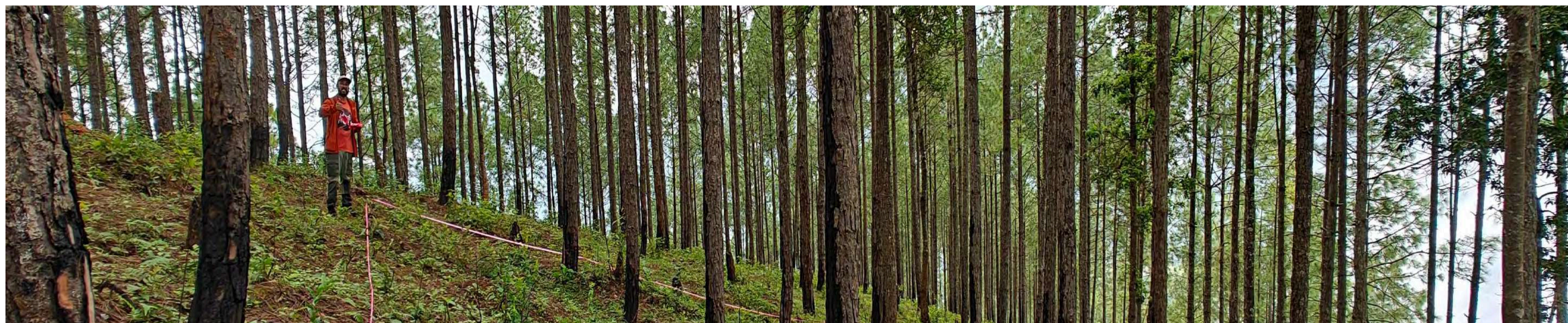
Using spatial statistics and geostatistical methods such as Gaussian Random Fields and kriging, the team analyzes elemental concentrations in pre- and post-treatment soil samples. This approach helps map weathering zones, improve sampling precision, and identify high-impact intervention sites. Affiliated with the Safexpress Centre for Data, Learning, and Decision Sciences, the project also integrates rainfall modeling, automated monitoring tools, and geochemical software to measure carbon capture.

State Mediated Trade, Distortions and Air Pollution



Research

This paper by Digvijay S Negi, Associate Professor of Economics, argues that government grain procurement in India, through fixed Minimum Support Prices (MSPs), leads to increased crop burning and air pollution. By disconnecting local grain prices from local supply conditions, higher MSPs push farmers to grow more rice, especially in states like Punjab and Haryana. This intensifies stubble burning, particularly in the winter, worsening PM 2.5 pollution. Using a difference-in-differences method, the study finds that procurement districts saw a 21% rise in illness and 19% more medical spending after MSP increases. While farmers benefited from higher prices, the health and pollution costs—estimated at \$1 billion—exceeded these gains, pointing to serious unintended consequences of current agricultural price policies.



Ashoka-Environmental Defense Fund Climate Corps Fellowship



Partnerships

Ashoka partnered with the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) to launch the Climate Corps Fellowship in India, an innovative programme that equips postgraduate students with the skills and experience to advance climate goals while strengthening the Indian economy. By placing fellows with leading companies and public institutions, the Fellowship addresses the critical green talent gap and prepares the next generation of sustainability leaders to deliver practical solutions that benefit both people and the planet.

Since its inception in India, the programme has trained and placed more than 80 fellows across 20+ organisations, including AB InBev, Amazon, ITC, Mahindra, Nestlé, Tata Steel, and Zomato. Fellows work on 3–6 month projects that reduce emissions, expand renewable energy, improve energy efficiency, and build climate strategies in sectors such as logistics, agriculture, and industrial manufacturing. Globally, EDF's Climate Corps has built a network of 3,500+ fellows, supporting over 600 organisations and delivering INR 14,000 crore in energy savings and 2.2 million metric tons of avoided emissions. In India, the Fellowship is shaping a skilled green workforce and accelerating progress towards net zero, reflecting Ashoka and EDF's shared commitment to advancing climate action and sustainable growth.

Reducing Household Electricity Consumption through Behaviourally Informed Nudges in Electricity Bills



Research

In the study 'Reducing Household Electricity Consumption Through Behaviourally Informed Nudges in Electricity Bills', Vikrom Mathur, Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Social and Behaviour Change, and collaborators explore how behavioural nudges can reduce electricity use among high-income urban households. As electricity accounts for the largest share of household carbon footprints—with wealthier households emitting seven times more than poorer ones—intervening at the consumption level is crucial for meeting India's 2070 net-zero goals.

Selected under Mission LiFE's Global Call for Ideas, the project tests nudges such as energy-saving commitments, goal setting, feedback, rewards, and information provision through an online experiment. These nudges will be piloted and scaled in partnership with utility companies to redesign electricity bills and influence everyday consumption. The study reframes climate action as a behavioural and societal challenge. It emphasises that enabling low-carbon lifestyles among high emitters is key to shaping more sustainable norms, values, and practices in India's urban future.

Rural Roads, Climate Change, and the Dynamics of Structural Transformation: Evidence from India



Research

Aparajita Dasgupta, Associate Professor of Economics and her collaborator, in this paper, deep dive into how rural road infrastructure interacts with climate change to affect structural transformation in India. Using a large-scale road construction program (PMGSY), the authors study whether new roads help villages maintain progress toward non-farm employment when exposed to rising temperatures. They find that rural roads reduce dependence on farm labour and increase employment in services and cultivation, suggesting improved market access and reduced transport costs support structural change. However, these positive effects are weakened by temperature shocks. High heat reduces service sector employment and drives people back into agricultural labour, counteracting transformation gains. Yet, road connectivity still cushions the impact by helping small landholders persist in farming and improving household wealth—though only when temperature shocks are moderate. The study highlights the role of infrastructure in climate adaptation, showing that roads can partially shield rural economies from the regressions caused by global warming.

Automated Long-Term Passive Acoustic Monitoring for Biodiversity Estimation



This project, led by Bittu Kaveri Rajaraman, Associate Professor of Biology and Psychology, seeks to establish a baseline acoustic database to monitor biodiversity over time using non-invasive, automated acoustic sampling methods. By creating a longitudinal record of bioacoustic calls—initially focusing on insect biodiversity—it will enable researchers to assess the impact of climate change on ecosystems and evaluate the effectiveness of conservation interventions. The database is designed to be updated annually, contingent on continued funding, providing a valuable resource for long-term ecological monitoring.

Nature and Nation



Mahesh Rangarajan, Professor of Environmental Studies and History, examines the often contested relationship between nature and the nation-state in this course. It challenges students to think critically about the trade-offs when national economic growth, measured by GDP, comes at the expense of forests, rivers, wildlife, or traditional ways of life. By unpacking these conflicts, the course highlights the political and economic dilemmas central to effective climate action.

Insights from Two Studies on Crop Burning in India



Two significant research papers—‘Political Cycles in Crop Residue Burning’ by Meghna Agarwala, Associate Professor of Environmental Studies and Aparajita Dasgupta, Associate Professor of Economics, along with other collaborators, and “Are Crop Residue Burning Bans Effective?” by Kanika Mahajan, Associate Professor of Economics, with her collaborators—offer complementary insights into the dynamics of crop residue burning (CRB) in India. The first paper reveals that CRB increases significantly in the months leading up to state elections, indicating a political cycle where environmental laws are under-enforced to avoid alienating farmer constituencies. The second paper, led by Mahajan, assesses the effectiveness of the 2015 National Green Tribunal (NGT) ban on CRB. It finds an initial 30% reduction in fire counts due to enforcement-related uncertainty, but notes that this effect vanishes within a few years due to weak and inconsistent implementation. Together, these studies put forward a critical theme: sustained enforcement and political will are essential for any policy to succeed in curbing CRB. While political incentives can weaken environmental enforcement, even direct bans are ineffective in the absence of consistent and credible implementation. These findings collectively highlight the institutional fragility of environmental governance in India, especially when it intersects with electoral politics.

Increasing the Uptake of Eco-friendly Crematoriums



In the study ‘Increasing the Uptake of Eco-friendly Crematoriums’, the Centre for Social and Behaviour Change, in partnership with the Air Pollution Action Group, explores the behavioural and cultural barriers limiting the adoption of sustainable cremation practices in Delhi. Although alternatives like electric and CNG pyres are widely available, traditional wood-based cremation remains dominant—contributing significantly to air pollution and deforestation. Through a mixed-methods approach including interviews, surveys, and a literature review, the study identified 12 key behavioural barriers such as stigma, misinformation, and entrenched traditions, along with 6 enablers like respect for last wishes and higher acceptance among older adults. The research informed an ideation workshop that yielded 10 actionable interventions, 7 behavioural and 3 infrastructural, designed to increase voluntary uptake of eco-friendly pyres. By addressing both cultural norms and system-level constraints, the study offers a roadmap to make cremation practices more sustainable and climate-conscious in urban India.

Transition of Coal Mining Communities towards Sustainable Lives and Livelihoods (TRANS-MINES)



Partnerships

The Ashoka Centre for a People-centric Energy Transition (ACPET) launched the project TRANS-MINES to facilitate the smooth transition of coal mining communities impacted by mine closures in India. As coal gradually declines in importance amidst India's net zero commitments, abandoned and discontinued mines currently numbering nearly 299 pose serious challenges to employment, land use, and natural resources, affecting close to 500,000 livelihoods.

Supported by HSBC, the project adopts a dual-level approach. At the macro level, it engages stakeholders to understand the socio-economic impacts of closures, inform policy discourse, and recommend people-centric mine closure strategies. At the micro level, it focuses on site-specific research to assess community needs, map aspirations, and co-design interventions in collaboration with affected groups.

Using a mixed-method approach, the ACPET team conducted formative research and extensive surveys at the Rajhara coal mines in Jharkhand, chosen for its complex closure history. The research documented layered community impacts and identified vulnerable groups, shaping tailored interventions to be tested on the ground. The first phase produced a set of actionable recommendations, laying the groundwork for pilots and evaluations that aim to create sustainable livelihood pathways for transitioning coal communities.

Communities and Ecosystems



Teaching

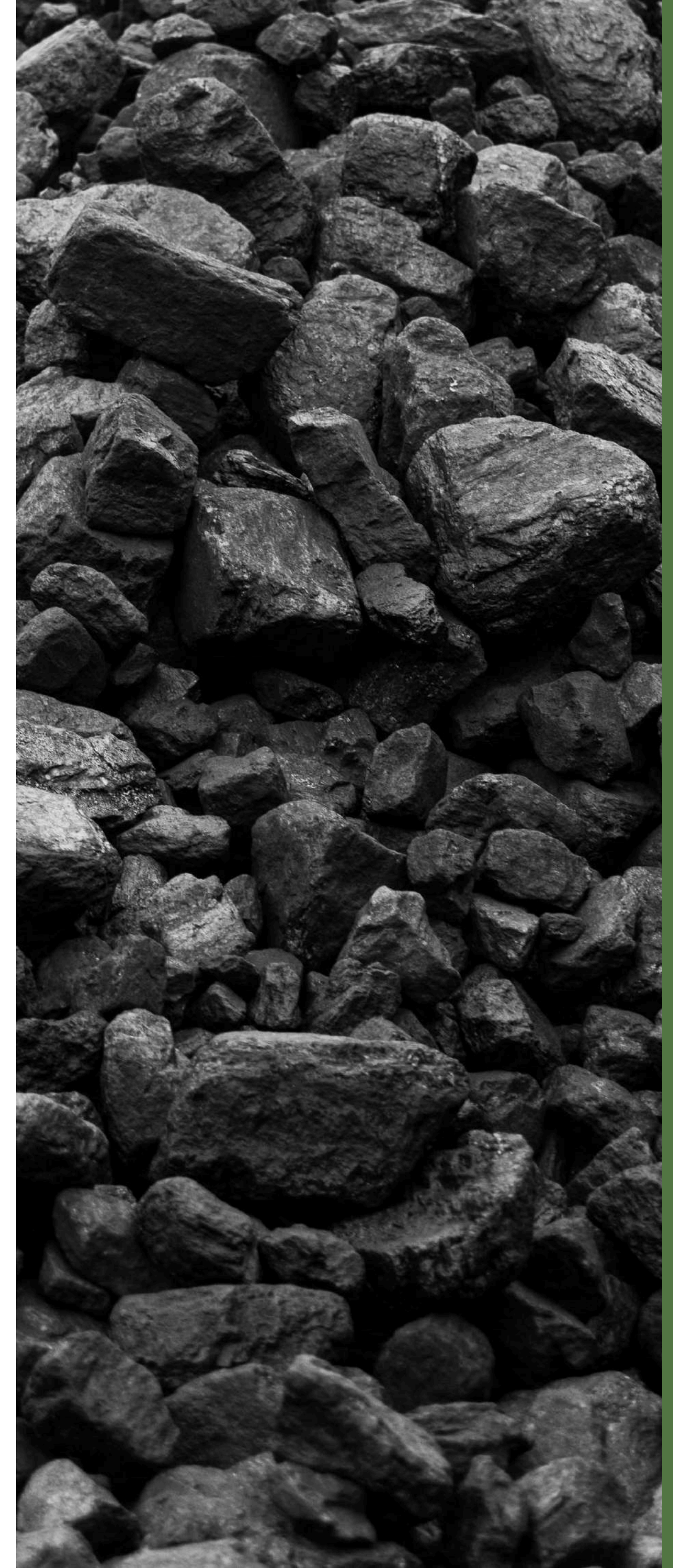
This course, offered by the Environmental Studies Department, provides the ecological foundation for understanding and acting on climate change. Structured as a series of deep dives into select topics in community and ecosystem ecology, it equips students with a holistic understanding of the complexity and interconnectedness of life on Earth. The topics covered, which include ecosystem resilience, carbon cycling, and the relationship between biodiversity and ecosystem functioning, have direct relevance to diverse applications such as ecosystem management and climate change mitigation.

Advanced Primer- Environmental Journalism



Teaching

Tisha Srivastav, Assistant Professor of Media Studies, leads this course that equips students with the skills to drive climate action through effective communication and reporting. Students engage with works by leading environmental journalists, learn from conservation activists, and explore the role of archives in environmental conservation. The course prepares future journalists to cover environmental issues accurately and thoughtfully, helping to raise public awareness and foster urgent climate discourse.



Climate Change and Biotic Evolution



This course offers a deep scientific exploration of how climate change has influenced biological diversity on Earth. Covering topics such as biodiversity, biogeography, and human evolution over the last few million years, students learn to apply concepts from population genetics, molecular ecology, and genomics to understand how natural populations evolve under climate stress. Balaji Chattopadhyay, Assistant Professor at the Trivedi School of Biosciences, guides students through this critical investigation, providing foundational knowledge to grasp the impacts of the current climate crisis.

States, Sciences and Societies: Environmental Challenges and Debates, 1970-2020



Spanning five decades of environmental thought and policy, this course, taught by Mahesh Rangarajan, Professor of Environmental Studies and History, examines how nations and global actors have approached environmental challenges across changing contexts. It traces debates that have shaped international agreements, national policies, and grassroots movements, situating them in their historical, political, and scientific settings. By doing so, it offers students a framework to analyse how ideas about nature, development, and conservation have evolved and how they continue to influence present-day environmental governance.

Temperature Shocks in Early-Life and Long-run Health Outcomes



This research project by Aparajita Dasgupta, Associate Professor of Economics and her collaborator investigates how exposure to temperature shocks in early life affects the long-term risk of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as anaemia and diabetes in India. Using detailed climate data from the Indian Meteorological Department and health outcomes from the National Family Health Survey (NFHS), the research focuses on individuals aged 15–49, finding strong evidence that early exposure to temperature extremes increases the likelihood of developing anaemia (especially in males) and diabetes (with gender and age-specific variations). These findings highlight a critical link between climate vulnerability and public health in developing countries, where malnutrition and NCDs often coexist.

Science and Technology in the Context of Climate Change, Changing Geopolitics, and the Demand for Sustainable Development



Through an interdisciplinary approach, this course, offered by K VijayRaghavan, Chair of the Science Advisory Council, examines the historical pathways of industrialisation, colonialism, and scientific advancement that have shaped today's climate challenges. It projects future scenarios across health, agriculture, and fisheries, and evaluates how science and technology can drive effective mitigation and adaptation. The course equips students with an understanding of how technological innovation and policy must intersect to address global climate priorities amidst complex geopolitical shifts.



Tracking Carbon Footprint at Ashoka University



Since January 2019, Ashoka University has systematically measured its energy consumption and carbon dioxide equivalent (CDe) emissions to better understand and manage its environmental impact. Following the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol, the university records emissions across three scopes—direct, indirect from purchased energy, and other value-chain activities. The process incorporates key assumptions, including diesel generator efficiency, which has been adjusted to reflect actual performance levels of 80–85%, and air travel emissions, which are reported in aggregate rather than separated into international and domestic categories due to limited travel data. By aligning its methodology with global standards such as the GHG Protocol, rather than PAS2050 or ISO 14064, Ashoka ensures credible and transparent reporting. This effort not only establishes a reliable baseline for monitoring progress but also strengthens accountability in reducing the University's carbon footprint over time.

ASHOKA IN NUMBERS

YEAR	NUMBER OF PEOPLE	SCOPE 1 EMISSION	SCOPE 2 EMISSION	SCOPE 3 EMISSION	TOTAL tCO ₂	tCO ₂ / PER PERSON
2019	2738	290.4	5697.8	522.8	6511.0	2.38
2020	1672	77.1	3582.0	219.8	3878.9	2.32
2021	2038	116.4	5061.5	74.8	5252.7	2.59
2022	3792	370.0	7152.7	407.8	7930.5	2.09
2023	4167	214.0	8498.1	611.0	9323.1	2.24
2024	4528	128.0	9100.8	456.3	9685.1	2.14



Shaping Change: Steering India Towards a Low-Carbon Lifestyle



Research

In the study ‘Shaping Change: Steering India Towards a Low-Carbon Lifestyle’, Vikrom Mathur, Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Social and Behaviour Change, and colleagues present a holistic behavioural analysis of climate-relevant practices in Indian households. Applying the RARE framework, the study explores barriers and enablers across four domains—energy, mobility, food, and waste—highlighting the need for informed, culturally sensitive behavioural interventions.

Findings reveal that low awareness, social status perceptions, and convenience barriers often hinder sustainable choices. Yet, momentum for change exists. The study identifies promising nudges: promoting rooftop solar adoption through positive spillover effects, reframing plant-based diets via health narratives, elevating the status of public transport and cycling, and simplifying waste segregation and recycling practices. The research underscores the importance of aligning low-carbon lifestyles with individual identity, health, and financial benefits. By bridging knowledge gaps and restructuring incentives, India can foster meaningful behavioural shifts to meet its climate commitments.

Building Synergies Between Biodiversity, Carbon Sequestration, and Rural Prosperity Through Community Forest Governance



Partnerships

Meghna Agarwala, Associate Professor of Environmental Studies in her research investigates how community forest governance shapes plantation diversity and enhances ecosystem services such as carbon storage, wildlife conservation, water regulation, and human well-being. The project focuses on sites across Himachal Pradesh in India and in Nepal, where community-led decisions can influence both ecological and socio-economic outcomes.

Funded by the Swedish Research Council, the study combines large-scale fieldwork including 5,000 household surveys, interviews with key informants in 50 panchayats (India) and wards (Nepal), and 600 ecological plots to understand governance in action. It examines how communities negotiate among themselves and with state agencies to influence plantation policies, and whether more diverse plantations deliver greater ecological and social benefits. The findings aim to inform policies that link biodiversity conservation with climate action and rural prosperity.





CONSERVE AND SUSTAINABLY USE THE OCEANS, SEAS AND MARINE RESOURCES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



Understanding Local Engagement with Critically Endangered Marine Species



Research

Divya Karnad, Associate Professor of Environmental Studies in her research focuses on sawfishes, once widespread and culturally significant across the tropics, have suffered severe global declines, particularly in countries with weak fisheries management, such as India. As a range state for four species, India's conservation success depends on understanding community connections to sawfish. Prof. Karnad's team surveyed 619 fishers and three traders in four coastal states, finding that 77% had never seen a sawfish, with most encounters occurring over 25 years ago. Only 2.7% reported any cultural value, pointing to cultural extinction and generational amnesia.

With such a loss of cultural connection, effective grassroots conservation appears unlikely. Instead, Professor Karnad recommends a government-led sawfish recovery plan, modelled on successful efforts in countries like the USA. Local ecological knowledge also identified new priority areas, such as Tamil Nadu, for targeted recovery initiatives.

Getting Curious: Shark Conservation through Education with InSeason Fish



Partnerships

Led by Divya Karnad, Associate Professor of Environmental Studies, this programme highlights the urgent need to reconnect children with marine life and foster early awareness about shark conservation in India. Despite living close to the ocean, many children in coastal cities such as Chennai have little exposure to marine ecosystems, and their perceptions of sharks are largely shaped by sensationalised media depictions. Recognising this disconnect, InSeason Fish, with support from The Habitats Trust and the Future for Nature Foundation, developed a six-week ocean-themed curriculum for students aged 11–13 across schools and after-school learning centres.

The programme combined shark biology and conservation with existing science syllabi, using storytelling, art, games, and interactive tools such as the Sharks of India website to introduce students to ocean systems and species. Through modules centred on key species such as the Whale Shark and hammerheads, children explored marine food webs, habitats, and ecological roles, while debunking common myths about sharks.

Initial outcomes showed students growing increasingly curious, engaged, and eager to share their learning with peers and families. By bridging science, education, and public engagement, this initiative builds a foundation for long-term conservation stewardship and informed citizenship in India's next generation.

Digital Conservation of Sharks and Rays in India



Research

This project led by Divya Karnad, Associate Professor of Environmental Studies, explores the potential of digital platforms as cost-effective tools for biodiversity conservation in data-poor contexts of the Global South, using sharks and rays in India as a case study. Despite being one of the world's largest shark-fishing nations, India lacks coordinated, nation-scale research and conservation efforts for these species. By analysing 1,293 elasmobranch-related posts across six social media and citizen science platforms, the study recorded 83 species and revealed both ecological and social dimensions of data, including governance and human-wildlife interactions. The findings show that digital platforms are spatio-temporally more representative than scientific research, covering 96 underrepresented regions over 18 years, and are particularly effective for detecting rare species, documenting human perceptions, and complementing ecological data. The project highlights digital conservation as a transformative approach to fill socio-ecological data gaps, strengthen public participation, and provide national-level insights to inform sustainable management of species. The research is supported by the Centre for Climate Change and Sustainability, the Prince Bernhard Nature Foundation, and the Burger Zoo Foundation.

Sustainable Seafood with InSeason Fish



Research

This project led by Divya Karnad, Associate Professor of Environmental Studies, advances sustainable fishing practices and marine conservation through the initiative InSeason Fish. With the motto "Promoting India's seafood diversity and healthy oceans, one bite at a time," the project seeks to empower consumers to make informed seafood choices that support responsible fishing and ocean health. By engaging with local fishers, restaurants, conservation organisations, and consumers, the initiative promotes practices that reduce pressure on threatened marine species and ensure the long-term viability of India's seafood and restaurant industries. The project combines awareness-building with practical tools, offering children's games, educational materials, seafood guides, and experiential learning opportunities to foster understanding of sustainability. It also collaborates with chefs and restaurants to design sustainable seafood menus, while providing consulting support to seafood businesses seeking to align with sustainability standards. By bridging conservation with everyday consumer practices, the initiative fosters behavioural change and contributes to healthier marine ecosystems. The project is supported by the Future for Nature Foundation and the Bertarelli Foundation.



The Underwater World: An Introduction



Divya Panicker, Visiting Faculty of Environmental Studies, teaches The Underwater World: An Introduction, a course that explores Earth’s oceans and the forces shaping their change. Providing a foundation in oceanography, the curriculum covers physical, chemical, biological, and geological dimensions of the seas. Students study marine life across diverse oceanic zones from the sunlit surface to the deep sea while examining the intricate workings of marine food webs. Drawing on current research and discoveries, the course encourages critical thinking about global environmental challenges and the future of ocean conservation and management.

The Social Life of Water



Mitul Baruah, Associate Professor of Sociology/ Anthropology and Environmental Studies, offers this interdisciplinary course that views water not only as a vital resource but also as a site of social and political contestation, especially in South Asia. With nearly a billion people worldwide lacking safe drinking water, the course investigates how access is shaped by power structures and marked by differences such as caste and gender. Students engage with questions of water governance, justice, and the health impacts of scarcity, developing a deeper understanding of how environment, inequality, and public health intersect across the Global South.



Mitul Baruah
Head of the Department,
Environmental Studies,
Associate Professor of Sociology and
Anthropology and Environmental Studies

“The SDG 14, Life Below Water, holds critical significance for a sustainable planet. Oceans, seas and coastal areas together occupy more than two-thirds of the earth’s surface and contain about 97% of the planet’s water. These, however, are extremely fragile ecologies. Climate change is unleashing a whole new range of threats to marine ecosystems in the form of sea level rise, coral bleaching, ocean acidification, deoxygenation of oceans, and extreme weather events, to name a few. On top of these, anthropogenic forces such as mega infrastructural projects in coastal zones, overfishing, and dumping of urban/industrial waste into the sea have further destabilized these vulnerable ecosystems. It is also important to note that life below water is inseparable from and fundamental to life above water. Protecting marine ecosystem, thus, is also about saving lives and livelihoods of billions of people who depend on these resources. Today, a large number of island nations/communities are under serious threat due to sea level rise. More and more islanders are becoming climate refugees. Working towards SDG14 has therefore never been more urgent.”



15 LIFE
ON LAND



PROTECT, RESTORE & PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE USE OF TERRESTRIAL ECOSYSTEMS, SUSTAINABLY MANAGE FORESTS, COMBAT DESERTIFICATION, AND HALT AND REVERSE LAND DEGRADATION AND HALT BIODIVERSITY LOSS



Mitigating Noise Pollution on Campus



Campus

Ashoka University is located in one of the country's fastest urbanising regions. Rapid urbanisation has affected the climate as well as the air quality of the area. The National Highway 44 (NH 44) runs next to the University and the regular movement of heavy vehicles on it is a constant source of noise and air pollution. To address this problem, the University has planted trees along its boundary, which creates a natural barrier against dust and noise.

The Jungle, the Spade and the Book



Teaching

Nayanjot Lahiri, Professor of History, teaches The Jungle, the Spade and the Book, a course that traces the history of the jungle and wilderness in the Indian subcontinent from antiquity to the present. It examines how forests entered the ancient Indian imagination, how they are studied through science and archaeology, and the methods used to interpret wilderness as an archaeological source. Alongside this, the course investigates human interactions with other species across time, illuminating the intersections of history and natural history.

Drivers of Human-elephant Conflict in Angul Forest Circle in Odisha



This project, led by Meghna Agarwala, Associate Professor of Environmental Studies, investigates the drivers of human-elephant conflict in the Angul Forest Circle of Odisha. The research examines elephant habitat selection, probing whether herds are being displaced from forests due to limited nutrition or drawn into agricultural fields in line with optimal foraging theory. It further explores the role of human values, attitudes, and historical interactions in shaping conflict, alongside broader ecological and social drivers in Odisha. A second year of field data is underway, and work on an early warning system is underway. Supported by KCDH and 3CS, the study aims to inform conservation strategies, reduce conflict, and foster coexistence between communities and elephants.



Meghna Agarwala
Associate Professor
Environmental Studies

“Terrestrial ecosystems are very complex, with intricate interactions between various sub-components and long-term interactions with climate and human activities. A better understanding of these interactions, in various local contexts, is imperative for more informed and effective conservation and restoration.”

Understanding the Presence of Cannabis Across the Holocene in Central India



Meghna Agarwala, Associate Professor of Environmental Studies, with collaborators, examined fossil pollen records to understand whether Cannabis presence in Central India’s paleo-record reflected natural dispersal or human cultivation. To disentangle the natural growth of Cannabis from deliberate human use, the study introduced a novel method comparing Cannabis and Artemisia pollen, which disperse under similar ecological and settlement conditions. The research revealed that Cannabis shows clear signs of cultivation ~2.5 ka near major early historic settlements, while its presence in earlier periods (<2.5 ka) was largely due to natural dispersal. These findings not only refine our understanding of the cultural history of Cannabis in South Asia but also contribute to broader debates on human-environment interactions in prehistoric and historic contexts.



Conservation Policy in the Developing World



Ghazala Shahabuddin, Visiting Faculty of Environmental Studies, leads this course on conservation policy in developing countries. It examines biodiversity conservation through ecological, historical, and socio-political lenses, encouraging students to integrate conservation efforts with sustainable development and social-ecological realities. The curriculum critically evaluates traditional and current paradigms like strict nature protection, community-based conservation, and Integrated Conservation and Development Projects, offering a comprehensive understanding of the ongoing biodiversity crisis and potential solutions.

Applications of Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning in Inferring the Past Demographic History of a Species



This project led by Balaji Chattopadhyay, Assistant Professor at Trivedi School of Biosciences develops machine learning tools to reconstruct past demographic trajectories of wild populations. By applying these methods to real datasets, the team has successfully tested a program capable of inferring population history, providing new computational tools for understanding species' past population dynamics and informing conservation efforts.

Whole Genome Sequencing and Comparative Genomics to Understand the Evolution, Genomic Diversity and Immunity of Bats from the Indian Subcontinent



This project led by Balaji Chattopadhyay, Assistant Professor at Trivedi School of Biosciences generates high-quality genomic resources for endemic bat species in Northeast India, aiming to understand their genomic diversity, adaptations, and host-pathogen interactions. Through whole genome sequencing, it has identified two divergent lineages of bats and produced high-quality genomes for three species. The findings provide insights into bat immune systems, their demographic fluctuations in response to past climate change, and broader evolutionary patterns. Key publications from this work include peer-reviewed articles in Journal of Molecular Evolution and Genomics.

Project Pulp-An Initiative of LiveGreen@Ashoka



The Office of Sustainability, through its student engagement program LiveGreen@Ashoka, launched Project Pulp—a unique paper recycling initiative dedicated to creating an in-house stationery brand from the paper waste generated by the Ashoka Community. Aligned with the principles of the circular economy, Pulp introduced its first product, the Pulp Notebook, in 2024, now available at the Ashoka University Merchandise Store.

Nature Positive University



Ashoka University became a part of Nature Positive Universities, a global network of over 500 higher education institutions dedicated to promoting nature on campuses, in supply chains, and within communities. Nature Positive Universities is a partnership between the University of Oxford, UNEP Youth & Education, and the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, aiming to unite the fight against climate and biodiversity crises.



NATURE POSITIVE
—UNIVERSITIES—

International Meeting on Land Cover/Land Use Change (LCLUC) in South Asia and Synthesis



This meeting co-organised with NASA's South Asia Research Initiative (SARI) at Ashoka University, synthesises research on Land Cover and Land Use Change (LCLUC) in smallholder tree-based systems across South Asia to evaluate their role as natural climate solutions. The initiative assessed tree cover and biomass trends, examining the conditions under which improvements contribute to carbon sequestration and rural livelihoods. In April 2024, over 60 scientists from South Asia and North America convened at Ashoka University, led by a Michigan State University consortium of six universities, to deliberate on the state of LCLUC science and its policy relevance. Structured around four themes: tree cover and livelihoods, monitoring trends and drivers, readiness of Nature-Based Solutions (NbS), and evidence-based net-zero policies, the discussions emphasised integrating social and biophysical data with Earth Observations. The synthesis underscored how advancing monitoring technologies and landscape-level analyses can inform evidence-based climate adaptation and mitigation strategies, fostering sustainable land management and climate-responsive development in the region.

The Word for World is Forest: Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Development in an Age of Climate Change

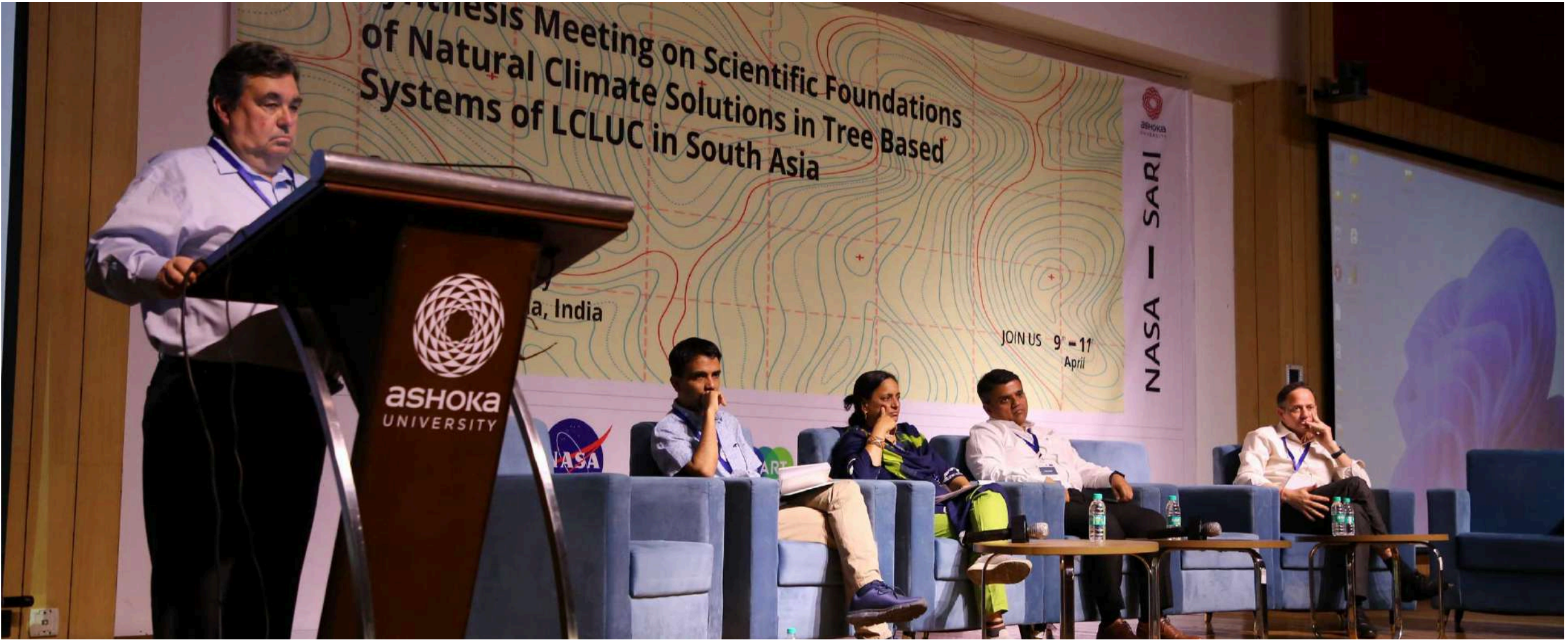


Through the lens of climate change, this course taught by Meghna Agarwala, Associate Professor of Environmental Studies explores the ongoing debates around biodiversity conservation, economic growth, and social justice. It draws attention to the tensions that arise when conservation efforts intersect with local livelihoods, and how integrated or adaptive approaches may help navigate these complexities. Students are encouraged to examine both the scientific and the socio-political dimensions of biodiversity management, as well as to reflect on the evolving relationship between conservation policy and development agendas.

Sustainable Development: How Do We Align Social Justice, Biodiversity Conservation and Climate Action?



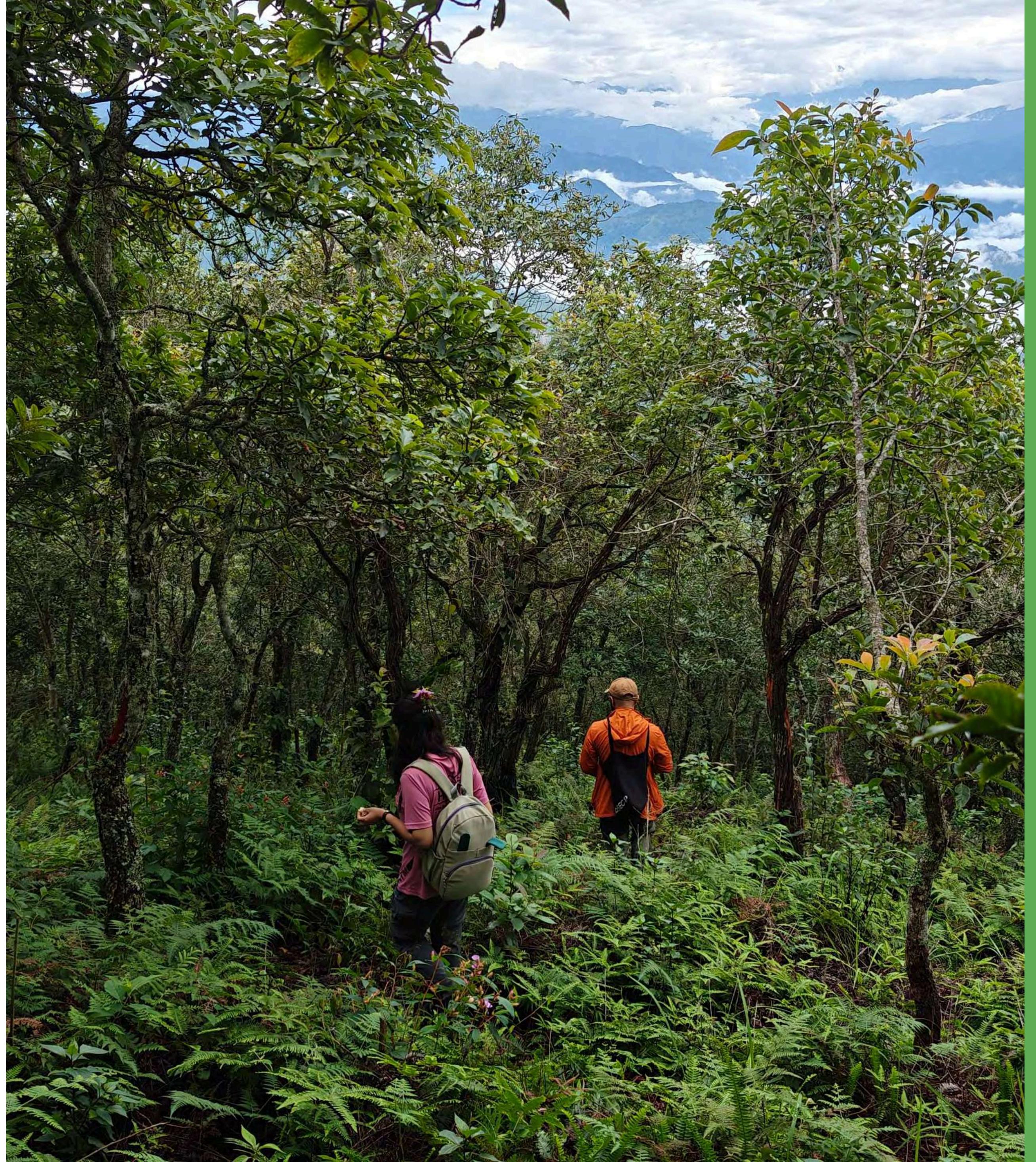
This course taught by Meghna Agarwala, Associate Professor of Environmental Studies builds an interdisciplinary understanding of sustainable development by combining theoretical frameworks with experiential insights. It asks how social justice concerns can be meaningfully aligned with biodiversity conservation and climate action, exploring examples from policy practice and field experience. The emphasis is on creating a holistic perspective where ecological priorities and human well-being are not seen as conflicting goals but as interdependent elements of long-term sustainability.



Ecology, Behaviour, and Conservation



‘Ecological Methods and their Applications’ and ‘Animal Behaviour’ are courses taught by Manvi Sharma, Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies, that linked ecological research with biodiversity conservation. The first course connected ecological theory with hands-on fieldwork, training students in research methods such as transect- and quadrat-based sampling for tree diversity, mark-recapture techniques for butterflies, and passive acoustic recording for bats. By collecting and analysing field data, students developed practical skills to address real-world environmental challenges. The second course explored the form and function of animal behaviour through a cost-benefit framework, examining examples such as weaver birds constructing nests and rock agamas performing push-ups. Beyond highlighting behavioural diversity, the course emphasised how behavioural research can strengthen wildlife conservation strategies. Together, the courses equipped students with both methodological tools and conceptual insights to understand ecosystems holistically and contribute meaningfully to biodiversity protection.



16

PEACE, JUSTICE
AND STRONG
INSTITUTIONS

PROMOTE PEACEFUL AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, PROVIDE ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR ALL AND BUILD EFFECTIVE, ACCOUNTABLE AND INCLUSIVE INSTITUTIONS AT ALL LEVELS



Clubs and Societies



Campus

Media and cultural societies at Ashoka strengthen dialogue, storytelling, and global cultural appreciation. Khayal and Navrang provide platforms for filmmaking, appreciation, and critical engagement with cinema, while Kalinga Magazine channels satire and humor to reflect on campus life. The Anime Club, Hallyu, and the Korean Culture Club foster intercultural exchange through art, music, and fandom, while Humrahi blends travel with heritage, encouraging empathy and curiosity through immersive journeys. CODA, the yearbook club, documents student experiences in lasting ways, while The Common Room provides a welcoming space for connection and reflection. Eeshto, the gaming society, builds strategy and community through board games, esports, and collaborative play. These initiatives highlight the importance of dialogue, cultural representation, and community-building, creating a vibrant, inclusive campus that mirrors the values of peace, justice, and sustainable living.

The Welfare State



Teaching

This course, taught by Mekhala Krishnamurthy, Associate Professor of Sociology and Anthropology, examines the evolution and future of welfare states, particularly in India and South Asia, by analysing how states construct and deliver social protection. Using readings across history, political theory, sociology, anthropology, economics and public policy, it looks at the social contract, the moral and political bases of welfare, how bureaucracies function, and what shapes delivery and outcomes.

Consistency and Social Choice



Research

Mihir Bhattacharya, Professor of Economics and his collaborators examine the fundamental challenges in designing fair and consistent decision-making rules in the context of social choice theory. Focusing on how individual preferences can be aggregated into collective outcomes, the authors demonstrate a powerful impossibility result: no social choice rule can simultaneously satisfy contraction consistency, anonymity, and Pareto efficiency when there are at least three alternatives and two individuals involved. This highlights the inherent trade-offs that arise when trying to balance rationality, fairness, and efficiency in collective decision-making.

To navigate this impossibility, the paper introduces and characterises the Priority Rule, which selects a Pareto efficient outcome according to a fixed priority ordering. The authors also propose a weaker rationality condition—Efficient Dominance (ED)—that relaxes traditional consistency requirements while maintaining efficiency. They show that the Priority Rule uniquely satisfies both ED and Pareto efficiency, offering a theoretically sound approach for institutional settings that require consistent and fair resolution of group choices. These findings contribute to the broader understanding of how institutions and governance structures can be designed to reflect both collective rationality and individual rights.

Economics of GST Evasion in the Indian Context



Partnerships

This case study by Bhanu Gupta, Assistant Professor of Economics, explores how India's Goods and Services Tax (GST), a value-added tax system introduced in 2017, is designed to reduce tax evasion and improve compliance through a digitally integrated, self-enforcing structure. The paper explains how mechanisms like input tax credit (ITC), e-invoicing, GSTR form filings, and e-way bills help create transparency and traceability throughout the supply chain. However, it identifies two persistent challenges: last-mile evasion at the retail level (where consumers and sellers may collude) and fake invoicing, where fictitious firms generate false input claims.

To address these, the government has implemented reforms such as Aadhaar verification for new registrants, biometric checks, invoice incentive schemes like Mera Bill Mera Adhikar, and integrated data analysis systems. The study also emphasises the crucial role of human capital—trained tax officers and analytical infrastructure—in ensuring effective enforcement. It concludes that while GST's architecture holds promise in curbing evasion, the success of the system ultimately depends on building stronger, data-driven institutions across both central and state administrations.

Philanthropy and Social Justice Movements: A study exploring the Impacts, Challenges, and Opportunities of Funding Movements



Partnerships

Shalini from Centre for Social Impact and Philanthropy (CSIP) Research Fellowship 2023–24, in this paper examines the role of philanthropy in supporting social justice movements in India, particularly those addressing caste annihilation, gender justice, food sovereignty, and environmental rights. It finds that while funding can significantly strengthen movements, grassroots collectives—especially those led by marginalised communities—face major barriers to accessing resources due to donor-driven priorities, bureaucratic funding processes, legal restrictions like the FCRA, and entrenched power imbalances. The study warns of the risk of movement capture, where elite funders dilute radical agendas, and highlights the underrepresentation of marginalised voices in decision-making within philanthropic structures. It also critiques the tendency of Indian philanthropy to focus on service delivery rather than systemic change.

The research identifies key opportunities for transformative funding: donor education on caste, gender, and intersectionality; flexible, long-term funding rather than short-term, project-based grants; prioritising self-led movements with leadership from marginalised communities; and incorporating collective care and second-line leadership development into funding models.

Datascape by CEDA



Partnerships

On November 29, the Centre for Economic Data and Analysis (CEDA) hosted Datascape, a day-long event at the India Habitat Centre, Delhi, dedicated to advancing conversations around socio-economic data in India. The event opened with an address by Dr Saurabh Garg, Secretary, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), who spoke on 'Official statistics in India – Unlocking the power of data for development', highlighting MoSPI's efforts to enhance data accessibility. The event brought together voices from across academia, policy, media, and civil society, including representatives from the World Bank, Indian Express, NCAER, IndiaSpend, and Janaagraha, to discuss topics such as democratising statistics, strengthening civic data initiatives, and female labour force participation. The event concluded with presentations from CEDA's core team showcasing the organisation's data tools, research vision, and collaborations. Attended by over 125 participants, Datascape served as a unique platform to reflect on the role of public statistics in shaping informed governance and accountability. The event's focus on increasing transparency, accessibility, and relevance of official and civic data directly contributes to fostering evidence-based dialogue, promoting institutional trust, and encouraging data-driven policymaking.

The Politics of Peace: Reconstruction and Justice in Post-Conflict Societies



Teaching

Dipin Kaur, Assistant Professor of Political Science and International Relations, leads this course on the politics of peace in post-conflict societies. Students explore the challenges of accountability, reconstruction, and justice, studying mechanisms like truth and reconciliation commissions and international criminal tribunals. Through global case studies, the course offers insight into the complex journey of building lasting peace and just institutions after war.



Digitalisation, AI and Society



Research

Subhashis Banerjee, Professor of Computer Science, in his work critically examines India's large-scale digitalisation efforts, including Aadhaar, UPI, Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission, and the Account Aggregator system. While these initiatives showcase India's technological prowess and impact on public life, they also raise deep concerns around privacy, fairness, exclusion, and ethics.

His research highlights the challenges of balancing innovation with safeguards in areas such as digital identity, healthcare records, elections, AI ethics, and social media governance. He emphasizes the urgent need for robust design, privacy-preserving techniques, fairness in AI, and multidisciplinary frameworks for digital governance. He calls for rigorous academic enquiry into India's digital transformation, stressing that rapid digitalisation must not come at the cost of security, accountability, or equity.

Buddhist Ethics



Teaching

Tatyana Kostochka, Assistant Professor of Philosophy, teaches this course that explores the foundations of peace and justice through Buddhist thought. Students engage with texts from diverse Buddhist traditions, including the Pali canon, Mahayana sutras, and the writings of philosophers like Śāntideva. The course addresses ethical issues that remain deeply relevant today, providing a rich philosophical basis for understanding peaceful coexistence.

Democracy, Decisions, Development: A PPE Perspective



Bastian Steuwer, Assistant Professor and Head of the Department of Political Science, leads this interdisciplinary course exploring the foundations of strong institutions. The curriculum tackles fundamental questions about the justification of democracy and the aspirations for India's democratic future. By integrating insights from political science, philosophy, and economics, students gain a well-rounded understanding of how democratic processes, rational decision-making, and economic development combine to build and sustain effective, accountable institutions.

Empires, Nomads and Barbarians



Upinder Singh, Professor, leads this course that offers a deep historical perspective on the formation of political institutions and their ties to justice and inclusivity. Drawing on a broad array of primary sources, students explore networks of political, economic, and religious interactions across ancient Asia, Europe, and Africa. The curriculum also examines how cultural "others" came to be labelled as 'barbarians,' shedding light on historical processes of inclusion and exclusion.

Digitalization and Privacy



The course offered by Subhashis Banerjee, Professor of Computer Science explores the privacy and human rights dimensions of Digital Public Goods (DPGs) in India, which include large-scale public service applications such as national identity systems, payment platforms, electronic voting, health registries, and contact tracing technologies. It critically examines the risks of exclusion, privacy violations, and discriminatory data processing within a context of low digital literacy and evolving legal frameworks. Students will analyze privacy requirements from both legal and technical perspectives, reviewing Supreme Court judgments, cryptographic methods, anonymization techniques, database and network security, and architectural strategies for privacy protection.

By the end of the course, students will gain the ability to assess privacy risks, evaluate technical solutions for data protection, and explore frameworks for aligning legal and technical standards in large-scale digital systems.

Technology Law and Policy: A New Frontier for Business and Society



Nikhil Sud, Visiting Faculty of Entrepreneurship, teaches this course on emerging technology law and policy issues crucial for strong institutions in the 21st century. Students explore topics like data privacy, free speech, and content moderation, with a focus on India as well as key contexts in the US and Europe. The course equips students to understand and influence tech law and policy, essential for fostering transparency and accountability in the digital age.





STRENGTHEN THE MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION AND REVITALIZE THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Ashoka's Global Footprint



CHAIR-INDIA



The Consortium for Climate, Health, and Air Pollution Research in India (CHAIR-India), established in May 2019, brought together exposure scientists and health researchers to address air pollution health effects. The first project, "CHAIR-India: Addressing gaps in achieving the sustainable development goals," was executed in collaboration with Karolinska Institutet, Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health, Boston University School of Public Health, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, Ben Gurion University of the Negev, and the Centre for Chronic Disease Control. The project aimed to construct a nation-wide exposure assessment model for air pollution and ambient temperature, which could be leveraged to examine associations with a range of health and disease outcomes, building an evidence base for the health effects of poor air quality and ambient temperature on populations across India. Poornima Prabhakaran, Professor and Director, Centre for Health Analytics Research and Trends (CHART), Trivedi School of Biosciences, led the project, which was funded by FORMAS-Swedish Research Agency.

Ashoka ZEISS Core Imaging Facility



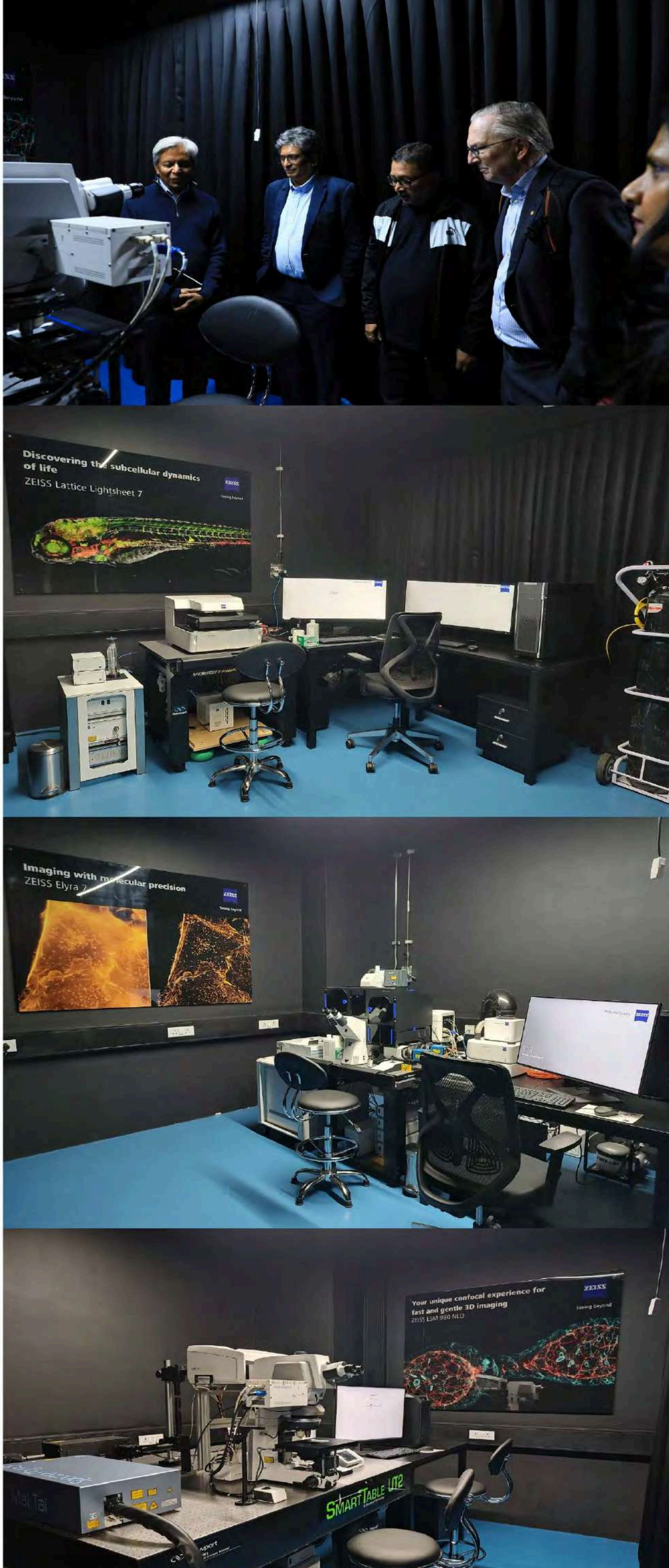
Ashoka – ZEISS Core Imaging Facility was established in December 2024 as the result of a collaborative partnership between Ashoka University and ZEISS Research Microscopy Solutions (Carl ZEISS India (Bangalore) Pvt. Ltd). This advanced research microscopy facility offers the latest and cutting-edge microscopy technology for students and researchers and physical access to the highly sophisticated microscopes from ZEISS installed at the Trivedi School of Biosciences block of Ashoka University. The facility started its operations from January 2025 and it houses four research microscopes from ZEISS, namely Lattice Lightsheet 7, Elyra 7 LS (Lattice SIM2), LSM 980 NLO, and Cell Discoverer 7 with LSM 900 Airyscan. These microscopes can offer advanced research support in fields such as cell biology, biophysics, soft condensed matter studies, and structural biology.



K. VijayRaghavan
Special Invitee - Governing Body,
Chair, Science Advisory Council

“The Sustainable Development Goal 17 has an ambitious 2030 Agenda titled "Partnerships for the Goals." It underscores the principle that no single entity can achieve sustainable development on its own. Partnerships are vital. At Ashoka University, our partnerships span the humanities and sciences, from Sonipat to all over India and the world.

In science, these collaborations are crucial. Initiatives like the Lodha Genius Programme exemplify this by partnering to nurture exceptional high school students in STEM fields. We actively foster collaboration through regular international meetings and workshops, bringing together diverse researchers to tackle complex problems. Furthermore, our state-of-the-art core collaborative facilities are central to this vision. These shared labs and centres for health, genomics, imaging, and data science are not just resources but hubs for interdisciplinary projects, allowing scholars from various institutions to pool expertise and accelerate discovery, truly embodying the spirit of SDG 17.”



Havells School of Management and Leadership



Partnerships

On its Founder's Day, Ashoka University announced the establishment of the Havells School of Management and Leadership, supported by a commitment of ₹ 250 crore from Havells India. Designed to complement Ashoka's strengths in the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, and computer science, the new School integrates management and leadership education with the University's distinctive liberal arts approach. Its programmes aim to nurture responsible leaders equipped to address pressing economic and social challenges in India and globally. The School will introduce innovative undergraduate programmes in Applied Liberal Arts and Management offered for the first time in India, with the aspiration of becoming one of the world's leading undergraduate management programmes. It will also offer integrated postgraduate degrees in collaboration with leading business schools in India and abroad. Anchored in Ashoka's interdisciplinary foundation courses, the School will provide students with critical thinking, communication, and leadership skills while allowing them to specialise in management, business, and entrepreneurship. This initiative reflects Havells India's continuing legacy of supporting Ashoka's vision for transformative education.



Co-Designing Urban Futures



Partnerships

The Office of Global Education at Ashoka University collaborated with the School of Cities, University of Toronto, under the Multidisciplinary Urban Capstone Project (MUCP) to address real-world urban challenges through an SDG-aligned framework. This year-long partnership brought together cross-cultural teams of students to work with local communities in Pune on issues of waste, housing, transport, livelihoods, and urban governance.

Three standout projects included co-creating a Skill Development Toolkit for transgender communities, repurposing under-flyover spaces for inclusive public use, and mapping waste picker geographies with SWaCH to recognise and professionalise informal labour. Pune served as a dynamic learning site, enabling students to blend ethnographic research, field visits, and community engagement. Led by Prof. Aditi Mehta and Prof. David Roberts, the programme exemplifies Ashoka's commitment to experiential learning, participatory planning, and global-local knowledge exchange. MUCP reflects how international academic partnerships can generate scalable, inclusive solutions that contribute meaningfully to the SDGs.

Collaborative Partnerships Driving SusCat-STA 2024



Partnerships

The first International Conference on Sustainable Catalysis: Synthesis, Theory, and Applications (SusCat-STA 2024) is being organized under the joint partnership of the Department of Chemistry and the Ashoka Centre for a People-centric Energy Transition (ACPET), Ashoka University, in association with the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER) Kolkata. This collaboration brings together expertise from leading academic institutions to create a global platform for researchers, scientists, and industry professionals to exchange knowledge, foster innovation, and promote advancements in sustainable catalysis. The conference is further supported by contributions from renowned organizations including RSC, ACS Publications, Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), and WILEY Publications, ensuring strong academic-industry engagement.



Machine Learning Methods for Enhanced Forecasting of Antiretroviral Therapy Demand in India



Partnerships

Ashoka University, in collaboration with the National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO), is leading an innovative project on Machine Learning Methods for Enhanced Forecasting of Antiretroviral Therapy (ART) Demand in India, headed by Steven J Clipman, Assistant Professor of Medicine at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, and Debayan Gupta, Assistant Professor of Computer Science. The project seeks to strengthen HIV treatment delivery in India, where long procurement timelines, seasonal migration, dosage changes, and frequent drug substitutions create significant supply chain challenges.

In its first phase, the project engaged NACO to design a secure system capable of integrating with its existing data infrastructure. The second phase deploys advanced machine learning models to predict ART drug demand up to two years in advance, accounting for patient-level drug switching, pediatric transitions, seasonal migration, and centre-level anomalies across 700+ ART centres. An AI-adaptor pipeline cleans and processes unstructured data, while a user-friendly interface ensures accessibility for healthcare workers with limited technical training.

By improving forecasting precision, the project aims to reduce over-purchasing, optimise procurement, and guarantee uninterrupted drug availability. Beyond ART, the model provides a scalable framework for forecasting medication demand for other chronic diseases, contributing to more efficient healthcare delivery in India.

Strengthening Global Sustainability through Strategic International Partnerships



Ashoka University's commitment to nurturing ethical leaders and engaged global citizens continues to shape its internationalisation agenda. In 2024-25, this vision was further advanced by the Office of Global Education through the establishment of thirteen new strategic partnerships across Europe, North America, and Asia. These collaborations are more than academic linkages—they are platforms for collective action on pressing global challenges such as climate change, inclusive development, and social equity. By enabling joint research, student and faculty mobility, and co-designed teaching programmes, these partnerships strengthen Ashoka's role as a contributor to global sustainability dialogues while advancing the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



Gitanjali Rana
Director
Office of Global Education

"True progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals is only possible when we collaborate across borders, sectors, and generations. In education, partnerships are not just about sharing resources—they are about co-creating solutions, amplifying impact, and empowering learners everywhere to become architects of a more just, inclusive, and sustainable world."



Notable MoUs Signed in 2024

1. Ashoka University and SN Bose National Centre for Basic Sciences signed an MoU to promote collaborative research, Ashoka University signed an MoU with NIMHANS to foster collaborative initiatives
2. Ashoka University partnered with Cornell University to support the HEaTR research project led by Cornell faculty, Alex Nading
3. Ashoka University, IFRE, and the Telrad Foundation signed an MoU to advance public health research and develop tools for disease prevention and management
4. Ashoka University partnered with the Environmental Defense Fund to develop sustainability leaders.
5. Ashoka University signed an MoU with IIT Bombay's NDMC to advance disease modelling, initially focusing on Tuberculosis, Malaria, Vaccine Preventable Diseases, and Neglected Tropical Diseases
6. Ashoka University signed an MoU with the University of Birmingham for collaborations in student exchange programmes and research
7. Ashoka University signed an MoU with the University of Notre Dame (UND) for collaboration in student mobility, faculty exchange, joint research initiatives and more.

Bhashavaad: India’s Living Translation Archive



The Ashoka Centre for Translation, in collaboration with the New India Foundation, has launched Bhashavaad, India’s first non-profit, open-access, and crowd-sourced database of Indian translations. Beginning with over 14,000 entries, 6,500 authors, and 7,000 translators, it aims to revitalise the country’s translation ecosystem and provide a much-needed resource for India’s literary and cultural identity.

Designed as a living archive, the database maps the multilingual landscape of India, highlighting what is being translated, who is translating, and which language pairs are most active. It records translations across major languages such as Hindi, Bengali, and Marathi, while also documenting smaller traditions including Manipuri, Kodava, and Kokborok, offering a fuller picture of India’s literary diversity.

The platform showcases striking patterns, such as the leap from 125 recorded translations in the first half of the 20th century to over 2,600 in the first two decades of the 21st. It also recognises key publishers, translators, and authors while uncovering lesser-known figures who have contributed significantly to Indian literature in translation. As it continues to grow with user submissions and partnerships, Bhashavaad serves as both archive and idea, creating a dynamic resource for researchers, readers, and translators to explore and sustain India’s multilingual heritage.

ICPP Annual Growth Conference



The inaugural ICPP Growth Conference convened senior policymakers, academics, private sector experts, and civil society leaders for a two-day dialogue on India’s growth strategy. The conference featured five thematic sessions on Macro and Public Finance, Regulations, Employment, Indian States, and Agriculture, engaging over 350 participants drawn from government, academia, media, and the private sector.

The event showcased ICPP’s research and created a platform for deep discussions on India’s policy priorities in the coming years. The deliberations not only addressed pressing economic challenges but also generated a series of critical policy questions that will inform and guide ICPP’s future research agenda. The inaugural edition also brought together a distinguished set of speakers, including more than a dozen Government of India Secretaries and State Chief Secretaries, former Supreme and High Court Justices, chairs of past Finance Commissions, the Chief Economic Adviser, Vice Chairperson of NITI Aayog, and senior private sector leaders. This landmark conference sets the stage for sustained multi-stakeholder engagement in shaping India’s growth trajectory.

Isaac Centre for Public Policy



The Isaac Centre for Public Policy (ICPP) at Ashoka University aimed to establish itself as India’s leading public policy center, recognized for its research and ideas on Indian public policy. It focused on academic programs, policymaker-led research, and public policy events, offering interdisciplinary undergraduate and executive education programs, including modules for the Young India Fellowship. ICPP will disseminate its research, case studies, and policy briefs through workshops and thematic conferences, collaborating with other Ashoka centers. The Centre will also host an annual marquee conference that will bring together academics, think tanks, policymakers, and civil servants to address critical national issues, influence public discourse, and foster impactful dialogues on public policy.



Fellowship In Infectious Disease – Ashoka University & Max Hospitals



This project is led by Anurag Agrawal, Professor and Dean, BioSciences and Health Research, Trivedi School of Biosciences, is funded by Pfizer Inc. This collaboration with Max Super Speciality Hospitals in Dehradun, Mohali, and Saket (New Delhi) has launched a series of fellowship programs in Infectious Disease to strengthen India’s healthcare capacity. These initiatives aim to address critical gaps in the evidence-based management of infections by advancing research and training. The fellowships focus on risk factors, diagnostics, causative strains, prognostic markers, and management strategies, particularly for infections encountered in critical care conditions such as Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome (ARDS) and Sepsis. Through these programs, the research teams also study drug susceptibility and resistance patterns, offering insights into one of the most pressing challenges in global healthcare today—antimicrobial resistance. By fostering collaboration among clinicians, researchers, and healthcare professionals, the fellowships promote a multidisciplinary approach to improving patient care and clinical outcomes. By training healthcare professionals in advanced research and evidence-based practices, the fellowships contribute to building a robust ecosystem capable of responding to infectious diseases more effectively. Together, these initiatives aim not only to strengthen patient care in India but also to generate insights of global relevance in tackling infectious disease challenges.



Mercia Prince
Director, Office of Admissions

"The Office of Admissions at Ashoka University actively seeks to craft as diverse a cohort as possible through its holistic admissions processes, with the belief that a diverse campus is truly enriching only if it is also an inclusive one. To bring this vision of inclusion, learning and growth to fruition, the various avenues created for additional support on campus play a crucial role. For some of these students, the Academic Bridge Programme helps build multiple, small but necessary, bridges to ensure a smoother transition into Ashoka's educational and residential life experiences."

Ashoka Connect



Ashoka Connect has been a key initiative in the 2024-25 cycle, serving as a platform for meaningful engagement between Ashoka’s founders, Vice Chancellor, and faculty with prominent school principals across major cities such as Delhi NCR, Hyderabad, Bangalore, Mumbai, Pune, Kolkata, Guwahati, and Lucknow. To date, the events have brought together over 400 school principals and 500 counselors, fostering strong relationships with key stakeholders in the education ecosystem. The sessions highlighted Ashoka’s 10-year journey of academic excellence, its significant investments in Pure Sciences, and its commitment to enabling large-scale impact through generous scholarships. These efforts have been widely appreciated by participating schools and counselors, reinforcing Ashoka’s position as a leading institution in higher education.



Koita Centre for Digital Health



Koita Centre for Digital Health at Ashoka (KCDH-A) is an interdisciplinary Centre, offering robust academic and research programmes aimed at advancing and developing a fresh perspective on Digital Health. KCDH-A partnered with Max Healthcare and MyHealthcare to develop personalised cardiometabolic risk assessment tools as well as their optimal management. They also partnered with data.org to create training modules in data science for health. The Centre is partnering with global universities and other health-groups including Johns Hopkins, Stanford, Centre for Chronic Disease Control in the areas of generative AI, health recommendations, and wearables. Through its involvement in the Digital Transformation for Health Lab (DtfHL), the Centre contributes to developing value-based approaches to health governance, focusing particularly on young people. Additionally, KCDH-A played a crucial role in the Genomic Surveillance of SARS-CoV-2 project, implementing a scalable hub-and-spoke model for sequencing labs, improving genomic surveillance capabilities, and building international research capacity. These initiatives demonstrate the Centre’s commitment to fostering global collaborations that improve health outcomes and contribute to sustainable healthcare solutions.



Aradhita Baral
Deputy Director
Koita Centre for Digital Health

“Collaborators are central to the vision of KCDH-A. Together with partners we co-create solutions, we innovate, and ensure that digital transformation is grounded in responsible society and outcomes are available internationally.”

Centre for Health Analytics Research and Trends



The Centre for Health Analytics Research and Trends (CHART) is advancing evidence-based research on population health through large-scale epidemiological studies across India. The center’s multidisciplinary approach focuses on critical health determinants, including air pollution, nutrition, psychosocial factors, and the impacts of climate change. By utilising AI-based modeling techniques, CHART aims to provide robust data that informs policy and enhances public health outcomes. Additionally, the center is dedicated to building research capacity through national and international collaborations, offering training opportunities to early and mid-career researchers, and contributing to the development of the next generation of health scientists. This initiative promotes knowledge sharing and fosters a global approach to tackling health challenges.



The Edict Project



Ashoka University launched The Edict Project in collaboration with Carnatic musician and author TM Krishna, focusing on the theme “Ashoka and Memory.” The initiative, conceived in four parts, explores the contemporary relevance of Emperor Ashoka’s teachings through art, music, and scholarship. The launch featured a conversation between historian Nayanjot Lahiri and Krishna, with Krishna performing verses from Ashoka’s edicts. A short film by MK Raina reimagined Ashoka’s words in the context of Kashmir, alongside collaborations with artists from northern India. Chancellor Rudrangshu Mukherjee highlighted the project as a bridge between Ashoka’s vision of a humane society and modern socio-political discourse, while Krishna emphasised its role in fostering compassionate governance and coexistence. Lahiri noted Ashoka’s advocacy for mutual respect across denominations as central to the project’s spirit. Future editions will expand the project to the southern, eastern, and western regions of India.



What Makes the World Hang Together?: Culture, Norms and Identity in International Politics



Ananya Sharma, Assistant Professor of International Relations, teaches this course exploring the socio-cultural dimensions of global politics. Moving beyond material explanations, the curriculum examines how culture, norms, and identity influence events such as wars, peace negotiations, and financial crises. Emphasising an interdisciplinary approach, the course offers students a nuanced understanding of how shared ideas and values underpin global partnerships and cooperation in a culturally diverse world.

Global Supply Chains



Devesh Roy, Professor of Economics, teaches Global Supply Chains, a course that equips students with tools to analyse the complex global partnerships shaping modern production. The curriculum explores key frameworks for understanding market integration and the connections between globalisation and development. It also examines the economic, social, and environmental impacts of transnational supply chains, offering insights into how these critical networks can be made more sustainable and equitable.

Demystifying Investments: Private Equity and Venture Capital



Sridhar Sethuram, Visiting Professor in the Department of Entrepreneurship, teaches this course on Private Equity and Venture Capital. It explores the financial partnerships driving development and innovation, focusing on the rapid growth of institutional capital in emerging markets, including the social impact sector. Students gain insight into the opportunities and challenges faced by institutional investors, crucial for mobilising private sector resources to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals through global partnerships.



Millennium Fellowship 2024



Partnerships

Ashoka University is among just 280 campuses worldwide chosen to host the prestigious Millennium Fellowship in 2024, a program presented by the United Nations Academic Impact (UNAI) and the Millennium Campus Network (MCN). Out of more than 52,000 applicants across 6,000 campuses in 170 countries, only 5% of universities were selected, with 15 Ashoka students earning their place in the 4,000-strong global cohort.

The semester-long Fellowship equips undergraduates with leadership training to design and implement community service projects aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the UNAI principles. Ashoka Fellows will collaborate with peers globally, engage in the structured curriculum, and develop actionable social impact initiatives that address pressing community needs. Beyond individual projects, they will collectively advance all 17 SDGs while fostering cross-campus collaboration and peer learning.

Since its inception in 2013, the Fellowship has grown into a global movement of over 11,000 alumni from 300+ campuses in 47 nations. The selection of Ashoka students for the 2024 cohort highlights the university's culture of civic engagement and its commitment to nurturing young leaders equipped to drive meaningful change locally and globally.

Annual Economics Conference 2024



Partnerships

The Department of Economics hosted its Annual Conference on December 2024, bringing together twelve distinguished speakers from leading institutions across India, the United States, the United Kingdom, Europe, Australia, and the UAE, as well as the Federal Reserve Bank and Board. The conference featured presentations on Macroeconomics, Microeconomic Theory, Development Economics, and Behavioural Economics, offering a platform for exchange between global scholars, Ashoka faculty, and students. The event drew enthusiastic participation from students across NCR and alumni pursuing doctoral and post-doctoral research abroad, fostering vibrant discussions and intellectual engagement. The conference reinforced Ashoka's commitment to advancing economic research and creating spaces for dialogue, collaboration, and knowledge-sharing, setting the stage for many such enriching academic engagements in the years ahead.



Bridging Academia and Industry in Digital Health: Partnership with EXL Service



Partnerships

Koita Centre for Digital Health (KCDH-A), has partnered with EXL Service to strengthen the bridge between academic learning and industry practice in digital health, data science, and Artificial Intelligence. The collaboration is designed to provide students and young professionals with practical exposure to health data analytics, digital interventions, and AI-driven healthcare solutions, while fostering interdisciplinary learning through mentorship, internships, and technical sessions led by EXL experts.

The partnership focuses on building capacity for future leaders in digital health by equipping students with industry-relevant skills that will enable them to contribute effectively to India's growing health innovation ecosystem. It also emphasizes the real-world application of classroom learning by facilitating opportunities to work on live data and pressing healthcare challenges, thereby enhancing employability and critical thinking.

Beyond training, the initiative strengthens academia-industry linkages by creating space for collaboration between researchers, educators, and industry professionals, opening pathways for joint projects and applied research. By promoting ethical and impact-oriented use of technology, the collaboration highlights how responsible, data-informed innovation can improve patient outcomes, operational efficiency, and equity in healthcare delivery.

Leveraging Language Models and Common Data Model To Unlock Real World



Koita Centre for Digital Health (KCDH-A), in collaboration with Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, is leading the project Leveraging Language Models and Common Data Model to Unlock Real World Evidence, spearheaded by Dr. Matthew L. Robinson, Assistant Professor of Medicine at Johns Hopkins, and Dr. Rintu Kutum, Faculty Fellow of Computer Science at the Koita Centre for Digital Health. The project harnesses Natural Language Processing (NLP) and Large Language Models (LLMs) to extract meaningful insights from unstructured Electronic Health Records (EHRs), focusing on antibiotic prescription practices and treatment outcomes in India and the US.

In partnership with MyHealthcare, India’s first ABDHM-accredited health startup, the team works with structured and unstructured data, including prescriptions, clinical notes, and demographic details, mapping them into standardised formats using the OMOP Common Data Model. The initial focus is on respiratory infections and antibiotic use, applying AI pipelines, schema validation, and LLM fine-tuning to identify treatment patterns, address unstructured prescriptions, and overcome the absence of standard terminologies in Indian datasets.

The long-term goal is to establish an open data ecosystem that strengthens India’s digital health infrastructure, improves antibiotic stewardship, and advances global efforts in evidence-based healthcare innovation.

Ashoka University at COP29, Baku



The Office of Sustainability sponsored Mr. Asish Singh to represent Ashoka University at the COP29 Climate Conference in Baku, Azerbaijan, further strengthening the university’s presence in global climate dialogue. COP29 marked a milestone in global climate governance with the finalisation of operational guidelines for Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, enabling international cooperation through carbon markets. This long-awaited framework is expected to open new financial flows, particularly for developing nations, though concerns remain over its implementation and effectiveness in ensuring genuine emission reductions. Another key highlight was the establishment of a new global climate finance goal of \$300 billion annually by 2035 to support developing countries. India strongly criticised this target as inadequate, calling it “abysmally poor” and stressing the urgent need for equitable resource allocation. His participation underscores Ashoka University’s growing engagement in shaping international sustainability discourse.



SDG Expo 2024: Celebrating the UN SDG Flag Day



The Office of Sustainability hosted the SDG Expo on 25th September 2024 to mark the UN SDG Flag Day, bringing together students, faculty, administrative offices, and external partners to showcase Ashoka University’s collective commitment to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Expo highlighted projects and initiatives aligned with global sustainability, inclusivity, and innovation. At the centre of the event stood the “Tree of Hope,” a symbolic installation that transformed a dying tree into a representation of resilience and renewal. Community members tied messages of hope to its branches, with Prof. Somak Raychaudhury, Vice-Chancellor of Ashoka University and Prof. Gautam Menon, Director of the Centre for Climate Change and Sustainability, leading the act of nurturing it with soil, water, and new leaves. The gesture embodied Ashoka’s vision of fostering life, collaboration, and sustainable futures.

Democratisation and Foreign Aid



Teaching

Bann Seng Tan, Assistant Professor of Political Science and International Relations, offers this course on Democratisation and Foreign Aid. It critically examines foreign aid as a tool for promoting democracy, exploring various types of aid, debates around their effectiveness, and the motivations of both donors and recipients. The curriculum equips students with a nuanced framework to understand the complexities of strengthening implementation mechanisms and revitalising global partnerships crucial for achieving sustainable development goals.

Trade, Trust and Peace in South Asia



Teaching

This course from the YIF department provides a regional perspective on South Asia's economic and political trajectories, looking at how countries in the region have evolved and the models of development they have pursued. It emphasizes the economic and human linkages between these countries and critically examines the costs of missed opportunities due to limited regional cooperation. The course also considers the changing role of external actors and how shifts in global power dynamics may open or constrain pathways for trade, trust, and peace in the region.



NOTE FROM THE OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY

Rooted in the spirit of Emperor Ashoka's life of learning, transformation, and ecological consciousness, Ashoka University continues to embody its ethos of sustainability through education, research, partnerships, and campus initiatives. As a liberal, multidisciplinary, and inclusive institution, Ashoka nurtures students to think critically, act responsibly, and lead change with purpose.

This report, spanning January 2024 to May 2025, reflects our community's deep commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). With 172 courses and 105 research works aligned to the SDGs, alongside nine sustainability-focused departments and six research centres, Ashoka has woven sustainability into the fabric of its academic life. Our campus operations from renewable energy adoption and waste management to mindful infrastructure demonstrate our dedication to responsible stewardship.

The Office of Sustainability, through its behavioural, operational, and green technology interventions, works cross-functionally with every office, department, and centre at Ashoka. LiveGreen@Ashoka, our Student Engagement Initiative, continues to serve as a living lab for innovation and collective action.

The cover page of this report, illustrated by Nylaa Ahmad (UG 2025), captures the spirit of our work: people from diverse backgrounds coming together, each bringing unique strengths to collectively shape sustainability.

Our efforts were also recognised on global platforms this year. Ashoka made its debut in the Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings 2025, securing an overall rank of 801–1000, a framework that evaluates universities worldwide on their performance against the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In addition, Ashoka was ranked for the first time in the QS Sustainability Rankings 2025, with an overall rank of 1501+, placed 959 in Governance and 1001+ in Social and Environmental Impact. These rankings reaffirm Ashoka's growing role in advancing environmental, social, and governance (ESG) priorities in higher education.

The journey to 2030 and beyond requires an unwavering commitment to interdisciplinary collaboration and evidence-based solutions. We offer this report both as a reflection of our progress and as a reaffirmation of our path forward. Let it serve as a call to action for our entire community as we build on this momentum, deepen collaborations, and scale our impact.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all stakeholders whose contributions made this year a remarkable chapter in Ashoka's sustainability journey. We especially thank the entire community for sharing the data that made this report possible, and acknowledge Riya K George (UG 2023) and Nimra Jeelani (MA 2025) for their invaluable contributions in bringing this report to life. Together, we will continue to advance Ashoka's vision of a sustainable future for all.



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