ASHOKA UNIVERSITY

# Ashoka University SDG Report 2026

## Advancing Sustainability Through Research, Education and Action



Authored by the Office of Sustainability

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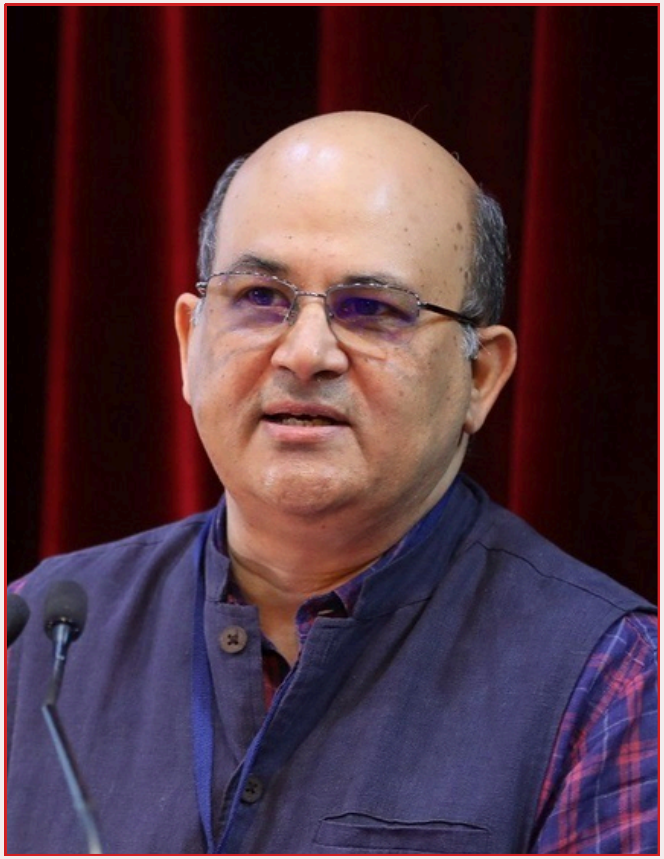


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## A Note from the Vice-Chancellor



**Rishikesha T. Krishnan**
**Vice-Chancellor, Ashoka University**

The Sustainable Development Goals provide us with a shared language to think about some of the most important challenges facing our world. From climate change and inequality to health, education, sustainable cities and responsible use of resources, these challenges are deeply connected and cannot be addressed in isolation. Universities have an important role to play in this effort, not only as places of learning, but as institutions that can help society understand these challenges and find ways to address them.

Higher educational institutes are uniquely placed to bring together young people as part of a living hub of sustainability; this is especially true when it comes to Ashoka as our researchers, practitioners, government collaborations and relationships with communities help us foster a sustainable method of living in every aspect. Through our campus, we imbibe operational practices that contribute directly towards sustainable ideals such as environmental conscientiousness and social inclusivity; through teaching, educational institutions help students understand the world around them and equip them to make thoughtful choices. Through research, we are able to generate new knowledge and evidence that can inform better decisions, policies, technologies, and practices. Through our local and global partnerships, we take this knowledge beyond the campus and work with others to develop solutions that are relevant to the needs of society.

At Ashoka, we treat the Sustainable Development Goals as a framework through which many of these efforts can be understood. Our work spans the classroom, research centres, student initiatives, campus operations and collaborations with organisations in India and around the world. What is particularly encouraging is that sustainability is increasingly becoming part of the way a university thinks and works, rather than being limited to a single programme or area of activity.

The role of universities will become even more important in the years ahead. The world our students will enter is one shaped by rapid technological change, environmental pressures, social inequalities and new forms of global cooperation. Universities must therefore prepare students not only for the opportunities of the future, but also for the responsibilities that come with them. We must encourage curiosity, critical thinking and a willingness to work across disciplines and with people whose experiences may be very different from our own.
This also means recognising that no university can address the Sustainable Development Goals alone. Progress depends on sharing knowledge, learning from others and building meaningful partnerships across institutions, sectors and borders. Research collaborations can help us ask better questions and develop new solutions, while partnerships with governments, communities, industry and civil society can help translate those solutions into meaningful action. This report reflects our continued efforts in that direction. It brings together the work of our students, faculty, staff and partners across the University and illustrates the many ways in which higher education can contribute to a more sustainable and equitable world.

As we look ahead, our responsibility is not simply to respond to the challenges of today, but to help build the knowledge, ideas and people needed to address the challenges of tomorrow. The Sustainable Development Goals remind us that the future we want is a shared one. Universities have both the opportunity and the responsibility to help shape it.

## A Note from the Vice President, Special Projects



**Bhaskar K Mishra**
**Vice President**
**Special Projects, Ashoka University**

Sustainability is a long-term institutional journey, shaped not only by the commitments we make but by the systems, practices and choices through which those commitments are translated into action. Universities have a particularly important role to play in this journey. As places where people learn, research, collaborate and innovate, they have the opportunity to influence not only their own environmental and social footprint, but also the wider communities and future generations they serve.

At Ashoka University, we have continued to strengthen our approach to sustainability by bringing together initiatives across our campus, academic community, local communities and institutional operations. What began as individual efforts across different areas is increasingly developing into a more integrated approach, where sustainability considerations inform how we manage resources, operate our campus, engage our community and measure our progress.

Our annual Sustainable Development Goals report is an important part of this process. It allows us to look beyond individual initiatives and understand the collective contribution of our work towards the Sustainable Development Goals. It also enables us to track our progress over time, record our achievements, identify areas where we can strengthen our performance and improve the way we measure and communicate our impact. As our sustainability efforts evolve, so too does our approach to capturing the data and evidence that underpin them.

The 2026 report reflects this continued progress across a wide range of areas. Our efforts include improving energy efficiency and renewable energy use, strengthening water and waste management practices, protecting campus biodiversity, and creating a more inclusive and socially responsible environment. Alongside our operational initiatives, the work of our faculty, researchers, students, staff, centres, and community partners contributes to addressing some of the broader challenges represented by the SDGs.

We recognise that strengthening our sustainability profile is not about achieving a single milestone. It requires sustained attention to our performance, greater consistency in monitoring and reporting for our local community, country and eventually the world, and continued collaboration across the University. The process of measuring our impact also helps us identify opportunities for improvement and encourages us to move from individual interventions towards systems that can create lasting change.

Our progress would not be possible without the participation of the many members of the Ashoka community who contribute to this effort in different ways. I extend my sincere appreciation to our faculty, students, staff, operational teams and external partners for their continued engagement. I would also like to acknowledge the efforts of our EHS and Sustainability teams in coordinating the University's sustainability initiatives and supporting the development of our reporting processes.

At Ashoka the ultimate aim is to make sustainability a part of our core foundations, continuously strengthening our contributions across the University. By improving our practices, enhancing our measurement of impact and encouraging greater participation across the Ashokan community, we are setting out to make a more meaningful contribution to the transition towards a more sustainable and equitable future environmentally and socially as an institution.




# END POVERTY IN ALL ITS FORMS EVERYWHERE

### 1. Creating Sustainable Livelihoods through Local Employment

**Campus**

As part of our commitment to supporting neighbouring communities, we have prioritised the employment of local community members across a range of campus operations, including gardening and horticulture, housekeeping, maintenance, security, dining services, and other support functions. By creating opportunities closer to their homes, this enables providing individuals with a stable source of income, while conveniently removing the need to travel long distances in search of work.

| Asawarpur village demographic profile | |
|---|---|
| Village details | From Asha workers |
| Total Population | 3248 |
| Male (A) | 1573 |
| Female (B) | 1475 |
| Male Child (0-6 Years) © | 115 |
| Female Child (0-6 Years) (D) | 121 |
| BPL cardholders | 200 (From Panchayat Officer) |
| Unemployed individuals | 500 (From Panchayat Officer) |

The demographic profile of Asawarpur highlights the importance of creating job opportunities. By employing members of the village, we aim to strengthen household incomes, increase purchasing power and improve the financial security for these families. Beyond creating jobs, these opportunities contribute to economic resilience by enabling the community to better meet their needs, invest in education and healthcare, and improve their overall quality of life.
Reference: **Panchayat office: 2024 data and Asha workers: 2024 data**

### 2. Breaking barriers through need-based scholarships

**Campus**

It is important that higher education institutions prioritise and plan against financial constraints that prevent gifted and capable students from accessing higher education. To directly address this, through our need-based scholarship programme at Ashoka University, we support students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds by lowering financial barriers to education and creating pathways towards long-term economic empowerment. By investing in equitable access to higher education, we contribute towards breaking cycles of poverty and expanding livelihood opportunities for students.

*This initiative is also discussed under SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities, where it is highlighted for its role in promoting equitable access to higher education.*

### 3. Neev's role in strengthening livelihoods and vulnerable communities

**Campus**

Neev worked closely with neighbouring communities during the year to create opportunities that strengthen livelihoods and improve financial well-being. Through Neev Haat, local entrepreneurs from Asawarpur were provided a dedicated platform to showcase and sell handmade products, food items, and other services to the Ashoka community, helping them expand their customer base and earn additional income. Additionally, they also supported local vendors by facilitating their participation in campus events, including jewellery and mehndi stalls, enabling them to generate income through their existing skills. One such initiative helped a community entrepreneur earn INR 6,155 through the sale of handmade jewellery.

NEEV

Neev is a student-led social impact collective that partners closely with neighbouring communities to co-create long-term, sustainable solutions to local challenges. Rather than focusing on one-time volunteering or charitable activities, Neev adopts a community-centred approach by identifying local needs, working alongside residents, and implementing initiatives that strengthen education, livelihoods, health and social inclusion over time.

**4. Empowering communities through the 'Street to Scale' initiative**

**Campus**

To build long-term financial resilience, Neev also launched the Street to Scale initiative, which involved students to directly interact and work with local shop owners and vendors to improve business visibility, financial management, and hygiene practices. Through one-on-one mentoring, digital tools such as WhatsApp Business and Google Maps listings, and simple bookkeeping systems, students were able to help micro-enterprises strengthen their businesses and become more financially sustainable.



*"I went to Ashoka and sold my food items without any difficulty. The students there were very well behaved and supported us a lot. They also ate chaat from my shop and really liked it. I keep visiting Ashoka whenever the students invite me to set up a stall there."*

***- Mahaveer Bhaiya, Pani Puri Stall Vendor***

**5. Project Asha: Strengthening Community Resilience through Essential Support**

**Campus**

Project Asha focuses on supporting families facing economic hardship by helping meet their immediate needs while building lasting community relationships. Through regular outreach visits, student volunteers, part of Rotaract, engaged with local residents to identify their challenges and provide targeted support. The initiative reached approximately 30 families per visit across seven community visits, distributing essential supplies including 350+ kg of dal and atta, and 50 blankets to 45 families. By reducing the burden of basic household expenses, the initiative provides immediate relief and contributes to the well-being of our neighbouring communities.

**6. Vocational Training for Economic Empowerment: ITI Skill Development Programme**

**Campus**

Through our ITI Skill Development program, we support youth from neighbouring communities by providing access to industry-oriented vocational education and technical training that enhances their employability. At present, four participants are actively enrolled in training in relevant courses. Upon completion, they will be offered assured employment within Ashoka including operational capacities. By equipping participants with practical skills and ensuring assured employment opportunities, we aim to strengthen financial security and improve livelihood prospects for youth residing in neighbouring regions.

This initiative is also featured under SDG 4: Quality Education and under SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth for enhancing employability and creating pathways to decent work.



### Examining the Role of Women Legislators in Forest Conservation

**Research**

Professor Sutirtha Bandyopadhyay collaborated with Associate Professor Bipasha Maity to investigate how environmental and agricultural conditions influence the distribution of consumption resources within Indian households. Using a collective household model and a structural estimation approach, the researchers examined how exogenous differences in soil texture affect the relative consumption shares received by individual household members. The study finds that women and children generally receive substantially lower shares of household consumption resources than men, indicating significant intra-household inequalities in access to resources. However, the gender gap is considerably smaller in households located in clayey-soil regions compared with loamy-soil regions. The authors link this difference to the association between clayey soils, higher female participation in agriculture and more favourable gender norms, suggesting that local economic conditions can influence women's bargaining power within households. While the research also has an important gender dimension, its central contribution to SDG 1 lies in identifying mechanisms associated with relative female poverty and unequal access to household resources. By demonstrating how environmental endowments and livelihood opportunities can affect intra-household economic security, the study provides evidence relevant to policies aimed at reducing poverty and improving resource access among economically vulnerable household members. Associate Professor Bipasha Maity's research at Ashoka focuses on development economics, gender and family economics, and the role of environmental shocks and institutions in household decision-making.

### Patterns in Growth of Agriculture and Allied Activities Across States

**Research**

Professor Digvijay Singh examined patterns in the growth of agriculture and allied activities across Indian states, providing insights into the structural and regional factors shaping agricultural development. The work contributes to understanding how agricultural economies evolve across different states and how variations in agricultural performance can influence rural livelihoods and broader economic development. By examining agriculture alongside allied activities, the research moves beyond crop production alone to consider the wider economic ecosystem supporting rural communities. Such analysis can inform state-level policy interventions aimed at improving agricultural productivity, strengthening rural economies and supporting more inclusive growth. The research is particularly relevant to understanding the relationship between agricultural development, food systems and livelihood opportunities, while providing an evidence base for policymakers seeking to address regional disparities in agricultural performance. The work therefore contributes to policy discussions around strengthening agricultural systems and improving economic opportunities in rural areas.

### India's Jobs in Transition: Skills, AI and the Future of Work

**Research**

Professor Kanika Mahajan, Professor Anisha Sharma, Mansi Wadhwa and Ayesha Ahmed examined the changing nature of employment through the intersection of skills, artificial intelligence and the future of work. The research considers how technological transformation can reshape labour markets and the skills required for workers to participate effectively in changing economic systems. By focusing on the transition taking place within India's jobs landscape, the work provides a relevant basis for understanding how workers, employers and policymakers can respond to technological disruption. Its emphasis on skills and future employment is particularly relevant to ensuring that economic transformation creates opportunities for productive employment rather than exacerbating labour-market inequalities. The research also contributes to policy discussions around workforce preparedness and the institutional responses required as AI and other technologies alter patterns of work. By connecting technological change with employment and skills development, the work provides evidence relevant to building a labour market capable of adapting to emerging economic opportunities while supporting inclusive participation in the future economy.

### Economics of Agricultural Transformation

**Teaching**

Professor Devesh Roy from the Department of Economics, taught Economics of Agricultural Transformation, examining economic development through the lens of food and agriculture. The course used structural-transformation models and micro-econometric approaches to explore how institutions, technologies, endowments, preferences, policies and historical conditions shape agricultural development. By focusing on agriculture as a pathway through which economies transform, the course enabled students to examine issues directly connected with rural livelihoods, economic opportunity and development outcomes. The course was heavily research-based, drawing on recent academic literature and requiring students to develop the institutional and contextual knowledge needed to understand agricultural transformation. Its emphasis on the relationship between agriculture and economic development provided students with analytical tools to examine how changes in agricultural systems can influence income, livelihoods and broader development trajectories, particularly in economies where agriculture remains central to economic and social well-being.

### Global Supply Chains

**Teaching**

Professor Devesh Roy taught Global Supply Chains, examining how global production and value chains influence economic development across countries and industries. The course explored the organisation of production across borders, including participation and positioning within global value chains, while examining governance issues and the diverse consequences of globalised supply systems. Students worked across case studies from agriculture, manufacturing and services and were required to analyse country- or industry-specific value chains, including cases from developing and emerging economies. The course also addressed how different groups and regions can participate in and move up value chains through appropriate policies and institutional interventions. Its focus on the distribution of economic opportunities provides a lens for understanding pathways out of poverty.

**Rethinking Development and Sustainability**

**Teaching**

Head of the Department of Environmental Studies, Professor Mitul Baruah taught Rethinking Development and Sustainability, critically examining the relationship between economic development, environmental change and sustainability. The course considered how development processes transform environments and shape the lives and livelihoods of different communities, with particular attention to questions of environmental justice, political ecology and sustainability. Students engaged with competing understandings of development and examined the tensions that arise when economic growth, environmental protection and social well-being are pursued simultaneously. The course provided an interdisciplinary framework for understanding contemporary environmental challenges while questioning conventional assumptions about what constitutes sustainable development. By connecting environmental change with social and economic processes, it enabled students to examine climate and sustainability challenges not only as ecological problems but also as questions of governance, inequality and development.

**Twisting the Tiger's Tale**

**Teaching**

Asmita Kabra, Visiting Professor of Environmental Studies, taught Twisting the Tiger's Tale, which examines the complex relationship between biodiversity conservation, wildlife protection, poverty and social justice. The course challenges conventional assumptions about conservation by exploring the tensions between protecting non-human species and safeguarding the livelihoods and rights of communities living in biodiversity-rich landscapes. Students investigate why areas of high biodiversity frequently overlap with vulnerable populations and examine how forests, commons and waterscapes have historically shaped local economies, cultures, identities and political relationships. Key themes include protected areas, dispossession, participatory conservation, environmental subjectivities, the commodification of nature and the roles of states, markets and communities. Through ecological, social science, legal and policy perspectives, students develop the ability to critically assess conservation-livelihood linkages and identify pathways towards socially just conservation. The course places these debates within wider experiences of the Global South.



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

### 1. Strengthening Food Security through Community Support

**Campus**

Recognising that food security is fundamental to community well-being, student-led initiatives under the Rotaract Club's Project Asha provided targeted nutritional assistance to underserved communities in and around Asawarpur. The initiative adopted a relationship-based approach, engaging regularly with families to understand community needs before designing appropriate interventions. This enabled food assistance to be delivered in a manner that prioritised dignity, continuity, and responsiveness rather than one-time relief efforts.

During 2025, volunteers distributed essential food supplies, including over 350 kg of ration, while engaging with more than 200 beneficiaries through community outreach. In addition, Rotaract organised several food donation drives, distributing biscuits, fruit beverages, wheat flour (atta), pulses (dal), salt, and other essential food items to vulnerable households in Asawarpur and residents of local care homes. These efforts helped address immediate nutritional needs while strengthening long-term relationships with neighbouring communities through continued engagement.

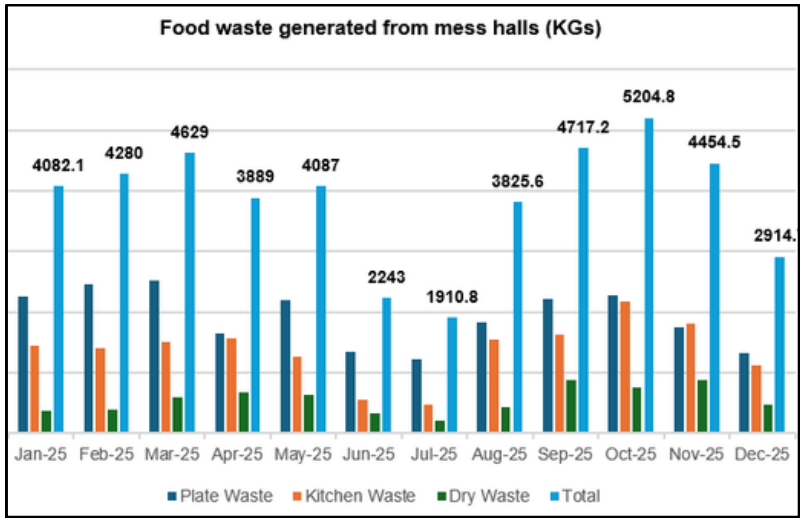
- **350+ kg** of ration distributed (atta and dal)
- **100+ snack packets** distributed
- **40** fruit beverages, **70** biscuit packets distributed in Asawarpur
- **60 kg** of wheat flour donated to **Adarsh Saraswati Shiksha Samiti, Sonipat**
- **60 kg** atta, **45 kg** salt and **10 kg** dal donated to **DAVO NGO, Sonipat**

### 2. Creating Safer Spaces for Food Preparation at Asawarpur Middle School

**Campus**

As part of our community outreach and infrastructure improvement efforts, we conducted an assessment of the Government Primary and Middle School in Asawarpur (further elaborated under SDG 4) to identify opportunities where we could meaningfully support our neighbouring community. The assessment identified the kitchen facilities at both schools as priority areas requiring immediate intervention.

The kitchens had damaged flooring, creating hygiene and safety concerns that affected the preparation of meals for students. To address this, we undertook repairs to the kitchen flooring at both schools, creating cleaner, safer, and more functional spaces for food preparation. In addition, we installed RO purification systems at both locations to provide access to safe drinking water.




*The data is reflective of the 2025 calender year*



### Understanding Regional Impacts of Trade on India's Edible Oil Sector

**Research**

Professor Bharat Ramaswami, from the Department of Economics, collaborated with Sutirtha Bandyopadhyay, Associate Professor of Economics at the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) to investigate how import competition influences India's edible oil sector through the journal publication Spatial Effects of Import Competition: Edible Oils in India. The research examines how international trade affects agricultural markets across different regions, highlighting the uneven economic impacts experienced by producers and local economies. By analysing spatial variations in market outcomes, the study provides evidence on how trade policies influence agricultural productivity, regional competitiveness, and rural livelihoods. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of creating resilient agricultural systems while supporting evidence-based policymaking that balances market efficiency with inclusive and sustainable rural development.

### Advancing Evidence-Based Policy for Agriculture and Rural Development

**Research**

Professor Bharat Ramaswami also collaborated with Digvijay Singh Negi, Associate Professor of Economics, to examine emerging issues in India's agricultural and rural economy through the working paper 'Stock Taking Paper – Agriculture and Rural Economy'. The research provides a comprehensive assessment of key trends, challenges, and opportunities shaping the agricultural sector and rural livelihoods, offering valuable insights into productivity, market development, and rural transformation. By synthesising current evidence and identifying priority areas for policy intervention, the study supports informed decision-making aimed at strengthening agricultural resilience, improving farmers' livelihoods, and promoting inclusive rural growth. The findings contribute to ongoing discussions on sustainable agricultural development and the long-term prosperity of rural communities.



**Professor Bharat Ramaswami**
**Department of Economics**

*'Along with Avinash Kishore of IFPRI and my Ashoka colleague Devesh Roy, I have a paper forthcoming on India's agricultural policy transitions (Annual Review of Resource Economics). This review traces the evolution of India's agricultural policy regime, centred on price supports, input subsidies, and complex trade policies that oscillate between protectionism and implicit taxation of farmers. It highlights three interlinked challenges: low farm incomes, poor diet quality, and environmental degradation. Reform requires repurposing subsidies and restoring credibility to trade policy. Despite policy rigidities, economic growth and urbanisation continue to drive structural changes in agriculture. Diversification away from cereals, new food value chains, and rising integration with non-farm employment are the key dynamic forces shaping agricultural outcomes. Future outcomes will depend on policy responses to emerging food value chains and new agricultural technologies.'*

### Analysing Growth Patterns in Agriculture Across Indian States

**Research**

Professor Digvijay Singh released a research publication which investigated regional trends in agricultural development through the working paper titled 'Patterns in Growth of Agriculture and Allied Activities across States'.
The research analyses variations in agricultural growth across Indian states, examining the performance of agriculture and allied sectors such as livestock, fisheries, and horticulture. By identifying regional differences in productivity and structural transformation, the study highlights opportunities for improving agricultural efficiency and supporting balanced rural development. The findings provide valuable evidence for policymakers seeking to strengthen agricultural growth, enhance farmers' livelihoods, and promote sustainable development across diverse agro-economic regions.

### Evaluating Agricultural Support Policies for Sustainable Rural Development

**Research**

Researchers Professor Lalit Contractor, Assistant Professor of Economics, collaborated with Dr Pubali Chakraborty, Economist, and Professor Anand Chopra, Assistant Professor of Economics, IIM Ahmedabad, to examine the economy-wide effects of agricultural support policies through the working paper The Equilibrium Impact of Agricultural Support Prices and Input Subsidies. The study analyses how minimum support prices and input subsidies influence agricultural production, market outcomes, and farmer welfare while considering their broader economic implications. By evaluating the balance between farm incomes, productivity, and policy efficiency, the research provides evidence to support more sustainable agricultural policies that strengthen rural livelihoods and improve long-term food security.

**Aanganvaani: Behaviourally Informed Training for Anganwadi Workers**

**Partnerships**

The Centre for Social and Behaviour Change (CSBC) developed Aanganvaani, a series of 12 behaviourally informed video training capsules designed to strengthen Anganwadi Workers' knowledge and practices around child growth and nutrition. Developed in partnership with the Department of Women and Child Development and Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), Government of Uttar Pradesh, and the Uttar Pradesh Technical Support Unit, the intervention used peer-based storytelling, positioning Anganwadi Workers and Mukhya Sevikas as protagonists who demonstrated recommended practices to colleagues. This approach aimed to make training more relatable and actionable by allowing workers to learn from familiar, peer-led examples rather than external instruction. Aanganvaani was launched on 7 July 2025 under SAMbhav Abhiyaan 5.0 and was subsequently showcased during the launch of Swasth Naari Sashakt Parivaar and POSHAN Maah. A randomised trial involving 209 Anganwadi Workers in Pilibhit and Varanasi was conducted from October 2025 to April 2026 to assess the approach. Following the trial, state-wide rollout progressed towards reaching approximately 1.9 lakh Anganwadi Workers across Uttar Pradesh.

**Bihar Nutrition Kit Project, Muzaffarpur**

**Research**

**Partnerships**

In Muzaffarpur, Bihar, during the year the Centre for Social and Behaviour Change (CSBC) in partnership with SC Meditech and the Bihar Behavioural Insights Unit, began evaluating whether simple, behaviourally informed tools can improve maternal and child nutrition practices. The project combines community health camps, exclusive breastfeeding kits for women in their third trimester and new mothers, and complementary feeding kits for mothers of children aged 6–23 months. The kits use practical objects, including age-marked feeding bowls and slotted spoons, to make recommended portion sizes and food consistency easier to understand and follow. A randomised evaluation of the complementary feeding intervention recorded a 26-percentage-point increase in minimum dietary diversity, demonstrating the potential of behaviourally informed interventions to strengthen child nutrition outcomes.

**The Taste of Turbulence: Memory and Everyday Resistance in Kashmiri Foodways**

**Research**

Gayatri Sapru, researcher from the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, examines how foodways in Jammu and Kashmir are shaped by political conflict, ecological pressures, unemployment and displacement. Drawing on 30 days of ethnographic fieldwork across farms, kitchens, markets and meadows, the study explores the experiences of farmers, bakers, fisherfolk, butchers, chefs and home cooks. Food emerges not only as a source of nourishment but also as a site where cultural memory, community relationships and resilience are maintained amid social and environmental disruption. The research highlights how ecological neglect and political instability can affect local food systems while also documenting the ways communities sustain food-related practices and relationships under pressure. By connecting food, livelihoods, environment and cultural identity, the study demonstrates the broader social dimensions of food security and resilience. It provides an important perspective on how communities navigate disruptions to food systems while preserving cultural practices and collective memory.




**BLOOM: Co-Benefits of Large-Scale Organic Farming on Human Health**

**Partnerships**

The BLOOM (Co-Benefits of Large-Scale Organic Farming on Human Health) project examined the health, nutritional, environmental and economic impacts of large-scale agroecological farming in Andhra Pradesh. Phase I, conducted in Kurnool and Visakhapatnam districts, evaluated whether the Andhra Pradesh Government's community-managed natural farming programme reduced pesticide exposure and improved dietary diversity among agricultural households. The study assessed pesticide exposure, dietary diversity, household income and crop yields, alongside health outcomes including adult glycaemia, kidney function and self-reported symptoms, as well as children's growth and cognitive development. Building on these findings, BLOOM Phase II, led by the University of Edinburgh in collaboration with Ashoka University and funded by MRC-UKRI, expanded the community-based cluster randomised controlled trial across 82 clusters in four districts. The study also incorporated a Heat Pilot Study examining farmers' personal heat exposure. During the reporting period, the project entered its fifth and final round of data collection, with completion expected by mid-2027.

**Tracking Microbiome Composition and Stability Across Indian Social Honeybees Foraging in a Homogeneous Mustard Crop Landscape**

**Research**

Associate Professor Imroze Khan of the Trivedi School of Biosciences, contributed to research examining the microbiome composition and stability of four Indian social honeybee species foraging in a homogeneous mustard-crop landscape. The study combined behavioural observations of pollinators with microbial community analysis to understand how shared agricultural resources influence the microbiomes of co-occurring bee species. The research found that microbiome composition was more strongly associated with the identity of the host species than with foraging behaviour, bee abundance or landscape use. The findings highlight the importance of understanding pollinator health and microbial ecosystems within agricultural landscapes. By examining the ecological relationships that support pollinators in crop systems, the research contributes to a deeper understanding of sustainable agricultural ecosystems and the biological processes that support food production.

**Economics of Agricultural Transformation**

**Teaching**

Professor Bharat Ramaswami taught Economics of Agricultural Transformation, examining economic development through the interconnected lenses of food, agriculture and structural transformation. The course explored how changes in agricultural systems influence broader economic development outcomes, drawing on macroeconomic models alongside micro-econometric evidence and recent research. Students examined the institutional, technological, environmental and policy conditions shaping agricultural transformation, including the role of water and land resources and climate change. By placing food and agriculture at the centre of development analysis, the course enabled students to understand the economic forces shaping agricultural livelihoods and food systems, particularly in developing economies. Its research-oriented approach encouraged students to engage with contemporary evidence and develop new questions around agricultural development. The course therefore contributes directly to teaching on food systems, agricultural transformation and the economic conditions influencing food security and rural development.

**Eat Like a Human: A Glimpse into Ancient Foodways**

**Teaching**

Assistant Professor Kalyan Sekhar Chakraborty, Department of History, teaches Eat Like a Human: A Glimpse into Ancient Foodways, examining food as a lens through which students can understand the ecological, biological, social, political, economic and technological dimensions of human societies. The course traces major transformations in human food practices and introduces students to scientific and theoretical approaches for reconstructing ancient diets. Students examine how evidence relating to food and diet can reveal patterns of social organisation, economic activity, environmental change and human health. Particular attention is given to the relationship between food practices, ecological conditions and the health and well-being of communities practising traditional diets. This interdisciplinary approach makes the course relevant to questions surrounding food systems, nutrition, ecological relationships and human well-being. Its focus on how foodways connect human societies with their environmental and social contexts provides meaningful curriculum evidence for the University's engagement with sustainable food systems and nutrition.

**Farmers and Traders: Fields, Markets and Agricultural Commodities**

**Teaching**

Associate Professor Mekhala Krishnamurthy from the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, through this course examines the social and economic relationships connecting farmers, traders, agricultural markets and commodity systems. The course provides students with an understanding of how agricultural production and markets operate within wider social, political and economic structures, including the relationships between producers and intermediaries. It is particularly relevant to questions concerning rural livelihoods, agricultural markets and the distribution of economic opportunities across rural communities.

Professor Krishnamurthy's wider research focuses substantially on agricultural markets, farmers' incomes, public systems and rural economic life, reinforcing the relevance of this course to questions of inclusive and sustainable development.

**Economics of Agri-food Systems**

**Teaching**

Professor Devesh Roy taught Economics of Agri-food Systems, examining how food and agricultural systems can contribute to reducing poverty and hunger while supporting livelihoods, nutrition and environmental sustainability. The course focused particularly on low- and middle-income countries, exploring how agri-food systems can be transformed to become more sustainable, resilient and inclusive. Students examined global patterns of food demand and supply alongside the roles of institutions, organisations, policy and technology in shaping food systems. The course also considered how shocks such as climate change and pandemics affect food production and access, and how systems can be redesigned to provide safe, nutritious, affordable and culturally appropriate food. By approaching food systems through an economic, sustainability and social-justice lens, the course connected questions of agricultural productivity with poverty reduction, food security and livelihoods. Students also engaged with experts from within and outside the institution, linking classroom learning to contemporary practice.



**Transformer-Embedded Attentive CNN for Spectral Image Analysis of Rice Blast Syndromes**

**Research**

Shubhajyoti Das, Pritam Bikram and Arindam Biswas, Indian Institute of Engineering Science and Technology, Shibpur, together with Chanda Grover, Department of Biology, contribute to research developing artificial-intelligence-based methods for identifying rice blast disease. The study introduces a transformer-embedded convolutional neural network for analysing spectral images associated with rice blast syndromes, a significant constraint on rice production. More effective and automated disease identification can support earlier intervention and more informed crop management, helping reduce losses and improve agricultural productivity. By applying advanced machine-learning and imaging techniques to a major crop disease, the research demonstrates how technological innovation can address challenges in food production.

**Political Ecology of Food**

**Teaching**

Guided by Professor Amita Baviskar, this course examines food systems from farm to plate, connecting nutrition and food practices with ecological systems, agrarian change and social inequality. The course explores how access to food is shaped by political-economic structures and how food practices affect both human and non-human well-being. Students examine the ways in which ethics, culture, science and religion influence contemporary food systems, while considering the unequal social causes and impacts embedded within everyday food practices. The course also encourages reflection on the relationship between individual consumption and planetary welfare, linking personal choices to broader questions of sustainability and food justice. Through a social science perspective, students develop an interpretive framework for understanding food ecologies, agrarian systems and the political processes shaping them. This enables a more integrated understanding of sustainable consumption, equitable food systems and ecological well-being.



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

**1. Excellence in Campus Healthcare: NABH Accreditation at the Infirmary**

**Campus**

The Ashoka Infirmary, operated in collaboration with Blue Circle Medi Services Pvt Ltd (BCMS), marked a significant milestone for us; we positioned ourselves by becoming the first on-campus clinic in India to receive accreditation from the National Accreditation Board for Hospitals & Healthcare Providers (NABH). Conferred by the Quality Council of India, this recognition reflects the highest standards of patient safety, clinical excellence, and continuous improvement.

Building on this foundation, the Infirmary has strengthened its healthcare ecosystem by working with Max Healthcare, Shalimar Bagh, which focused on cardiovascular health alongside monthly tie-ups with private hospitals such as Tulip Hospital, Sonipat to expand access to specialised care. These efforts enhance the range and quality of services available on campus.

This achievement places our Infirmary among a select group of leading healthcare institutions in the country and underscores Ashoka University's commitment to accessible, high-quality medical care. It also highlights the strength of our partnership with BCMS in setting benchmarks for campus healthcare, reinforcing the Infirmary's role as a trusted hub for the well-being of students, staff, and faculty.



National Accreditation Board for Hospitals & Healthcare Providers

(Constituent Board of Quality Council of India)

CERTIFICATE OF ACCREDITATION

Blue Circle Medi Services Pvt. Ltd.
Ashoka University, Plot No. 2, Rgec Rai Sonepat
Sonipat - 131029, Haryana

has been assessed and found to comply with NABH Accreditation Standards for Allopathic Clinics.
This certificate is valid for the Scope as specified in the annexure subject to continued compliance with the accreditation requirements.

Valid from : August 01, 2024
Valid thru : July 31, 2027

Certificate No.
C-2024-0092

Dr. Atul Mohan Kochhar
Chief Executive Officer

Sl No. 020581

NABH as an organisation is ISQua Accredited

External healthcare collaborators

1. Total patient consultations during the reporting year:
   a. Total footfall of consultations at infirmary: **16,168**
2. Number of medical emergencies managed (including ambulance referrals, if applicable): **70**
3. Number of health camps, screening camps, and vaccination drives conducted: **04**
4. Number of beneficiaries reached through community health camps and outreach programmes: **979**
5. Number of collaborations with external healthcare organisations (hospitals, NGOs, government agencies, etc.): **07**
6. Number of one-on-one counselling sessions delivered (outside ACWB) : **92**



**Ajai Kumar Balyan**
**Chief Medical Officer**
**Infirmary**

*"Health is fundamental to every aspect of sustainable development. A university's responsibility extends beyond academic learning to creating an environment where students, faculty and staff can access timely, inclusive and quality healthcare. Strong health facilities contribute directly to SDG 3 while enabling progress across other SDGs by supporting wellbeing, equity, learning and productivity. At Ashoka, our health services aim to foster a campus where every member of the community can thrive, recognising that good health is both a foundation and an outcome of sustainable development."*

## Healthcare resources and equipment available at infirmary

- **2** Cardiac Monitors
- **17** Oxygen cylinders, 5 large and 12 small
- Qualified physiotherapist with equipment for **6** hours daily, **6** days a week
- **6** blood glucometers
- Healthcare professionals include **5** Doctors, **6** Nurses (4 female and 2 male), **1** GD staff and **4** Ambulance drivers
- **2** on-campus healthcare facilities: Infirmary for **physical** illnesses and ACWB for **mental** well-being
- **32** wheelchairs
- **1** ECG Machine and **1** Defibrillator
- **2** transport ambulances & **1** Basic life support ambulance
- Availability of **24×7** healthcare services
- **16** Hospital Bed sets
- **6** Oxygen concentrators
- Visiting doctors include **2** Gynecologists and **1** Psychiatrist

### 2. Nurturing Mental Health: Ashoka Centre for Well-Being

#### Campus

The Ashoka Centre for Well-Being (ACWB) provides counselling and psychological support to students, staff, and faculty, promoting mental health, resilience, and overall well-being. Through preventive, clinical, and awareness initiatives, it addresses mental health concerns, reduces stigma, and encourages a positive outlook towards mental health across campus. Beyond the University, ACWB acts as a resource and capacity-building hub, collaborating with external organisations and supporting departments through webinars, workshops, and training programmes. By strengthening awareness, access to care and support systems, ACWB plays a vital role in building a campus environment where mental health is openly understood, supported, and prioritised - while also extending this impact beyond the University to create more informed, empathetic, and resilient communities.

During the year, ACWB conducted a range of awareness, advocacy, training, and outreach initiatives that reached students, faculty, staff, school leaders, counsellors, and external communities. Through collaborations with academic institutions, NGOs, and community partners, ACWB strengthened mental health awareness, promoted well-being, and built capacity across diverse groups. These efforts contributed primarily to SDG 3 while also supporting SDGs 4, 5, 10, and 17 through education, inclusion, gender equality, and partnerships.



**Nivedita Singh, Director**
**Ashoka Centre for Well-Being**

'To sustain the world, we must first sustain the human spirit, because healthy minds, connected communities, and purposeful lives are the true renewable resources of the future. To sustain life is not merely to preserve it, but to protect our capacity to savour it. A truly sustainable community is one where care is woven into the everyday, where people feel seen, supported, and connected, and where well-being enables not only survival, but hope, healing, and the possibility of flourishing'.

#### 2. i. MH360: A Celebration of Mental Health, Unity & Healing

On 8 April, ACWB hosted MH360, a collaborative mental health festival organised with the YIF team, The Red Door, Rohini Nilekani Philanthropies, and YAASS. The festival brought together students, activists, artists, NGOs, and changemakers. Through storytelling, discussions, theatre, and expressive arts, the event promoted mental health awareness, inclusion, emotional well-being, and community engagement.

#### 2. ii. Workshop in Collaboration with Sleepwell Foundation and ICA-AP

On 20 June, ACWB organised an online session in collaboration with the ICA-AP Committee on Women and the Sleepwell Foundation titled 'From Awareness to Action: Recognising Violence Against Women and Building Coping Capacities'. The session was attended by 25 participants from across the Asia-Pacific region. The session increased awareness of violence against women, strengthened participants' coping capacities, and encouraged practical actions to promote safer and more inclusive communities.

| | |
|---|---|
| **2634** | **Individual counselling sessions conducted** |
| **95** | **Workshops, trainings, events conducted** |
| **7736** | **Total workshops, trainings, events beneficiaries** |
| **27** | **External training and workshops** |
| **11** | **Mental health workshops for high schoolers** |

### 3. Setting the Benchmark for Safety Excellence in Higher Education

**Campus**

At Ashoka, we are unwavering in our commitment to prioritising the health, safety, and well-being of our students, professors, staff, and all other stakeholders. This commitment has shaped a culture where safety is embedded into every aspect of campus life, enabling us to set benchmarks of excellence at both national and global levels.

Our efforts have been recognised by the British Safety Council through the prestigious International Safety Award for four consecutive years. After receiving the Winner recognition in **2023 and 2024,** we were awarded the highest honour of **Distinction in 2025**, achieving **50/56 marks (89.3 per cent)** in the International Safety Award assessment. Building on this achievement, in 2026 we once again received the International Safety Award – Distinction, marking our fifth consecutive year of recognition and becoming part of the globally recognised organisations in the 2026 awards cycle. We also achieved a perfect score of **50/50** in the safety assessment and audit framework for the first time and were honoured with the **Best in Sector (Education) – India** and **Best in Sector (Education) – Global**, recording amongst the highest global score in the education sector.

These milestones reflect far more than external recognition - they represent a culture where safety is actively practised, continuously strengthened, and embedded into our everyday operations. Every protocol, initiative, and framework we implement is designed with people at its core, ensuring that well-being remains a defining principle of our campus. This commitment is further reinforced through recognition from the Government of Haryana for exemplary safe working conditions.

We continue to foster a culture defined by Occupational Health & Safety policies, regular emergency preparedness measures including our Disaster Preparedness Response Plan and campus-wide fire safety protocols, including quarterly fire drills in conjunction with the local fire department. Clearly marked evacuation routes, emergency response procedures, and safety signage help ensure that every member of our community is equipped to respond effectively during emergencies, reinforcing our shared commitment to creating a safe, resilient, and caring campus environment.

**2022**

- The **decision to apply for international awards** was made by internal parties, to determine compliance and current standing in Health and Safety standards

**2023**

- **International Safety Award - Pass**
- First time Ashoka University received this recognition
- Became the first university in India to attain it

**2024**

- **International Safety Award - Distinction category** awarded: the highest grading category under the award framework for the second consecutive year.
- **Best in Sector Award – Education**: Awarded as a top-performing institution globally within the education sector

**2025**

- **International Safety Award – Distinction category** (Third consecutive year)
- '**Runner-Up Best Safe Working Condition**' accolade for maintaining a safe working environment at its under-construction site. The award was presented by Rajeev Ranjan, IAS, **Principal Secretary, Labour Department, Haryana.**

**2026**

- **International Safety Award - Distinction** (Fourth consecutive year)
- Ashoka becomes part of the globally recognised organisations in the 2026 awards cycle by scoring a perfect **50/50** on the safety assessment and audit framework for the first time.
- **Best in Sector (Education) – India** & Best in Sector (Education) – **Global**, including Highest Global Score in Education sector.

### 4. Fostering a Culture of Safety and Well-Being

**Campus**

Conducted annually, this year at Ashoka University we celebrated the **54th Safety week** as a dynamic, campus-wide programme that brought safety to the forefront of everyday action. From daily toolbox talks across operational and construction sites to intensive training sessions on occupational health, fire and electrical safety as well as workplace risk management.

As a result, this year's theme was '**Safety & Well-being: Crucial for Viksit Bharat'** and hence was designed to actively engaged employees and students at every level.

Interactive elements such as safety quizzes, poster and drawing competitions, and a medical camp further deepened participation, while a collective safety pledge reinforced shared responsibility. Safety week this year was conducted from the 4 - 10 March and culminated in celebrating contributions across technical and safety roles to spread awareness about the critical importance of workplace safety and well-being, reinforcing collective responsibility towards a safer work environment across the Ashokan community.



**5. Nourishing Health: Nutrition Awareness Campaign at Ashoka University**

**Campus**

At Ashoka University, as part of our dining services, we committed ourselves to providing students, professors and staff alike with a combination of the best nutrition and balanced meals to students, staff, and faculty. We believe that food is not only a source of energy but also a means to nourish the body, enhance performance, and support overall wellbeing.

To promote healthier dietary choices across campus, every item served in the mess is accompanied by its calorie count, enabling members of the University community to make informed decisions based on their nutritional requirements. Allergen information is also clearly displayed to ensure the safety of individuals with dietary sensitivities and food allergies. Students have access to personalised nutrition consultation services whenever required, providing guidance on dietary concerns and healthy eating practices. To continuously enhance dining services, regular meetings with the student committee are conducted to gather feedback, address concerns, and improve the overall dining experience. Complementing these efforts, online nutrition awareness campaigns regularly share practical nutritional information and healthy lifestyle tips, encouraging the campus community to adopt informed and balanced dietary habits.

**6. Childhood Games – Encouraging Active and Inclusive Play**

**Campus**

In collaboration with the Sports Ministry and IEEE, Neev organised Childhood Games to promote physical activity, teamwork and inclusive participation among children from Asawarpur. Traditional games such as tug of war, dodgeball, kabaddi and relay races encouraged movement, coordination and cooperation across age groups. The initiative provided children with an enjoyable opportunity to stay active beyond the classroom while strengthening interaction with student volunteers. By promoting active play and social engagement, Childhood Games supported children's physical wellbeing and contributed to SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being.



**Shaifali Sharma**
**Nutritionist**

*Nutrition is the foundation of lifelong well-being. A balanced diet rich in seasonal vegetables, whole grains, fruits, and protein supports energy, concentration, and immunity, while limiting processed foods and excess sugar helps prevent lifestyle diseases.*

*Developing mindful eating habits - such as portion control, proper hydration, and regular meal timings - empowers students to make healthier choices every day. By understanding the link between food and health, adults can cultivate resilience, maintain vitality, and build a sustainable lifestyle that benefits both body and mind.*

*"Good nutrition isn't about strict rules - it's about making smart choices every day that keep you energized and focused for the future."*

**7. Air Quality Monitoring and Improvement Systems**

**Campus**

We regularly monitor ambient air quality across the campus and undertake indoor air quality assessments in classrooms and academic spaces, To ensure that students, faculty, and staff are provided with safe and healthy environments, we have air purifiers in classrooms and buildings.

**8. Project Khiladi – Promoting Physical Activity Through Sport**

**Campus**

Project Khiladi was introduced during the year in October by Neev to promote physical activity and sports participation among children from Asawarpur. Conducted on Saturdays and led by members of Ashoka University's official sports teams, the programme provided children with regular opportunities to learn, practise and explore different sports in a structured and supportive environment. Sessions focused on developing sports skills while encouraging teamwork, discipline and active participation. Ashokan student volunteers supported the sessions by mentoring children individually and in small groups and assisting with drills and skill development. By creating sustained opportunities for physical activity beyond the classroom, Project Khiladi contributed to healthier, more active lifestyles while strengthening community interaction and engagement. The initiative directly supports SDG 3 through its emphasis on physical wellbeing and active living.

**9. Mental Health Session – Creating Space for Emotional Well-being**

**Campus**

As part of its holistic approach to student development, Neev also incorporated mental health into its learning and community engagement activities during the Spring Semester 2026. During the first two weeks of April, a dedicated mental health session created a safe and reflective environment for children from Asawarpur to discuss emotions and mental wellbeing. The session moved beyond conventional classroom learning by encouraging children to recognise and engage with their feelings through guided discussions and storytelling. Creative expression was used to encourage confidence, communication and openness, helping create an environment in which children could participate comfortably. By bringing conversations around emotional wellbeing into community-based learning, the initiative recognised mental health as an important component of overall health and development. The session aligns directly with SDG 3's focus on promoting mental wellbeing.

**10. Improving Rural Healthcare Access: Establishment of a Primary Health Centre in Asawarpur**

**Campus**

When we first observed that Asawarpur did not have a Primary Health Centre (PHC), we noticed that elderly residents and infants often had no choice but to travel long distances to CHC Badkhalsa to access basic medical care. With most working-age adults away during the day, these overlooked individuals were frequently left to make these journeys on their own, facing significant physical and logistical challenges.

Recognising this critical gap, and in line with our commitment to advancing the Sustainable Development Goals, a Primary Health Centre (PHC) was established by the Government of Haryana at the Asawarpur Village Community Centre in collaboration with the University. Ashoka played an active role by providing essential resources for the PHC such as mattresses, workstations, benches, tables, chairs and medical equipment such as a haemoglobin meter, thermometers, BP monitors, glucometers and an examination bed amongst other essentials. This initiative has significantly improved access to essential healthcare services for local residents, particularly by reducing the obstacles to travel to distant health centres in Badkhalsa.

The PHC operates every Friday from 10 am to 3.30 pm, with qualified doctors and nursing staff providing regular consultations. In addition, monthly health camps are organised in Asawarpur by government and private healthcare providers, alongside routine immunisation and vaccination drives, under the overall coordination of the University.

Preventive healthcare is further strengthened through scheduled immunisation drives on the third Wednesday of every month and vaccination services on the fourth Friday, with support from healthcare partners including Max Healthcare, Shalimar Bagh, and Tulip Hospital, Sonipat. As part of these programmes, newborns and infants receive age-appropriate vaccinations free of charge in accordance with the National Immunization Schedule, helping build immunity during the early years of life and supporting their healthy growth and development. Medicines are also distributed free of cost to patients in need.

Through the centre, we were able to determine that:
**1020** Total patients/beneficiaries availed medical checkups
**24** Total number of health camps undertaken during the year
**235** Patients recommended for further treatment at CHC Badkhalsa
**750** Total blood tests taken during the year

**11. Extending Healthcare and Preventive Well-being through Community Outreach**

**Campus**

Through a series of student-led community outreach initiatives, the Rotaract Club of Ashoka University continued to advance health and well-being beyond the campus by promoting preventive healthcare, improving access to essential health services, and encouraging active civic participation. In collaboration with Max Hospital, Shalimar Bagh, on 2 November 2025 - the students organised a community health camp in the Asawarpur region, providing 110+ individuals with free ECG, ENT, and blood sugar screenings, while engaging 25 volunteers who collectively contributed 50 volunteer hours.

Through Project Asha, Rotaract conducted three outreach sessions, supporting the health and nutrition needs of over 60 families by distributing hygiene essentials, and basic healthcare supplies.

The Club also organised two campus-wide blood donation drives in partnership with the Rotary Club of Midtown Sonipat and the Delhi Rotary Blood Bank, collecting 234 blood units, facilitating 155 thalassaemia screenings, engaging over 200 participants, and mobilising 100 volunteers, who together contributed 200 volunteer hours. Collectively, these initiatives strengthened community health outcomes while fostering a culture of service, compassion, and preventive healthcare among students.





**Demonetization and Child Health: Evidence from India**

**Research Seminar**

Professor Shampa Bhattacharjee presented the seminar Demonetization and Child Health: Evidence from India, examining the unintended consequences of India's 2016 demonetization policy on maternal and child health outcomes. The research investigated how the sudden withdrawal of high-value currency notes disrupted access to banking services and household liquidity, particularly in areas with limited financial infrastructure. Using a difference-in-discontinuities research design, the study compared districts with varying levels of banking access to assess the policy's impact on infant mortality and institutional births. The findings indicate that districts with better access to banking services experienced significantly lower infant mortality following demonetization.

This suggested that disruptions in liquidity and access to cash, rather than changes in income, played a critical role in shaping health outcomes. The seminar highlighted the importance of financial inclusion and resilient banking systems in protecting vulnerable populations during periods of economic transition.

**Assessing the Effects of Alcohol Prohibition on Consumption Behaviour**

**Research**

Professor Aparajita Dasgupta, Associate Professor of Economics, collaborated with Ronit Mukherji and Pubali Chakraborty to investigate the effects of alcohol prohibition policies through the working paper Intoxicant Consumption Dynamics under Alcohol Prohibition: Evidence from India. The study examines how prohibition influences patterns of intoxicant consumption, exploring behavioural responses, substitution effects, and the broader implications for public health and policy.

By providing evidence on the effectiveness of alcohol control measures, the research contributes to informed policymaking aimed at reducing substance-related harms while improving community and social well-being.

**Phase Angle as a Marker of Nutritional Recovery in Children with Severe Acute Malnutrition**

**Research**

Professor Geeta Trilok-Kumar from the Koita Centre for Digital Health at Ashoka (KCDH-A) collaborated collaborated with Shivani Rohatgi, University of Delhi; Dr. Sukhneet Suri, Associate Professor, Vivekananda College, Dr Praveen Kumar, Professor, Lady Hardinge Medical College; and Professor Neena Bhatia, Lady Irwin College, University of Delhi, to examine whether bioelectrical impedance analysis (BIA), particularly Phase Angle (PhA), can be used as an indicator of cellular health and nutritional recovery in children with severe acute malnutrition. The longitudinal study followed hospitalised children aged 12–59 months, assessing anthropometry and BIA at admission, discharge and 11 weeks after discharge. The research found that lower PhA values were associated with older age, oedema and low-income households, while PhA showed positive relationships with weight-for-height and body-cell-mass index. The findings indicate that PhA may serve as a complementary marker for assessing cellular health and nutritional recovery among children with severe acute malnutrition, although standardised reference values are needed for routine clinical use, particularly in resource-limited settings.

**Developing New Approaches for Triple-Negative Breast Cancer Treatment**

**Research**

Professor Deepak Asthana, Assistant Professor of Chemistry, collaborated with researchers from the Bose Institute to investigate new naphthalimide-based molecular systems with potential applications in cancer treatment. The study focuses specifically on triple-negative breast cancer (TNBC), an aggressive form of breast cancer with limited targeted treatment options.

The researchers developed naphthalimide compounds that form nanoaggregates within cancer cells and examined how their molecular structure influences their biological activity. The study found that selected compounds could generate reactive oxygen species, cause DNA damage and activate programmed cell death in TNBC cells. The compounds also showed potential to reduce the migratory behaviour of cancer cells, suggesting possible therapeutic relevance beyond simply killing tumour cells.

The research demonstrates how advances in chemical biology and molecular design can contribute to the development of new approaches for treating difficult-to-treat cancers.

**Improving Mass-Casualty Training Through Video-Based Analysis**

**Research**

Mayank Garg collaborated with researchers from Duke University, Emory University and Weill Cornell Medicine to develop a video-based system for identifying and evaluating successful field interventions during mass-casualty training exercises. The research explores how automated video analysis can be used to assess activities undertaken during simulated emergency situations, helping trainers and participants evaluate whether appropriate interventions have been carried out. By using a structured video pipeline to identify interventions during training scenarios, the work seeks to strengthen the assessment of practical skills in complex and high-pressure emergency environments. The approach has potential to make training evaluation more systematic by providing an additional method of reviewing participant performance and identifying areas for improvement. The research was presented at the 2026 Critical Care Congress as part of a session focused on crisis management.



**Northeast India as the Next Frontier of EcoHealth and One Health Research**

**Research**

Assistant Professor Balaji Chattopadhyay, Trivedi School of Biosciences, contributed to research examining Northeast India as an emerging frontier for EcoHealth and One Health research, bringing together human health, animal health and environmental systems. The study explores how the region's exceptional biodiversity, environmental change and close interactions between human and animal populations create both opportunities and risks for public health, particularly in relation to zoonotic and emerging infectious diseases. The research highlights the need for integrated surveillance and prevention approaches that move beyond conventional, human-centred healthcare systems and consider the ecological and social conditions that influence disease emergence. By examining the interconnectedness of biodiversity, environmental pressures, wildlife and human health, the work contributes to strengthening evidence-based approaches to disease prevention, health preparedness and interdisciplinary public-health planning. The research demonstrates the importance of collaborative approaches spanning biological sciences, environmental research and public health, particularly for regions experiencing rapid ecological and social change.




**Vegetarian Diets and Cancer Risk**

**Research**

Dr Krithiga Shridhar, Senior Research Scientist at the Centre for Health Analytics, Research and Trends (CHART), Trivedi School of Biosciences, collaborated with Yashvee Dunneram, Jia Yi Lee, Cody Z. Watling, Izabella Lawson, Mahboubeh Parsaeian, Tammy Y. N. Tong, Ruth C. Travis, Gillian K. Reeves, Keren Papier, Sarah Floud, Timothy J. Key and Aurora Perez-Cornago, alongside researchers from institutions including the University of Oxford, Newcastle University, University of Cambridge, National Cancer Institute and Emory University, to investigate associations between dietary patterns and cancer incidence. The study pooled data from 1.8 million women and men across nine prospective studies on three continents, providing a large-scale evidence base for examining cancer risk across vegetarian, vegan, pescatarian and other dietary groups. The research identified differences in the incidence of several cancers across dietary patterns, contributing to understanding the relationship between diet, nutrition and non-communicable disease prevention. By examining dietary patterns in relation to cancer outcomes at population scale, the study strengthens evidence relevant to preventive healthcare and healthy lifestyles. The research is directly aligned with SDG 3 through its focus on cancer prevention, nutrition, dietary risk factors and population health. Dr Shridhar's role is particularly relevant to Ashoka's health research portfolio, given her work in cancer epidemiology, prevention, early detection and survival.

**Machine Learning in ARDS: An Intensivist's Guide to Artificial Intelligence Applications**

**Research**

Mayank Garg, a Simons-Ashoka Early Career Fellow at Ashoka University, and Mihir Chaturvedi, both affiliated with KCDH-A, collaborated with Mathieu Jozwiak and Romain Lombardi of Université Côte d'Azur and its associated intensive-care units to map the use of machine learning and artificial intelligence in Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome (ARDS). The review surveys emerging applications across critical-care workflows, from identifying clinically relevant patterns for diagnosis to supporting monitoring and treatment decisions. Drawing on expertise in intensive-care medicine, respiratory physiology and digital health, the work examines how computational approaches can complement clinical judgement in managing a complex and heterogeneous condition.

**NELFA-Mediated Pausing Restrains YAP Transcription and Context-Dependent Outcomes in Breast Cancer**

**Research**

Visiting Professor of Biology (Honorary) L. S. Shashidhara collaborated with a diverse number of individuals to investigate how promoter-proximal transcriptional regulation influences YAP-driven signalling in breast cancer. Using experiments in human cell lines, transcriptomic profiling and analyses of independent breast-cancer cohorts, they examined the role of NELFA, a component of the promoter-proximal pausing machinery in regulating YAP-dependent transcription. The study found that depletion of NELFA amplified YAP-associated transcriptional programmes and that lower NELFA expression was associated with poorer disease-free survival in YAP-high tumours, particularly in triple-negative breast cancer. By identifying a regulatory mechanism that influences tumour-associated transcription and clinical outcomes, the research contributes to a deeper understanding of breast-cancer biology. The study was published as an original research article in Frontiers in Oncology in April 2026.

**NELFA-mediated Pausing Restrains YAP Transcription and Context-dependent Outcomes in Breast cancer**

**Research**

Professor L. S. Shashidhara, Visiting Professor of Biology, examined the molecular mechanisms regulating breast cancer progression through NELFA-mediated transcriptional pausing and YAP signalling. YAP is a key regulator of cell growth and has been associated with tumour progression, while NELFA forms part of the promoter-proximal pausing machinery that regulates gene transcription. The study uses genetic perturbation, transcriptomic profiling and analysis of independent breast cancer cohorts to investigate how NELFA influences YAP-dependent transcription. The findings show that depletion of NELFA selectively amplifies YAP-driven transcription and is associated with epithelial–mesenchymal transition and TGF-β signalling programmes. Lower NELFA expression is also associated with poorer disease-free survival in YAP-high tumours, particularly in triple-negative breast cancer. The research therefore identifies transcriptional pausing as an important regulatory layer in aggressive breast cancer and provides potential avenues for further biomarker research.

**Editorial: Precision Nutrition for Lifestyle, Health and Disease**

**Research**

Geeta Trilok-Kumar, Professor of Research at the Koita Centre for Digital Health; Mayank Garg, Simons-Ashoka Early Career Fellow; Naveen Kumar Bhatraju, Assistant Professor of Research at the Trivedi School of Biosciences; and Kanika Agarwal, Faculty Fellow at the Koita Centre for Digital Health, contribute to an editorial examining the potential of precision nutrition to improve disease prevention and health management. The authors highlight how genetic, metabolic, environmental and lifestyle differences influence nutritional requirements and health outcomes. Precision nutrition integrates nutritional science with biomarkers, artificial intelligence, bioinformatics, omics and digital health to develop more personalised approaches to prevention and treatment. The editorial highlights the potential of these technologies to identify biomarkers, interpret complex biological information and inform tailored nutritional interventions. By moving beyond one-size-fits-all dietary recommendations, precision nutrition can support more targeted approaches to chronic disease prevention and management. The work highlights the growing intersection between nutrition, digital technologies and public health, and the potential for data-driven approaches to improve health outcomes.

**Oropouche Virus: Transmission, Epidemiology, Genetic Diversity, and Public Health Implications**

**Research**

Professor Anurag Agrawal, Dean of BioSciences and Health Research at the Trivedi School of Biosciences and Head of the Koita Centre for Digital Health, contributed to a comprehensive review of Oropouche virus as an emerging public-health concern. The research synthesises evidence on its transmission, epidemiology, genetic diversity, clinical manifestations and implications for disease surveillance. It highlights knowledge gaps surrounding vector competence, animal reservoirs and possible transmission pathways, while also considering factors that may contribute to the geographical expansion of the virus. The review emphasises the importance of strengthened surveillance, genomic monitoring, laboratory capacity and coordinated outbreak preparedness. By bringing together evidence from diverse geographical and scientific settings, the research supports a more comprehensive understanding of an emerging infectious disease and the systems required for its detection and control. The work is particularly relevant to strengthening preparedness for emerging diseases and improving the ability of public-health systems to anticipate and respond to evolving infectious-disease risks.

**SPECTRA: A Conceptual Framework to Bridge Praxis and Remap Relational Violence in India**

**Research**

Maitrayee Sen, PhD Scholar in Psychology; Snigdhaa Rajvanshi and Stuti Khandelwal, doctoral researchers in Psychology; and Simantini Ghosh, Professor of Psychology at Ashoka University, developed SPECTRA, a conceptual framework for understanding domestic and familial violence in India. The framework challenges approaches that treat violence primarily through individual clinical outcomes such as anxiety, depression or PTSD, instead situating violence within persistent social, cultural and structural contexts. Drawing on seven illustrative case studies, the research examines how patriarchal family structures, discrimination and continuous exposure to relational violence shape psychological experiences. The framework seeks to connect individual experiences with broader systems of power and inequality and argues for culturally contextualised approaches to understanding trauma. The research is directly relevant to addressing violence against women and girls and strengthening gender-responsive approaches to mental health, making it particularly relevant to gender equality and the reduction of structural inequalities.

**Protoporphyrin IX Attenuates Liquid–Liquid Phase Separation of α-Synuclein by Inducing Its Compaction**

**Research**

Abhishek Mazumder, Assistant Professor, Research in Biology at Ashoka University's Trivedi School of Biosciences, investigates a molecular mechanism that may help limit the formation of α-synuclein aggregates associated with Parkinson's disease and related neurodegenerative disorders. The study focuses on protoporphyrin IX (PPIX), an endogenous small molecule, and examines its ability to interfere with the early liquid–liquid phase separation of α-synuclein, a process associated with the subsequent formation of pathological amyloid fibrils. Experimental analyses indicate that PPIX binding induces a more compact conformation of α-synuclein and suppresses condensate formation. Computational analysis further provides insights into the molecular interactions underlying this effect. The findings contribute to understanding the early molecular events involved in protein aggregation and identify PPIX as a potential candidate for further investigation in strategies targeting synucleinopathies. The research strengthens fundamental knowledge of neurodegenerative disease mechanisms and may inform future investigations into molecular approaches for disease intervention.

**Purification, Refolding and pH-dependent Stability Evaluation of Zika Virus EDIII protein**

Dilip Kumar, Assistant Professor of Biology along with researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee investigate the production and stability of the Zika virus envelope domain III (EDIII) protein, an important component for vaccine-related research. The study develops a systematic protocol for producing recombinant Zika EDIII protein using E. coli and optimises the refolding process required to recover functional protein from inclusion bodies. The researchers examine how temperature, growth media and buffer pH influence protein expression, refolding efficiency and stability. The work addresses a practical challenge in developing recombinant viral proteins that can support vaccine and diagnostic research. Since Zika virus remains an important mosquito-borne public-health threat, particularly in settings where vector-borne diseases are influenced by changing environmental conditions, improving the ability to produce and characterise viral proteins can support future prevention and preparedness efforts.





**Professor Bastian Steuwer**
**Head of the department of Political Science**

*"What are the most important threats to global health in the future? The answer to this question will depend on scientific predictions about disease predictions, demographic trends, and many more. But it also depends on ethical questions about how we assess future health. If we only focus on threats in the 21st century, then many of the worst effects of climate change will be ignored. If we focus on threats into the indefinite future, then we might need to deprioritise the health of current generations for the sake of benefits to those living many centuries from now. How should we compare different population sizes? Is global health best served if there are few ill people, even if this is achieved by having as small a population as possible? Or is there more health if there are more people? These ethical questions matter to prioritizing between threats to global health. In my research, together with collaborators, we have started to address these issues. A related issue that I tackle in my research concerns the ethical choices in designing a health care system for the future. Against the background of rising costs, I examine the ideal of a single-tier health system in which care is given according to medical need, not ability to pay."*

### Global Research on Future Health Ethics

**Partnerships**

Dr Bastian Steuwer, in collaboration with researchers from leading institutions including the University of Utah, the University of Texas at Austin, Lund University, Yale University, the University of Oxford, Rutgers University, the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and Harvard University, Professor Steuwer contributed to a companion paper to The Lancet Commission on 21st Century Global Threats to Health. The research examines the ethical challenges associated with emerging global health threats and explores how societies should determine appropriate timeframes for responding to long-term risks. Supporting the Commission's broader objective of identifying cross-cutting strategies to address health threats through 2050 and beyond, the paper contributes to evidence-based dialogue on global health preparedness and governance. The research has been accepted for publication in The Lancet.

### Advancing Global Dialogue on Equitable Health Systems

**Partnerships**

Dr Bastian Steuwer also played a critical role, collaborating for the Brocher Summer Academy on Global Population Health 2025, organised by the Fondation Brocher, Switzerland. The programme brought together researchers, policymakers, representatives from the World Health Organization and leading scholars from institutions including the University of Pennsylvania, Princeton University, Harvard University, and the University of Virginia to examine whether the single-tier ideal in healthcare systems can be sustained amid rapidly rising healthcare costs. Discussions explored democratic equality, equitable access to healthcare, ethical allocation of limited health resources, and the future of universal health systems. Through this engagement, the Department contributed to international dialogue on strengthening resilient, equitable, and sustainable healthcare policies while fostering global academic collaboration.

### Strengthening National Clinical Research and Knowledge Networks

**Partnerships**

During the year, KCDH-A began building its national network connecting clinical, academic, research and industry partners. Clinical collaborations with institutions such as CMC Vellore, Medanta Hospital, AIIMS, Delhi and KEM, along with engagement with the Research Society for the Study of Diabetes in India (RSSDI), provide access to clinical expertise, real-world use cases and validation environments. They also provide an opportunity to build capacity for the clinical workforce. Academic and research partnerships with institutions like IIT Madras, NIMS University Jaipur and Shiv Nadar University focus on strengthening digital health and biomedical research through collaborative research, evidence synthesis, and sometimes policy translation, with the aim of advancing evidence-informed healthcare. Partnership with Indian Cancer Genome Atlas (ICGA) and membership at the National Cancer Grid contribute to national collaborative research aimed at generating, analysing, and sharing multiomic and critical knowhow/data to advance cancer research and precision oncology. Engagement with industry and technology partners, including Rohtak Nuclear Medcare Imaging, Therapy & Research Center (RNM) and Go Qii, brings technological expertise and pathways for translation and scale, enabling KCDH-A to connect complementary expertise and strengthen nationally relevant digital health research and innovation.



**Dr Aradhita Baral**
**Deputy Director, Koita Centre for Digital Health at Ashoka**

*'Strategic partnerships are at the heart of KCDH-A's approach to transforming healthcare. By bringing together diverse stakeholders we seek to translate knowledge into solutions that are relevant and create a capacity for lasting impact'*

**ESIS Aarogya: Improving Access to Social Security and Healthcare Information**

**Partnerships**

The Centre for Social and Behaviour Change (CSBC) partnered with the Employees' State Insurance Scheme (ESIS), Uttar Pradesh and the Department of Labour and Employment, Government of Uttar Pradesh to improve insured workers' access to information on healthcare and social security entitlements. A behavioural diagnostic conducted by CSBC across four districts, covering ESIS hospitals, dispensaries, empanelled private facilities and industrial workplaces, found that 95 per cent of insured persons lacked accessible information about their entitlements, while none of those surveyed were aware of the claims reimbursement policy. In response, CSBC co-developed the ESIS Aarogya microsite, providing a facility locator, bilingual explainer videos, audio-enabled content and simplified guidance on benefits and claims. QR codes placed at workplaces enabled workers to access the platform directly. The microsite was launched on 11 December 2025 at Aarogya Manthan 2025 in Kanpur by Anil Rajbhar, Hon'ble Cabinet Minister for Labour and Employment. The launch was accompanied by a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between ESIS, the Department of Labour and CSBC, Ashoka University, formalising continued collaboration.

**Chemical Biology: Advancing Research at the Interface of Chemistry and Healthcare**

**Teaching**

Professor Sourav Chatterjee teaches Chemical Biology, an interdisciplinary course that brings together principles of chemistry and biology to understand biological processes and address problems relevant to human health. The course introduces students to the use of chemical approaches for studying biological molecules and their functions, with particular relevance to drug discovery, disease mechanisms, molecular interactions, and therapeutic intervention. This interdisciplinary orientation reflects the growing role of chemistry in developing tools and approaches for biomedical research.

At Ashoka, Professor Chatterjee's research similarly lies at the interface of chemistry and biology, with applications in cancer, intestinal inflammation, viral infection, protein regulation, and bioimaging. By exposing students to the principles underlying chemical biology and its applications, the course develops scientific capabilities relevant to biomedical research and healthcare innovation. It therefore contributes to strengthening the knowledge base and research skills required to understand disease and support the development of improved diagnostic and therapeutic approaches.

**Human Genetic Disorders: From Rare Diseases to Cancer**

**Teaching**

Taught by Dr Tanmoy Roychowdhury, Human Genetic Disorders: From Rare Diseases to Cancer explores the role of genetics in understanding, diagnosing, and treating inherited and acquired diseases. The course examines how genetic variation contributes to a wide range of health conditions, from rare genetic disorders to complex diseases such as cancer. Students are introduced to contemporary approaches in genomics and molecular biology, alongside emerging methods for diagnosing genetic conditions and developing targeted therapeutic interventions. The course also considers the growing role of genomic technologies in personalised medicine and the ethical considerations surrounding genetic research and counselling. By connecting theoretical concepts with practical demonstrations and scientific literature, the course enables students to understand how advances in genetics and genomics are transforming approaches to disease diagnosis, prevention, and treatment. The course therefore contributes directly to SDG 3, particularly by strengthening scientific understanding of disease and supporting the development of knowledge and capabilities relevant to improved healthcare and personalised medical interventions.

**Disease Biology**

**Teaching**

Taught by Dr Anindya Dasgupta and Dr Shraddha Karve, Disease Biology introduces students to the biological processes that underlie infectious diseases and their impact on human health. The course provides an integrated understanding of how pathogens survive, evade host immune responses, and contribute to disease progression, while examining current approaches to disease prevention, diagnosis, and treatment. Through case studies and scientific literature, students explore the diversity of infectious agents alongside concepts from microbiology, molecular biology, immunology, pathology, and genetics. By encouraging critical evaluation of contemporary biomedical research, the course develops an appreciation of the interdisciplinary nature of disease science and the importance of evidence-based healthcare. Students are equipped with the scientific knowledge needed to understand emerging infectious diseases, evaluate advances in diagnostics and therapeutics, and contribute to addressing evolving global public health challenges through research, innovation, and informed decision-making.

The course prepares learners to understand one of the fastest-growing fields in biomedical science and its potential to improve disease diagnosis, treatment, and long-term health outcomes.

**Mental Health in a Digital Society**

**Teaching**

Assistant Professor Dipanjan Ray, Department of Psychology, along with Mayukh Saha and Neetu Yadav, teach this course examining the psychological, neuroscientific, philosophical and systemic dimensions of mental well-being in an increasingly digital society. The course explores the effects of digital isolation, information overload, algorithmic influence, social comparison, technology-mediated relationships, AI companions and hyperconnectivity on cognition, behaviour and psychological well-being. By examining how digital environments shape contemporary experiences of distress and mental health, the course equips students to critically understand emerging psychological challenges associated with technological change.

**History of Biomedicine: Germ Theory to Digital Health**

**Teaching**

Dr Projit Bihari Mukharji, Department of History, taught History of Biomedicine: Germ Theory to Digital Health, examining the development of modern biomedicine over approximately 150 years through the relationship between medicine, technology and society. Rather than presenting medical progress simply as a chronology of scientific discoveries, the course considers the roles played by clinicians, nurses, pharmacists, vaccine manufacturers, politicians, patients and other actors in shaping medical developments. Students examine major transformations including germ Theory, randomised clinical trials, organ transplantation, genetic screening, MRI technology, telemedicine and digital health.

The course therefore highlights how health systems develop through interactions between scientific knowledge, technology, institutions and society. Its inclusion of both historical medical breakthroughs and contemporary developments such as telemedicine and digital health makes it particularly relevant to understanding the evolution of healthcare and health technologies.

**TOLAKARI: Understanding Heat Exposure and Mental Health Among Agricultural Workers**

**Partnerships**

The TOLAKARI project, initiated in March, examined the behavioural, social and economic pathways through which chronic exposure to high temperatures may affect mental health among farmers and agricultural workers in India. Funded by the Wellcome Trust, the collaborative study brought together national and international research partners to investigate the intersection of climate change, occupational heat exposure and depression. The project combined epidemiological research, environmental monitoring and causal modelling to examine how prolonged heat exposure could influence psychological well-being through changes in livelihoods, working conditions, economic pressures, social circumstances and individual behaviours. By moving beyond measuring the direct association between temperature and depressive symptoms, TOLAKARI sought to identify the underlying mechanisms that shape vulnerability to climate-related mental health impacts. The research aimed to generate evidence that could inform targeted, context-specific interventions and policies to strengthen the resilience and well-being of climate-vulnerable agricultural communities.



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



At Ashoka University, we are committed to ensuring that access to quality education is not limited by financial constraints. Over the past several years, we have consistently supported a significant share of our student body through financial aid, with approximately **44 per cent to 55 per cent** of newly admitted students receiving scholarships annually, and **18 per cent - 24 per cent** being provided 100 per cent scholarship along with additional funds for pocket expenses.

This sustained level of support reflects our continued focus on making high-quality education accessible to a diverse range of learners. In parallel, we have strengthened our efforts to include students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Their representation has increased from 6 per cent to 10 per cent in recent years, highlighting a meaningful step towards greater equity and inclusion within our student community. Each year, over 400 - 450 students benefit from financial assistance, enabling them to pursue their education without financial barriers.

Through these efforts, we are actively working to reduce inequalities and expand the access of students to higher education and create a more inclusive learning environment. By expanding financial support and broadening representation, we continue to advance SDG 4: Quality Education, ensuring that more students - regardless of their socio-economic background - have the opportunity to learn, grow, and succeed.

Data is from AY 2025 and includes students from undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, including YIF and master's

| Academic Year | No. of Total students | Students on Scholarship | Students on 100% tuition scholarship | % of students on scholarship | % of students on 100% scholarship |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2021 - 22 | 964 | 484 | 227 | 50.21% | 23.55% |
| 2022 - 23 | 833 | 460 | 191 | 55.22% | 22.93% |
| 2023 - 24 | 921 | 409 | 166 | 44.41% | 18.02% |
| 2024 - 25 | 984 | 440 | 229 | 44.72% | 23.27% |
| 2025 - 26** | 953 | 416 | 220 | 43.65% | 23.08% |

### 1. Igniting Young Minds: A Transformative Journey through the Young Scholars Programme

**Campus**

The Young Scholars Programme (YSP) is a dynamic, value-driven initiative that transforms high school students in grades 9 to 12 through an immersive summer residential experience rooted in the liberal arts and sciences. Spanning seven interdisciplinary courses, the programme blends hands-on learning with direct engagement with Ashoka's world-class faculty and industry leaders. More than just an academic exposure, YSP ignites curiosity, sharpens critical thinking, and equips young minds with the confidence and capabilities to shape their future with purpose.

### 2. Nurturing India's Scientific Trailblazers: The Lodha Genius Programme

**Campus**

The Lodha Genius-Ashoka University Programme (LG-AUP), a fully funded initiative by the Lodha Foundation in collaboration with Ashoka, is designed to identify and nurture exceptional talent in science and mathematics from Grade 9 through early career stages. Each year, 200 - 300 high-potential students are selected through a rigorous process for a four-week residential immersion at Ashoka, where advanced coursework, hands-on research, and interactions with global experts - including Nobel Laureates - create an intellectually transformative experience.

Blending academic rigour with holistic development, the programme integrates co-curricular learning in ethics, arts, and sports to shape well-rounded, socially conscious individuals. Its impact extends far beyond the summer through sustained mentorship, Olympiad preparation, college guidance, and access to scientific resources. By removing financial barriers and offering world-class academic support, LGP empowers the next generation of innovators with the knowledge, values, and global perspective needed to lead scientific advancement with purpose.

### 3. AshokaX: Redefining Education for an Edgeless World

**Campus**

The AshokaX Digital Education Initiative is changing the way people learn by making top-quality education available to anyone, anywhere. It removes barriers like location and access, bringing world-class courses straight to learners through both live and self-paced programmes. By combining strong academic content with modern technology, AshokaX creates learning experiences that are interactive, practical, and easy to follow. Built on Ashoka University's commitment to excellence, the platform ensures that education is no longer limited to physical classrooms. Instead, it reaches people from all walks of life, giving them the chance to learn, grow, and build their future. With a strong focus on inclusivity and flexibility, AshokaX is opening doors for learners from diverse backgrounds. As it continues to grow, AshokaX isn't just expanding education—it's redefining it, setting a new standard for learning that is accessible, engaging, and ready for the future.

### 4. Enabling Inclusive Excellence: The Office of Learning Support

**Campus**

The Office of Learning Support (OLS) helps students with different learning needs, including specially-abled students with visual or hearing impairments, autism, and cerebral palsy, as well as students facing academic challenges. It provides personalised support such as learning plans, exam help, note-taking, and works closely with faculty to make classroom and the overall campus experience more inclusive. OLS also focuses on making course content, especially STEM subjects, more accessible and supports students in building skills like time management and academic planning. Overall, it ensures that every student gets the support they need to learn effectively and succeed. Their initiatives are of a diverse range, and include:

#### 4. i. The College Readiness Programme by the Office of Learning Support

The College Readiness Programme, run by the Office of Learning Support (OLS), helps high school students with disabilities prepare for college. Through two three-day online sessions, it brought together students, families, and experts to share useful information about higher education and how to make the right choices, while also promoting inclusion.

The programme also creates a supportive space where students can learn from each other, share experiences, and access helpful resources. By reaching beyond the University, it encourages more inclusive practices in higher education and helps ensure that every student gets a fair chance to succeed

#### 4. ii. Individualised Academic Support

OLS continues to provide structured academic accommodations to students with disabilities, including curriculum modifications, assistive technology, exam support, and personalised learning plans.

The support model extended beyond compliance to include regular check-ins, counselling, and tailored interventions for academic success. The initiative ensured continuity of support during key academic periods such as onboarding, midterms, and finals.

110 to 115 students with disabilities were supported, and there are ongoing academic accommodations across all semesters.

#### 4. iii. Executive Function (EF) Coaching Programme

The EF Coaching Programme focused on building core academic and life skills such as time management, planning, and self-regulation. Through one-on-one and structured sessions, students were supported in managing academic workloads and developing long-term learning strategies. The programme played a critical role during high-pressure periods like examinations, improving student confidence and independence. During CY 2025, there were over **141+ engagement sessions.**

### 4. iv. Student Onboarding and Transition Support

OLS implemented a structured onboarding process for incoming students, including early outreach, one-on-one consultations and personalised support planning. The Point of Contact (PoC) system ensured each student received dedicated guidance throughout their transition into university life. This initiative strengthened early-stage inclusion and improved student preparedness and retention.

Included outreach to all incoming students requiring support and individual onboarding meetings conducted for the full cohort.

### 4. v. Faculty & Staff Sensitisation and Capacity Building

OLS conducted multiple training sessions and engagements with faculty, staff, and cohort leaders to strengthen inclusive teaching and campus practices. These sessions focused on Universal Design for Learning, accessibility in coursework, and empathetic engagement with diverse learners. The initiative enabled institution-wide adoption of inclusive practices. During the year, 17 faculty members were trained through internal workshops and capacity-building sessions



**Reena Gupta**
**Senior Director and Head, Office of Learning Support**

*"At the Office of Learning Support (OLS), we believe true sustainability goes hand-in-hand with inclusivity. Creating a sustainable campus means building an environment where every individual, regardless of their learning needs, feels supported, valued, and empowered to succeed.*

*Through our work at OLS, we remain dedicated to advancing the UN Sustainable Development Goals - particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities)—by continuously advancing an accessible, equitable, and inclusive community across academics and campus life at Ashoka."*







## 5. Progressing Asawarpur's Learning Ecosystem:

We believe that a safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environment is fundamental to enabling students to learn, explore, and realise their full potential. Since 2024, we have been working closely with the Government Primary and Middle Schools in Asawarpur to strengthen their learning infrastructure, with the aim of creating spaces where every student feels valued, encouraged, and empowered to thrive. By engaging with school administrators, teachers, and students to understand their day-to-day needs, we seek to bridge critical infrastructure gaps and enhance both the physical and digital learning environment.

As a first step, our Special Projects team conducted a comprehensive assessment of the infrastructure at both schools. The assessment identified several priority areas requiring immediate intervention to improve safety, hygiene, accessibility, and the overall learning experience. Guided by these findings, we implemented targeted infrastructure upgrades to create more conducive and equitable learning environments. The key challenges identified and our corresponding interventions are outlined below.

### Improving physical learning infrastructure at Asawarpur Primary school:

### 5. i. Boundary Wall Repair

We undertook the restoration of the school's boundary walls to establish a secure campus, reinforcing safety for the Asawarpur students. By creating a protected learning environment, this intervention has enabled children to engage in their studies with a sense of security.

**Before**



**During**



**After**



### 5. ii. Building Structure Painting

We attempted to transform the worn-out classrooms and corridors into brighter and safer spaces that are more inviting. The goal was to create an environment where children feel motivated each day to attend School.

Ashoka students, part of Neev, came together to transform the surrounding boundary walls into vibrant spaces through aesthetic paintings and imagery. Through their artwork, they turned classrooms into places that feel vibrant and suitable for primary school students and ensure that learning is a joyful experience.

**Following the completion of structural repairs and painting works, an increase was observed in the participation of local students in after-hours training programmes and on-campus sporting activities.**

**Before**



**During**



**After**



### 5. iii. Ground Cleaning and Vegetation Removal at Asawarpur Primary School

Clearing overgrown vegetation transformed the previously neglected spaces into clean, open grounds where the school students can now move freely and engage in physical activity; what was once overrun with shrubs is now a welcoming space that feels safer and more appropriate for everyday school life.

**Before**





**After**





### 5. iv. Blackboard Repair and Classroom Improvements

We believe that the restoration of the blackboards was a necessary requirement, since they serve as the essential backbone for quality teaching in the school for both the teachers and students.

What were once damaged and difficult to use, the new blackboards are now tools that will support smoother lessons for teachers and better understanding for students, helping classrooms in facilitating education with more diligence.

### 5. v. Lighting and Electrical Enhancements

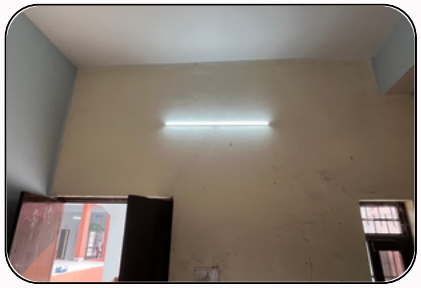
New tube lights and improved electrical fittings have brightened classrooms and corridors, making learning spaces more welcoming and focused. Enhanced lighting also contributes to a sense of safety during early mornings and late afternoons.

### 5. vi. Seating Arrangements for Students

Adequate desks and benches were also provided, which has allowed students to sit comfortably and attentively during lessons. With proper seating arrangements and resources, the school is better equipped to feel more organised, supportive, and conducive to meaningful education.

### 5. vii. Window Jali & Ventilation Repairs

Repairing window mesh and installing protective acrylic sheets improved airflow, cleanliness, and safety inside classrooms. The result is a healthier and more comfortable learning environment, protected from dust, insects, and harsh weather.

| Before | After |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

### 5. viii. Ground Vegetation Removal

Overgrown vegetation in the school premises posed significant safety and hygiene concerns for staff and students alike.

Clearing the grounds has not only ensured a cleaner and safer environment but has also enhanced the overall aesthetics of the space, making it more suitable for outdoor activities such as sports and other co-curricular events.

Before



After



### 5. ix. Window Jali Repairs to Strengthen School Infrastructure

Damaged window jalis at Asawarpur Middle School were repaired to improve safety, ventilation, and overall building functionality. The restoration strengthens the school's infrastructure while creating a more secure and comfortable learning environment for students and staff.

Before





After





### 5. x. Repair of Unhygienic Washrooms and Drinking Water Facility

During our evaluation, we noticed that the school had inadequate drinking water systems, posing significant health risks. Hence, these existing systems were upgraded with proper fixtures, ensuring access to safe potable water resources.

Before





After





### 5. xi. Revitalising Middle School through Infrastructure Restoration and Wall Repainting

Structural issues such as cracks and physical damage had compromised the safety of the school building. We consequently began repairing the structure including the corridor, pillars and roof of the school, to ensure structural stability and extend the building's lifespan, protecting the facility from adverse weather conditions.

Before





After



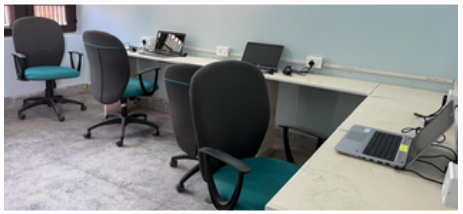


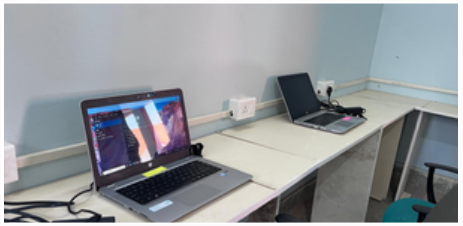
### 5. xii. Digital learning infrastructure in Asawarpur

Digital learning plays an important role in primary education, as access to technology and online resources can greatly improve learning opportunities. Keeping this in mind, we set up **two computer labs** at both the government schools and donated a total of **11 laptops,** with **five** being utilized within the middle school and **six** at the Primary school along with furnishing including chairs, tables and lighting fixtures.

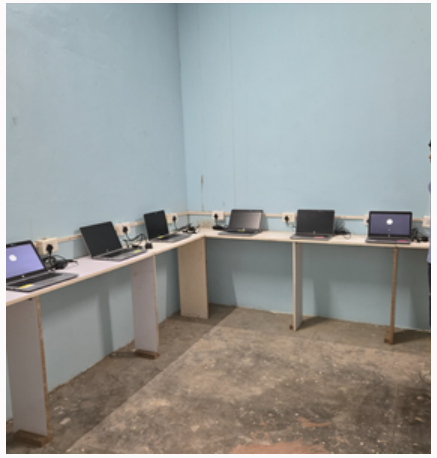
To ensure students could use these laptops confidently and effectively, Ashokan students volunteered their time each week to teach basic computer skills, helping these young learners become comfortable with technology and benefit fully from digital learning tools.

Primary school computer lab





Middle school computer lab



### 6. NEEV: Bridging Futures: Student-Led Training for Local Community

Students part of NEEV, also undertook community education training programmes, where they took on the initiative to mentor and teach residents of Asawarpur, including children, working adults and outsourced staff members from Ashoka.

These programmes' object is to expand access to foundational learning including English based classes for senior students and staff.

We also hold guided tours and practical learning experiences which help grow academic perspectives, digital literacy, ultimately inspiring educational aspirations, thereby supporting inclusive learning and contributing to SDG 4.

### 6. i. Academic Support and Mentorship

During the year, the programme engaged **50+ students (Grades 1–8)** through classroom instruction and **20+ students (Grades 9–12)** through personalised mentorship, delivering 35+ classroom sessions and 90+ mentorship and skill-building sessions across two academic semesters.

### 6. ii. Digital Literacy and 21st-Century Skills

To bridge the digital divide, NEEV conducted twice-weekly digital literacy classes for students in Grades 4–5, **supported by 5–10 volunteers per session**. Students developed practical skills in typing, Microsoft Excel, presentation design, Canva, and digital navigation, while maintaining a 90 per cent volunteer consistency rate.

### 6. iii. Higher Education Access & Career Readiness

The student body also expanded educational opportunities by launching a dedicated Admissions & College Guidance vertical to support students preparing for higher education. The initiative facilitated preparation for competitive examinations including CUET, JEE, NEET, CLAT, and NDA, raised **INR 12,000 for educational support**, and developed scholarship and college repositories, benefiting **50+ students.**

### 7. Project Badlaav, Adhyayan and Kalakaar

**Project Adhyayan:**

In collaboration with the Gyan Adhar Welfare Foundation, Rotaract delivered curriculum-based academic support in Mathematics, English, and Social Studies to children aged 4–12 years. The programme conducted 17 teaching sessions, reaching 60 children per visit, with the support of 68 student volunteers who contributed 136 volunteer hours.

**Project Kalakaar**

Project Kalaakaar promoted experiential learning and creative development through visual and performing arts, including drawing, music, dance, theatre, and movement-based activities. Conducted in collaboration with the Pehchaan Foundation, the initiative organised 11 sessions, engaging 30–40 children per visit through the efforts of 44 volunteers, who contributed 88 volunteer hours.

**Project Badlaav** focused on the holistic development of adolescents (11–18 years) at Spread Smile Foundation through career guidance, long-term goal setting, financial awareness, and soft-skill development. The programme uses interactive sessions, sports, and reflective activities to strengthen confidence, decision-making, and future readiness. The initiative included participation from 40 - 50 children per visit, with 64 volunteers participating; the total contributed volunteer hours were 128.

**8. Campus Connect: Experiential Learning & Digital Exposure Programme**

**Campus**

At Ashoka, we also facilitate campus visits for students from Asawarpur including other government and private schools, offering exposure to higher education environments. During these visits, students participate in interactive sessions on digital tools and software, engage in sports activities, and explore hands-on demonstrations.

We also hold guided tours and practical learning experiences which help grow academic perspectives, digital literacy, ultimately inspiring educational aspirations, thereby supporting inclusive learning and contributing to SDG 4.

**9. Skill Development & Employment Pathways through ITI Training**

**Campus**

In alignment with our initiatives beyond Asawarpur, we are also supporting access to quality technical education for local youth by facilitating enrolment in Industrial Training Institute (ITI) programmes. These one- and two-year courses are designed to build practical, industry-relevant skills that enhance employability.

Currently, four participants from nearby rural communities are actively undergoing training. Upon successful completion of their courses, assured employment opportunities will be provided to the trainees at the University, strengthening not only the access of these individuals to vocational education, but also lifelong learning, and development of a sustainable livelihood.

**Examining the Long-Term Impact of Climate Shocks on Education**

**Research**

Professor Aparajita Dasgupta, from the Department of Economics, collaborated with Anahita Karandikar to examine how climate-related shocks affect children's educational outcomes through the journal article 'Rainfall Shocks and Learning Outcomes: Dynamic Persistence and the Role of Local Labour Demand'. The research investigates the long-term effects of fluctuations in rainfall on learning outcomes, household livelihoods and local labour-market conditions. By examining how climate variability can influence children's educational attainment over time, the study demonstrates that disruptions to education can extend beyond immediate periods of environmental stress and may be shaped by broader household and economic conditions. The findings provide evidence for strengthening the resilience of education systems and reducing the long-term educational consequences of climate-related shocks. The research is particularly relevant to SDG 4, as it addresses the ability of children to access and achieve quality educational outcomes despite socio-economic and environmental disruptions. It also highlights the importance of considering local economic conditions when designing policies to protect learning continuity and educational attainment in climate-vulnerable communities.

**India's Jobs in Transition: Skills, AI and the Future of Work**

**Research**

Professor Kanika Mahajan, Professor Anisha Sharma, Mansi Wadhwa and Ayesha Ahmed examined the changing nature of employment through the intersection of skills, artificial intelligence and the future of work. The research considers how technological transformation can reshape labour markets and the skills required for workers to participate effectively in changing economic systems. By focusing on the transition taking place within India's jobs landscape, the work provides a relevant basis for understanding how workers, employers and policymakers can respond to technological disruption. Its emphasis on skills and future employment is particularly relevant to ensuring that economic transformation creates opportunities for productive employment rather than exacerbating labour-market inequalities. The research also contributes to policy discussions around workforce preparedness and the institutional responses required as AI and other technologies alter patterns of work. By connecting technological change with employment and skills development, the work provides evidence relevant to building a labour market capable of adapting to emerging economic opportunities while supporting inclusive participation in the future economy.

**Improving Parental Engagement in Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Learning**

**Research**

Sneha Shashidhara, Pavan Mamidi, Gunjita Gupta and Diksha Radhakrishnan, researchers at the Centre for Social and Behaviour Change, Ashoka University, examine whether simple interventions can increase parental engagement in children's foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN). Through a field experiment, parents received age-appropriate activities designed to support children's mathematics and Hindi learning, delivered either through WhatsApp or a workbook. The study found that the workbook intervention increased the value parents placed on FLN, while the WhatsApp intervention improved parents' understanding of foundational learning skills and their progression. The research addresses a major challenge in Indian education, where many children do not acquire basic literacy and numeracy skills during the early years of schooling. By testing low-cost mechanisms for strengthening parental involvement, the study provides evidence for interventions that can complement formal education and reach households beyond the classroom. The findings are particularly relevant to efforts to improve foundational learning outcomes and reduce educational disparities.

**Lights, Camera, Action: Professional Digital Filmmaking Workshop**

**Partnerships**

On 21 February 2026, the Department of Media Studies organised a full-day professional workshop, Lights, Camera, Action, led by Ajmal Jami, Course Director at the Centre for Open Learning, Film and Television Institute of India (FTII), Pune, and moderated by Professor Natasha Badhwar, visiting faculty in Media Studies. The hands-on session introduced students to the fundamentals of audio-visual and digital media production, with practical training in smartphone filmmaking and digital cinematography. By bringing professional expertise directly into the learning environment, the workshop enabled students to develop technical and creative capabilities beyond conventional classroom instruction. The practical format strengthened students' understanding of contemporary filmmaking tools and production techniques while exposing them to professional approaches used within the media industry. Such engagement with external practitioners complements academic learning with applied skills and industry-oriented experience, supporting students' development as media practitioners and storytellers.

**Advancing Assistive Technology through Inter-Institutional Collaboration**

**Partnerships**

The Office of Learning Support (OLS) advanced its assistive-technology work through collaboration across a national network of higher education institutions and accessibility organisations. The initiative brought together expertise from institutions including IIT Madras, IIT Delhi, Azim Premji University and other IUA members, with Idea Labs focusing on developing resources, training approaches and institutional frameworks for assistive technology. The collaboration included the development of an Assistive Technology Compendium, exploration of models for Assistive Technology Resource Centres, and work towards technology-needs assessment and training protocols for students and trainers. The network also examined practices from the Accessibility Resource Centre at IIT Madras and I-Stem to inform approaches to faculty development and inclusive education.

Through this collective model, OLS is contributing to the exchange of expertise and resources across institutions rather than developing accessibility solutions in isolation, supporting wider adoption of assistive technology and inclusive practices within higher education.




**Advancing Inclusive Higher Education through the Lady Shri Ram College Outreach**

**Partnership**

In collaboration with the Young India Fellowship (YIF) at Ashoka, OLS conducted an outreach session at Lady Shri Ram College, Delhi University, on 7 March 2025, engaging more than 45 participants. The session introduced students to inclusive higher education pathways and highlighted the University's support through accommodations, accessibility features and admissions guidance. Participants were also introduced to campus provisions including the Assistive Technology Room, braille signage and wheelchair-accessible infrastructure, alongside information on alumni outcomes and career planning. The collaboration provided an opportunity to take conversations on disability inclusion beyond the campus and engage students at another higher education institution on the importance of accessible learning environments. By combining YIF's outreach network with OLS's expertise in accessibility and student support, the initiative strengthened awareness of inclusive admissions and encouraged prospective students with disabilities to consider higher education pathways equipped to address diverse learning and accessibility needs.

**Continuous Collaboration with Abhivyakti Media for Development**

**Partnerships**

Professor Monia Acciari, Department of Media Studies, has maintained an ongoing collaboration with Abhivyakti Media for Development, Nashik, involving consultancy and engagement around equality in education, teaching programmes for disenfranchised communities, women and entrepreneurship. The collaboration also explores ways of framing the organisation's social work through the lens of heritage and intergenerational knowledge, using media practices and testimonies from the past to inform present and future communities. Initiated in 2022 and continuing through the reporting period, the engagement demonstrates the application of media expertise beyond the classroom to support organisations working with communities and social-development concerns. Its focus on educational access, women's participation, entrepreneurship, community knowledge and the preservation of social and cultural memory provides a multidimensional example of how academic expertise can contribute to external community-oriented initiatives and knowledge exchange.

**ESET Women in Cybersecurity Scholarship**

**Partnerships**

In 2025, a partnership between ESET and Ashoka University established the ESET Women in Cybersecurity Scholarship in India, creating targeted educational and professional opportunities for women entering cybersecurity and STEM. The initiative provided a USD 5,000 grant to an outstanding female Computer Science student, alongside the possibility of a summer internship with ESET. The first recipient, Roshni Agarwal, was announced in September 2025, demonstrating implementation of the partnership during the reporting period. Beyond financial assistance, the initiative addresses gender imbalance in a traditionally male-dominated technology sector by combining funding, professional exposure and pathways into the cybersecurity workforce.

**Grit, Data and Muck-raking: Beginner's Guide to Investigative Journalism**

**Teaching**

Professor Nitin Sethi teaches Grit, Data and Muck-raking: Beginner's Guide to Investigative Journalism, a practice-oriented course focused on the tools and methods required for evidence-based investigative journalism. Students learn to gather, verify and analyse data and information, investigate institutions and those in positions of power, and develop evidence-based reportage on issues within India's political economy. The course introduces students to government and business records, public datasets, disclosure norms, the Right to Information Act, the Digital Personal Data Protection Act and defamation law, while also developing skills in evidence gathering, source development and engagement with whistleblowers. Beyond technical journalism skills, the course encourages students to critically evaluate information, identify bias and distinguish evidence from competing claims in an increasingly information-saturated environment. This combination of investigative practice, critical thinking and public-accountability journalism makes the course particularly relevant to institutional transparency and responsible civic participation.

**Histories of South Asian Art: From the Earliest Times to the Present**

**Teaching**

Ajeya Vajpayee, Visiting Faculty of Visual Arts, taught Histories of South Asian Art, which examines the development of visual culture across the region from prehistoric cave paintings and early material cultures to sculpture, painting, manuscripts, calligraphy and architecture. Rather than presenting South Asian art as a straightforward chronological or dynastic history, the course investigates selected themes, objects, archaeological sites, built environments, religious and political symbols, institutions and changing artistic practices. Students explore questions of representation, landscape, identity, patronage, markets, material media and trans-regional cultural exchange, while critically examining how the categories of 'South Asia' and 'South Asian Art' have themselves been constructed. Compulsory museum, gallery and site-based classes at institutions including the National Museum, NGMA, Delhi Art Gallery and National Handicrafts and Handlooms Museum further connect classroom learning with cultural heritage institutions.

**Ethnographic Film**

**Teaching**

Associate Professor Chitralekha, Department of Media Studies, teaches Ethnographic Film, a course examining the relationship between anthropology, filmmaking and the representation of communities and ways of life. Students critically engage with questions of filmmaker perspective, subjectivity, reflexivity and the ethical challenges involved in representing people through moving images. The course introduces methodological and epistemological approaches to visual anthropology and examines how different forms of representation can influence understandings of communities and cultures. Students analyse classic ethnographic films before undertaking a collective ethnographic film project involving substantial field and laboratory work, allowing them to apply theoretical and ethical considerations to their own practice. By combining critical scholarship, field-based learning and practical filmmaking, the course develops both technical and research capabilities while encouraging students to consider questions of power and responsible representation. Its emphasis on diverse communities and ethical storytelling also supports more inclusive approaches to visual communication and knowledge production.

**In Situ: Architecture, Sculpture and Painting in the Western Himalayas**

**Teaching**

Taught by Latika Gupta, Visiting Faculty of Visual Arts, In Situ: Architecture, Sculpture and Painting in the Western Himalayas examines Buddhist temples, monasteries, sculpture and paintings across Western Tibet, Ladakh and Himachal Pradesh through geographical, ecological, religious and socio-political contexts. Students explore how architecture and material culture respond to changes in landscape, ecological conditions, ritual requirements and community relationships. The course places particular emphasis on sacred sites and pilgrimage, examining how sensory experiences and local belief systems contribute to place-making. It also considers the movement of sacred objects from their original settings into museums and the resulting changes in meaning and cultural value. Importantly, the course addresses the effects of tourism and climate change on traditional architecture and cultural practices in fragile high-altitude regions. Field visits to Buddhist sites and museum galleries in Delhi complement the historical and theoretical components of the course.

**Arts of Our Times (Mediums and Media in Contemporary)**

**Teaching**

Associate Professor Rakhi Peswani taught 'Arts of Our Times' which introduces students to contemporary artistic practices through drawing, sculpture, installation, site-specific placemaking and other visual media. The course encourages students to transform observations and reflections into complex questions through sustained experimentation with both two- and three-dimensional forms. Hands-on making forms a central component, allowing students to develop visual and material languages beyond conventional written expression. The course also introduces histories of abstraction and installation art through avant-garde and revisionist feminist perspectives, creating an inclusive and cross-disciplinary understanding of contemporary artistic practice. Through classroom discussions, presentations and studio-based exploration, students develop confidence in conceptualisation, experimentation and critical expression. The emphasis on materiality, perception and multiple forms of representation enables students to engage with contemporary social and cultural questions while developing creative and analytical capabilities.




# ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS

At Ashoka University, we set out to promote gender equality through numerous methods. One key area was by ensuring the equitable access to higher education through a diverse student community and merit and need-based financial support mechanisms. The University's student body demonstrates strong representation of women across undergraduate and academic programmes, while scholarship initiatives support equitable participation by reducing financial barriers to education.

| Indicator | Number |
|---|---|
| Total students (UG + academic programmes+ PhD) | 953 |
| Female students | 618 |
| Female student representation | ~65% |
| Students receiving scholarships | 416 |
| Female students receiving scholarships | 266 |
| Female students receiving 100% tuition scholarship or more | 128 |

**Past and Current Trends**

- 65 per cent of the incoming student cohort comprised women, reflecting strong gender representation in admissions.
- 43 per cent of women students received scholarships, supporting equitable access to higher education.
- 48.12 per cent of females who recieved scholarship recipients were awarded 100 per cent tuition scholarships, demonstrating significant financial support for women pursuing higher education.

(Showcased data includes only the newly admitted female students during AY 2025 - 26)

**1. NEEV: Discussing Gender Discrimination and Social Biases through Guided Discussions**

**Campus**

A big part of initiatives at Ashoka this year were undertaken by members of the student body including **NEEV**, which also encourages gender awareness, confidence, and critical reflection among students through workshops and discussion-based sessions that address issues such as discrimination, safety, and self-perception. These initiatives create spaces where students can openly engage with social issues and develop a stronger sense of self-awareness and empowerment. The Peer Mentorship Department, in collaboration with the student-led community conducted a series of Sachi Baat sessions (four),

The sessions were designed to create safe and reflective spaces where students could engage in open dialogue on issues beyond academics. One of the sessions focused specifically on subtle gender and caste-based discrimination, encouraging students to think critically about inequality and social biases. Through Sachi Baat discussion sessions, participants did not only engage in conversations on social issues, but analyzed and viewed films to hold guided discussion. The session included a documentary screening followed by an interactive discussion where students reflected on the themes presented and shared their perspectives.

The format encouraged open participation and allowed students to engage thoughtfully with complex social issues in a supportive environment.

**1.i. Building Confidence through Self - defense Training**

Neev members were also responsible for developing and enforcing a structured self - defense workshop for students in Grades 5 to 8, mentored by trained professionals. The session introduced practical safety techniques while also emphasizing awareness, confidence, and the ability to respond calmly in challenging situations. Through interactive exercises, students developed skills that support personal safety and self-confidence.

**2. Rotaract's Role in Promoting Health, Dignity and Well-being**

**Campus**

Project Pankh, undertaken in collaboration with Government Middle School, Asawarpur, BRZ School, Asawarpur and Gyan Adhar Rohini, involved addressing menstrual health, sexual and reproductive health, consent and body positivity among adolescents. Members of the Rotaract Club actively promoted gender equality through interactive workshops for both girls and boys.

The initiative challenged stigma, encouraged informed conversations, and fostered respectful attitudes towards gender and health. The project also supports menstrual hygiene by distributing sanitary products to girls in underserved communities. A total of **12 sessions** were undertaken, where in a single session, a total of 15 girls and 10 boys were direct beneficiaries.

**2.ii. Rotaract's Role in Enabling Lives through Empowerment**

Financial and legal literacy are skills everyone deserves access to yet, for many, they remain out of reach. This project was dedicated to equipping women aged 16 and above with the foundational knowledge to make informed decisions about their financial lives.

Through a series of interactive sessions, Rotaract representatives focused on three key areas: basic financial literacy, including budgeting, savings, and personal finance; awareness and registration for relevant government schemes and welfare programmes; and exploring alternative employment and livelihood opportunities for women. During the year, six sessions were conducted, with each session involving 20+ direct beneficiaries.

**2.iii. Safe and Inclusive Workplaces – Workshop for Female Staff**

In collaboration with the One Stop Centre, members of Rotaract conducted an awareness workshop for female support staff on workplace sexual harassment, domestic violence, gender bias, good touch and bad touch, and available support systems. The initiative strengthened awareness of women's rights while promoting a safer and more supportive workplace.

**Negotiating Normalcy and Patienthood: A Dialectical View of Mental Illness Narratives Among Women**

**Research**

Annie Baxi, Visiting Faculty of Psychology at Ashoka, collaborated with Ishita Bharadwaj, Department of Psychology, University of Delhi, and examined how Indian women with psychiatric diagnoses understand and navigate experiences of mental illness within culturally shaped expectations of gender, family, normalcy and recovery. Drawing on women's lived experiences of psychiatric care, the research explores how identities such as 'patient' and 'normal woman' are negotiated within everyday social relationships. It highlights how expectations around emotional expression, sacrifice, family responsibilities and socially prescribed gender roles can shape experiences of distress and recovery. The study underscores the importance of culturally sensitive approaches to mental healthcare that account for the social and relational contexts in which mental illness is experienced. By bringing gender and cultural perspectives into discussions of mental health, the research contributes directly to SDG 5 and SDG 3 through its focus on well-being and gendered experiences of healthcare.

**The 'Lesbian Eroticverse' of Personal Narratives and Indian Digital Platforms**

**Research**

Arunima Theraja and Charul Mehndiratta, Centre for Studies in Gender and Sexuality, examine how queer individuals use Indian digital platforms to narrate experiences of gender, sexuality and identity. Focusing on personal narratives produced by queer AFAB individuals on platforms including Agents of Ishq and Point of View, the research explores how digital spaces can provide opportunities for self-expression and affirmation. It also examines the intersections between sexuality, caste, marginalisation and inclusion, highlighting how online spaces can reproduce or challenge social inequalities. By bringing attention to the experiences and representation of queer communities within Indian digital and social contexts, the research contributes to broader conversations around gender equality, inclusion and the recognition of marginalised identities.

**Exploring The Role of Microbiota in Mediating Sexually Dimorphic Infection Outcomes in Mealworm Beetles**

**Research**

Professor Imroze Khan examines how microbiota influence sex-specific differences in susceptibility to infection. Using mealworm beetles, the study finds that females have higher bacterial loads and greater vulnerability to infection than males. When the microbiota are depleted, female survival following infection improves, reducing the difference between male and female infection outcomes. Reintroducing the microbiota restores this pattern, indicating that microbial communities play a causal role in shaping sex-specific immune responses. The findings highlight the importance of considering sex as a biological variable in understanding infectious disease and host–microbe interactions. The research also has implications for developing microbiota-targeted therapies and improving approaches to disease prevention and treatment that account for biological differences between sexes.

**Sufi Women and Mystics: Models of Sanctity, Erudition, and Political Leadership**

**Research**

Akansha Singh, Department of History, contributes to scholarship on women's roles in religious, intellectual and political life through her review of Sufi Women and Mystics: Models of Sanctity, Erudition, and Political Leadership. The publication examines the historical representation of Sufi women as figures of sanctity, scholarship and political influence, drawing attention to women's contributions within Islamic intellectual and religious traditions. By engaging with scholarship that challenges assumptions about women's roles and visibility in religious and intellectual histories, the work contributes to a broader understanding of women's agency and leadership. Its focus on women's intellectual, religious and political participation provides a defensible connection to SDG 5: Gender Equality, particularly the broader objective of recognising and strengthening women's participation and leadership.

**Understanding the Impact of Night Shift Policies on Women's Employment**

**Research**

Associate Professor Anisha Sharma, Assistant Professor of Economics, collaborated with Bhanu Gupta, Kanika Mahajan, and Daksh Walia to examine how labour regulations influence women's workforce participation through the working paper From Dusk Till Dawn: The Impact of Lifting Night Shift Bans on Female Employment. The study investigates the effects of reforms permitting women to work night shifts across selected industries, analysing their impact on employment opportunities and labour market outcomes. By assessing how regulatory changes shape women's access to formal employment, the research provides evidence on policies that can promote greater workforce participation while balancing safety and workplace protections. The findings contribute to ongoing discussions on creating more inclusive labour markets and expanding economic opportunities for women.

**Promoting Women's Employment through Workplace Safety Interventions**

**Research**

Professor Anisha Sharma also collaborated with Livia Alfonsi, Lori Beaman, Karmini Sharma, and Cyril Ream to investigate how workplace safety influences women's employment through the working paper Empowering Women through Safety at Work: An Experiment with SMEs in Urban India. Based on a field experiment with small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), the study evaluates how workplace safety measures affect women's willingness to enter and remain in formal employment. The findings demonstrate that safer and more supportive work environments can improve women's labour force participation while encouraging businesses to adopt more inclusive employment practices. The research offers valuable evidence for designing policies and workplace interventions that foster gender-equitable economic opportunities.



**Anisha Sharma**
**Associate Professor of Economics**

*"India has one of the lowest rates of female labour force participation in the world, and unlocking women's employment is central to growing the economy. Much of the research on this question focuses on the supply side - the constraints that keep women from entering the workforce. What is often overlooked is the demand side: the reasons, including regulatory ones, that firms do not hire women in the first place. Our research on India's night shift regulations is one small window into that picture. It shows that removing a decades - old, gender - discriminatory law can meaningfully expand firms' demand for female workers - but also that how such reforms are designed matters just as much as the reforms themselves."*

**Professor Anisha Sharma** on her publication titled 'From Dusk Till Dawn: The Impact of Lifting Night Shift Bans on Female Employment'.

**Examining Gender Norms and Women's Participation in the Workforce**

**Research**

Professor Aparajita Dasgupta, Associate Professor from the Department of Economics, collaborated with Ashokankur Datta to examine how gender norms shape women's labour force participation through the journal article 'Are Gender Norms Systematic to Caste Institutions?' Examining Preferences around Female Work Participation. The study investigates how social and caste institutions influence attitudes towards women's employment, exploring the relationship between cultural norms and economic opportunities. By analysing the persistence of these preferences across communities, the research provides valuable insights into the barriers that limit women's workforce participation and highlights the importance of social change in promoting gender-inclusive economic development.

**Supporting Women's Return to the Workforce after Parenthood**

**Research**

Professor Ashwini Deshpande, Professor of Economics, collaborated with Dr Gaurav Chiplunkar, Assistant Professor at the Indian Statistical Institute, Delhi Centre, Prfofessor Kanika Mahajan, Associate Professor of Economics at Ashoka and Dr S. Singh, Assistant Professor at the Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi, to examine the challenges women face in returning to paid employment after childbirth through the working paper 'From Pause to Pay: Supporting Women's Return to Work'. The research explores the structural and social barriers that interrupt women's careers following motherhood and identifies measures that can improve workforce re-entry, employment continuity, and long-term economic participation. The findings contribute to policy discussions on creating more inclusive labour markets that support working mothers through flexible employment practices and gender-responsive workplace policies.

**Advancing Women's Economic Participation through Evidence-Based Research**

**Collective- Research**

Women's participation in the workforce is shaped by a range of interconnected social, institutional, and economic factors, including prevailing social norms, recruitment practices, career interruptions, and opportunities for professional advancement. Professor Kanika Mahajan has led a series of complementary research studies that examine these barriers and identify practical pathways for creating more equitable and inclusive labour markets.

Beginning with the journal article Women's Work, Social Norms and the Marriage Market, co-authored with Professors Farzana Afridi (Indian Statistical Institute), Abhishek Arora (University of Essex), and Diva Dhar (University of Oxford), the research explores how marriage expectations and social norms shape women's decisions to participate in the workforce. Extending this work, Gendered Language in Job Ads and Applicant Behaviour: Evidence from India, co-authored with professors Sugato Chattopadhyay (Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad) and Zahra Siddique (University of Bristol), examines how subtle differences in recruitment language can influence women's application behaviour and reinforce hiring biases.

The research further investigates barriers that arise across different stages of women's careers. From Pause to Pay: Supporting Women's Return to Work, co-authored with Professors Gaurav Chiplunkar (University of Virginia), Ashwini Deshpande, and S. Singh, examines the structural challenges women face when re-entering paid employment after career breaks, particularly following motherhood, and identifies measures that can improve workforce re-entry and long-term career progression. Complementing this, Scaling Up to Decrease the Divide: Firm Size and Female Employment, co-authored with Professor Pubali Chakraborty, explores how expanding businesses can generate greater employment opportunities for women and contribute to narrowing gender disparities in the labour market.

Collectively, these studies provide a comprehensive understanding of the social, institutional, and economic factors influencing women's employment. Together, they generate evidence that can inform policies, organisational practices, and workplace reforms that promote more inclusive labour markets and enable women to participate, progress, and thrive throughout their careers.

**Janabai**

**Research**

Assistant Professor from the Centre for Communication and Critical Thinking, Nitya Pawar examines Janabai, the medieval Marathi saint-poet, whose work is particularly significant for bringing the experiences and perspectives of a lower-caste woman into the literary and religious traditions of medieval India. The research situates Janabai within the Varkari Bhakti tradition and highlights the distinctive significance of her extensive poetic corpus, which spans everyday social realities, devotional narratives, philosophical reflection and representations of women's experiences. By foregrounding the work of a woman from a socially marginalised caste, the study contributes to a broader understanding of how gender and caste shaped access to authorship, religious expression and intellectual participation in historical India. Janabai's poetry provides an important counterpoint to predominantly male literary and religious traditions and demonstrates how marginalised women could use literary and devotional expression to articulate identity, agency and social experience. The work is therefore relevant to SDG 5 through its focus on the historical visibility, agency and representation of women, while also intersecting with questions of social and caste-based marginalisation. Nitya Pawar completed her PhD in English at Ashoka University, with research centred on Marathi Bhakti literature, translation and the medieval saint-poet Janabai.

**Gender Socialisation and Women's Agency in India**

**Research**

Amrita Narayanan, Visiting Faculty of English, examines how gender norms are learned and reinforced during childhood and adolescence in India in the chapter The Socialization of Binary Gender in India: The Research in Psychology. The research reviewed in the chapter shows how Indian adolescents may be rewarded for conforming to rigid expectations of masculinity and femininity, while gender-nonconforming behaviour can be discouraged or penalised. It also examines the role of families, particularly mothers, in shaping these expectations, while highlighting how exposure to alternative models through television and the internet can influence the process of gender socialisation.

The work is relevant to understanding how gender norms develop and how they can influence young people's sense of agency and behaviour. By examining the social processes that reproduce gendered expectations, the research contributes to broader efforts to understand and challenge barriers to gender equality.

**Smartphone Ownership, Economic Empowerment and Women's Property Rights**

**Seminar- Research**

Professor Shreya Bhattacharya delivered the seminar **'***Smartphone Ownership, Economic Empowerment and Women's Property Rights: Experimental Evidence from Malawi'***,** presenting findings from a randomised controlled trial involving approximately 1,500 women in Blantyre, Malawi. The study examined how access to smartphones, either individually or jointly, combined with digital literacy and husband-inclusive training programmes, influences women's economic empowerment, bargaining power, and perceptions of property rights. By comparing different intervention models, including smartphone ownership, cash transfers, and training, the research assessed the role digital technologies play in women's decision-making and participation within households. The findings showcase that expanding access to digital tools can improve women's economic agency while contributing to more equitable household dynamics and greater recognition of women's digital and property rights. The seminar offered valuable insights into how digital inclusion can support gender-responsive development in low-income settings.

**Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies**

**Teaching**

Visiting Professor Anindita Chatterjee, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, teaches Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies, examining gender and sexuality through social, cultural and institutional perspectives. The course addresses how gendered identities and inequalities are constructed and reproduced through family, social institutions, cultural practices and broader systems of power. It provides students with analytical tools for understanding women's experiences and the social structures that shape gender relations, while engaging with wider questions around sexuality, representation and inequality. Because gender inequality is itself central to the course rather than a secondary application, it provides particularly strong curriculum evidence for the University's contribution to education around gender equality. It can also help demonstrate that teaching addresses gender not only as an identity category but as a structural issue connected to power, opportunity and participation.

**Investigation of Psychological Variables in Gender Trauma**

**Teaching**

Assistant Professor Simantini Ghosh, Department of Psychology, teaches Investigation of Psychological Variables in Gender Trauma, an independent-study course examining the psychological factors associated with gender-based trauma and its effects on individuals. The course provides an opportunity to investigate how experiences of gendered violence and discrimination can influence psychological well-being, emotional responses and trauma-related outcomes. It complements Professor Ghosh's broader academic work on gender-based violence, systemic discrimination and traumatic stress, with particular attention to the psychological experiences of individuals exposed to violence and other forms of gender-based harm. By engaging students with the psychological dimensions and consequences of gender-based trauma, the course contributes to a deeper understanding of the barriers affecting gender equality and well-being.

**Beyond the Master Subject: Montezuma Red and Feminist Aesthetic Resistance to Fascism**

**Research**

Debadrita Saha, PhD in English, examines the political and feminist significance of Montezuma Red lipstick, tracing its association with women's participation in wartime institutions and its subsequent interpretation as a form of resistance. The research situates Elizabeth Arden's cosmetics and the adoption of red lipstick by women serving in the United States Marine Corps Women's Reserve and other wartime contexts within broader histories of women's visibility, identity and resistance. Rather than treating cosmetics as an expression of femininity, Saha explores how an object conventionally associated with beauty could become a means through which women asserted presence, agency and political identity within gendered social and institutional environments. The research also engages with feminist aesthetics and resistance to fascist domination, examining how women's bodies, appearance and cultural expression can become sites of political contestation. By connecting beauty practices with representation, resistance and participation in public life, the article contributes to understanding the cultural dimensions of gender equality. The research was published as a research article in Women's Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal in March 2026.

**Power Dynamics in Classrooms through a Lens of Gender**

**Teaching**

Assistant Professor Simantini Ghosh from the Department of Psychology teaches this independent-study course examining gendered power relations within classroom environments. The course considers how gender can shape authority, participation, interpersonal relationships and experiences within educational spaces, providing students with a framework for critically examining the social structures that can reproduce gender inequalities. Its explicit focus on gender and power within education makes it particularly relevant while also intersecting with SDG 4 through its examination of inclusive educational environments.

**AI Sakhi: Advancing Women's Digital and Economic Empowerment**

**Partnerships**

During the reporting period, the Centre for Social and Behaviour Change (CSBC), in partnership with AVPN (Asian Venture Philanthropy Network) and the Department of Information Technology, Government of Uttar Pradesh, developed AI Sakhi, an initiative designed to equip women from self-help groups with practical artificial intelligence skills for livelihoods and everyday decision-making. The programme primarily engaged the Lakhpati Didi cadre and built on participants' existing economic activities, peer leadership networks and familiarity with digital tools, enabling AI capabilities to be introduced beyond basic digital literacy. In Uttar Pradesh, the initiative worked through 875 Samuh Sakhis across Barabanki and Varanasi, with the potential to reach approximately 1.75 lakh women. Early applications included business registration on Google, logo creation, information translation, household planning and supporting children's schoolwork. The initiative was also showcased at the Behaviour Change Conclave on 30 June 2026.



**Soft Skills Coaching in Economic Inclusion Programmes, Jharkhand**

**Partnerships**

During the reporting period, the Centre for Social and Behaviour Change (CSBC) conducted a randomised evaluation of group-based soft skills coaching delivered by local community coaches within a government economic inclusion programme in Jharkhand. The study was undertaken in partnership with the Jharkhand State Livelihoods Promotion Society, The/Nudge Institute and the University of Michigan, with additional research support from Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA). The research examined whether different approaches to coaching could strengthen the ability of economically vulnerable women to translate livelihood support into sustained economic progress. By comparing different coaching models with the regular programme, the study sought to identify which elements were most effective and worth integrating into programmes at scale, while considering the additional cost of each intervention component. Later in April 2026, IPA's Soft Skills Research Fund awarded top-up funding to support the study. The investigators were Dr Sharon Barnhardt and Dr Catherine Thomas.

**Gender Matters in Global Politics**

**Teaching**

Assistant Professor Ananya Sharma, Department of International Relations, teaches this course which examines gender as an analytical category for understanding international relations and global politics. The course explores how conventional understandings of war, peace, sovereignty, violence, foreign policy, governance and political economy are shaped by gendered assumptions and constructions of masculinity and femininity. Students examine and engage with feminist approaches that challenge established understanding of international politics. Importantly, the course treats gender not as a mere synonym for women, but as a system of hierarchical relations that influence institutions, political practices and the distribution of power. This enables students to analyse how gendered structures affect different groups across societies and states, while introducing them to feminist critiques that have reshaped the discipline of International Relations.

**Understanding Pathways of Transmission of Familial Violence in India through Complex Trauma Theory**

**Teaching**

Assistant Professor Simantini Ghosh, Department of Psychology, teaches this independent-study course examining the psychological pathways through which familial violence and complex trauma are experienced and potentially transmitted across generations in India. The course is particularly relevant to understanding the psychological consequences of violence and the social and familial contexts in which trauma develops. Professor Ghosh's broader research focuses on gender-based violence, systemic discrimination, traumatic stress and familial violence, making the course closely connected to research and teaching on gendered violence and its consequences.

**Gendering South Asian History, 1200–1800**

**Teaching**

Professor Tanika Sarkar, Department of History, teaches Gendering South Asian History, 1200–1800, using gender as a central lens for examining medieval and early-modern South Asian society. The course explores how masculinity and femininity were constructed and negotiated, and how gender norms shaped kingship, domesticity, political participation and social relations during the Sultanate and Mughal periods.

Students consider the experiences of royal women alongside concubines, dancing girls, women slaves, labourers and gender-liminal figures such as eunuchs. The course also examines gendered patronage in art and architecture and considers women saints who challenged established social hierarchies. By bringing both elite and marginalised groups into the historical narrative, the course examines the processes through which gender inequalities were produced, reinforced and challenged. Its explicit engagement with gender marginalisation, women's participation and challenges to gender norms makes it strong curriculum evidence for the University's teaching on gender equality.



महिलाओं ने सीखी एआई की बारीकियां

पुंपट से गैजेट्स तक

बदल जाएगी खेती और व्यापार की सूरत

राजीव सिंह/वाराणसी

डिजिटल साक्षरता और महिला सशक्तिकरण की दिशा में मंगलवार को बड़ागाँव ब्लॉक सभागार में एक ऐतिहासिक पहल देखने को मिली। सेंटर फॉर सोशल एंड बिहेवियरल चेंज, अशोका यूनिवर्सिटी, दिल्ली के तत्वावधान में ग्रामीण महिलाओं के लिए एक विशेष आर्टिफिशियल इंटेलिजेंस प्रशिक्षण शिविर का सफल आयोजन किया गया। सुबह 11:00 बजे से शाम 3:30 बजे तक चले इस सघन प्रशिक्षण कार्यक्रम में उत्तर प्रदेश राज्य ग्रामीण आजीविका मिशन से जुड़ी स्वयं सहायता समूह की 40 सक्रिय महिलाओं ने हिस्सा लिया।

**इंटरनेट का सही इस्तेमाल करने में मदद मिलेगी**- प्रशिक्षण का हिस्सा रहीं महिलाओं ने बताया कि इस ट्रेनिंग से उन्हें मोबाइल ऐप्स और इंटरनेट का सही इस्तेमाल करने में मदद मिलेगी, जिससे वे अपने हुनर और रोजगार को एक नई ऊंचाई पर ले जा सकेंगी। इस विशेष अवसर पर ब्लॉक मिशन मैनेजर राहुल सिंह, मनोज कुमार एवं कुसुम झा उपस्थित रहे। कार्यक्रम को सफल बनाने और महिलाओं के तकनीकी सवालों का समाधान करने में अशोका यूनिवर्सिटी की टीम के सदस्य रजनीश और शशिकांत ने भी महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाई। प्रमुख प्रतिभागीः संकुल लेखपाल संगीता देवी, सुषमा देवी, गीता देवी, सीता देवी, और समूह सखी नीलम, सीमा, रेखा, प्रियंका सहित कई अन्य ग्रामीण महिलाएं इस ऐतिहासिक पल की साक्षी बनीं।



खेती-किसानी और व्यापार में मददगार बनेगी तकनीक

मुख्य ट्रेनर बृजेश कुमार गुप्ता ने महिलाओं को बेहद सरल भाषा में एआई तकनीक की बारीकियों से अवगत कराया। उन्होंने व्यावहारिक उदाहरण देते हुए सिखाया कि कैसे महिलाएं अपने दैनिक जीवन, खेती-किसानी और छोटे घरेलू व्यवसायों को आगे बढ़ाने के लिए आधुनिक डिजिटल टूल्स का उपयोग कर सकती हैं। आज के समय में तकनीक से जुड़कर ही ग्रामीण महिलाएं आत्मनिर्भर बन सकती हैं और समाज में अपनी एक नई पहचान बना सकती हैं। पहली बार एआई जैसी आधुनिक तकनीक को सीखने के बाद महिलाओं के चेहरों पर एक अलग ही आत्मविश्वास नजर आया।



**CSGS × University of Melbourne: Trans*Abundance Conference**

**Partnerships**

The Centre for Studies in Gender and Sexuality (CSGS), in collaboration with the Gender Studies Program at the University of Melbourne, organised the one-day TransAbundance: Unruly Transnational Practices symposium on 29 October 2025 at the Melbourne Global Centre in Delhi. Held as part of the TAARIF (Transformative Arts and Research Initiatives Fellowship) 2025, the conference brought together early-career scholars, activists and artists to explore trans* practices as embodied, creative and epistemological forms that challenge universalised understandings of transness. The event was curated by Arunima Theraja, Postdoctoral Fellow at CSGS, and Professor CQ Quinan of the University of Melbourne, and created a platform for exchange across research, activism and creative practice. The collaboration extended CSGS's engagement with international scholarship on gender and sexuality while providing Indian and international researchers with a shared space to foreground diverse trans* experiences and knowledge practices.

The grant has enabled CSGS to provide funding, research mentorship and an international platform for emerging scholars working on underrepresented questions of gender and sexuality.

**Figure Drawing – Remembering and Reimagining: Guest Sessions on the Performative Body**

**Partnerships**

As part of the practice elective Figure Drawing – Remembering and Reimagining, the Department invited Hiten Noonwal for two sessions examining the performative potential of the body. Through an audio-visual performance and self-crafted costume drawing on baroque aesthetics, Noonwal encouraged students to reconsider conventional approaches to representing the human body in visual art. The sessions particularly questioned gendered representations of the female body within the tradition of life study and figure drawing. By introducing performance, costume and embodied practice into an established artistic exercise, the sessions expanded students' understanding of how bodies, identities and gender can be represented and interpreted. The engagement encouraged critical reflection on established visual conventions while creating a more inclusive space for considering diverse expressions of gender and embodiment within contemporary artistic practice.

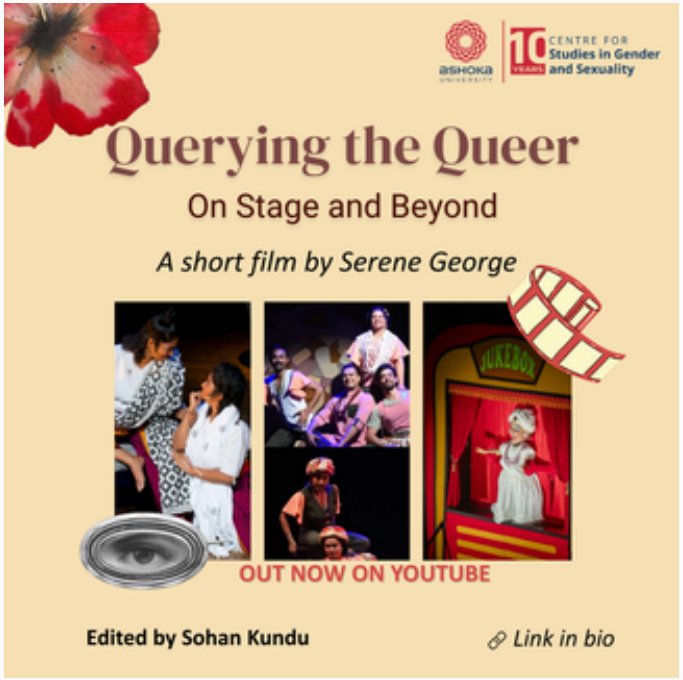
**Behaviour Change Toolkit for ASHAs: Strengthening Community Health Outreach**

**Partnerships**

During the reporting period, the Centre for Social and Behaviour Change (CSBC) began a partnership with the National Health Mission (NHM), Uttar Pradesh, to develop and roll out a behaviour change training module for Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs), who serve as a critical link between public health services and households across the state. With more than 1.6 lakh ASHAs in Uttar Pradesh, the programme is designed for scale through a one-day training supported by a Training of Trainers (ToT) module, enabling Master Trainers to cascade the approach across the health system. The toolkit addressed both the individual and community dimensions of an ASHA's work. Self-development tools covering identity mapping, time management and impact visualisation helped strengthen professional identity and role clarity, while community-facing tools provided scripted conversations, role plays and guidance for navigating household dynamics and social norms. Job aids further supported frontline counselling on breastfeeding, menstrual hygiene, non-communicable diseases, tuberculosis and family planning.





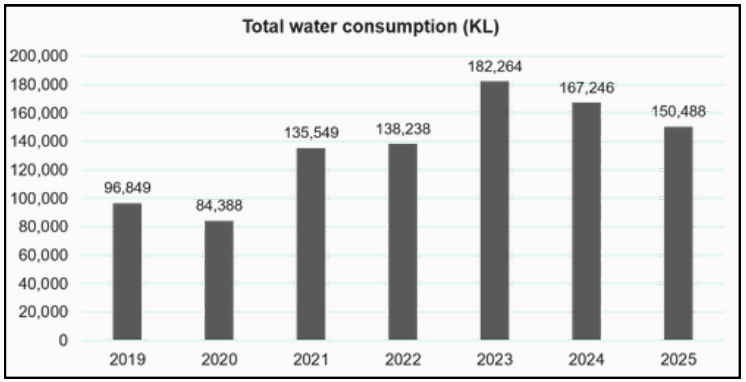



6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

# ENSURE AVAILABILITY AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF WATER AND SANITATION FOR ALL

As a university committed to sustainability, we continuously monitor, conserve, recycle, and responsibly manage water across our campus. Every building on campus is equipped with water meters that allow us to monitor consumption for drinking, flushing, cleaning, irrigation, and laundry, enabling us to identify opportunities for reducing freshwater use and improving operational efficiency.

Our approach to water stewardship is guided by the principles of Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle; hence, we have established a robust water management system that combines infrastructure, technology, and operational practices to minimize water consumption while maintaining campus functionality. Building-wise monitoring, preventive maintenance, and regular inspections help us promptly identify and address leaks, ensuring efficient operation of our water supply network and treatment facilities.




### 1. Rainwater Harvesting and Groundwater Recharge Programme

**Campus**

Latest evidence from the Dynamic Ground Water Resources of India showcases the critical nature of the groundwater status of districts in Haryana and particularly Sonepat.

The DGWRI is the official national assessment of groundwater availability and utilisation conducted by the Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) under the Ministry of Jal Shakti, in collaboration with State Ground Water Departments.

Their assessments of Sonepat convey that groundwater resources remain under stress, with **50 per cent** of assessed units classified as over-exploited during CY 2024. Recognising this challenge, we believe it to be our obligation to be a responsible steward of water resources.

To strengthen our efforts and enhance groundwater recharge in Sonipat, we constructed 15 strategically located rainwater harvesting pits across the campus.

These structures capture rainwater and channel it through dedicated de-silting chambers before facilitating groundwater recharge, helping replenish local aquifers, improve water security, and reduce dependence on freshwater sources.

Regular inspection and maintenance ensure the long-term effectiveness and optimal performance of these systems throughout the year.



### 2. Enhancing Water Resilience through Efficient Water Reuse and Campus Green Spaces

**Campus**

Potable water sourced through the HUDA municipal water supply is reserved for essential domestic uses across the campus, including drinking, cooking, sanitation, and other daily requirements. To minimise dependence on this valuable freshwater resource, wastewater recycling forms a key pillar of our circular water management strategy. Across the campus, wastewater is treated through two dedicated Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) with capacities of 100 KLD and 300 KLD, both utilising Moving Bed Biofilm Reactor (MBBR) technology to ensure effective treatment. The treated water is subsequently reused for landscape irrigation, gardening, solar panel cleaning, and sprinkler operations for dust suppression during periods of poor air quality, significantly reducing the demand for potable water in non-potable applications. By matching water quality to its intended use, we optimise resource efficiency, conserve freshwater resources, and strengthen the resilience of our campus water management system.

We are also in the process of expanding the use of treated water for toilet flushing and construction activities through a dual plumbing network, further strengthening water circularity across the campus.
To ensure the safe reuse of treated wastewater, water quality is periodically tested by NABL-accredited laboratories in accordance with the standards prescribed under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. In addition, wastewater generated from laundry operations is treated through two Effluent Treatment Plants (ETPs), each with a capacity of 5 KLD, before being transferred to the STPs for further treatment and reuse.
Additionally, we installed water-efficient fixtures such as aerators, sensor-based urinals, and low-flow faucets across campus to reduce wasteful consumption and have developed green spaces using local flora species which require minimal water consumption for maintenance and nourishment. Our automated irrigation system ensures efficient landscape watering with minimal wastage, while specialised cleaning equipment enables our housekeeping teams to maintain hygiene using significantly less water than conventional cleaning methods. We also undertake daily rounds as part of preventive maintenance at relevant times to ensure system integrity and rapid response to any incidents. These integrated processes ensure that only clean, treated water is released or reused, safeguarding both campus and local water resources.

### 3. Integrated Water Stewardship and Monitoring Programme

#### Campus

We have implemented a comprehensive water management system with building-wise metering and daily consumption monitoring. This enables real-time tracking, early leak detection, and optimisation of water usage, ensuring responsible consumption and continuous efficiency improvement across campus operations.
Through our water monitoring programmes, this year we were able to determine our total water consumption to be a total of **1,50,488 KL** and **31.2 KL/person** while our circular water management efforts have greatly improved our performance on the water consumption front.

We are happy to say that this year, we reduced our total water consumption by **10.02 per cent** and by **18.36 per cent** per person compared with the previous year.

### 4. Strengthening Safe Drinking Water Infrastructure at Asawarpur

#### Campus

Also discussed under SDG 4 (Quality education), access to safe drinking water is essential for maintaining hygiene and protecting student health. During an infrastructure assessment of Asawarpur's Middle and Primary School, poor drinking water facilities with visible signs of algae buildup and inadequate maintenance were identified as key concerns. There were cracked surfaces and exposed pipes which were risks to both safety and hygiene of the students and teaching faculty.
Recognising the importance of reliable basic infrastructure for the school community, we identified this facility as a critical area requiring timely intervention and improvement. Hence, we supported the refurbishment of both schools' water infrastructure, including the restoration of hand pumps, drinking water taps and new RO systems. These upgrades have strengthened the reliability and safety of the school's potable water supply, reduced hygiene risks and ensured that students and staff have consistent access to clean drinking water.

### 5. Community Water Body Revitalisation Programme – Asawarpur

#### Campus

As part of our commitment to clean water and sanitation, we are undertaking a pond rejuvenation initiative in Asawarpur. The project focuses on restoring a 7.3-acre water body that had been illegally encroached upon by locals, and now extends 5.38 acres in size.
Further, after undertaking research, it was discovered that Asawarpur has no Sewage Treatment Plant nor sustainable management process, leaving the villagers no option but to empty their entire sewage and waste into the pond itself.

Through this initiative, we are not only aiming to restore but also revive the pond and its surrounding areas as a safe, clean and functional community resource while ensuring reducing the surrounding residents' exposure to health risks, improving sanitation and enhancing the surrounding environment for residents.

#### A historic background of Asawarpur: Driving Long-Term Impact Through Collaboration

Across Haryana, more than 3,000 ponds fall under the monitoring ambit of the Haryana Pond & Wastewater Management Authority (**HPWWMA**), although many continue to face neglect. Until recently, the Asawarpur pond remained unregistered and without formal recognition. Through coordinated efforts between the Ashoka and relevant authorities, the pond has now been assigned a unique identification number (**Reg no 01HRSPTRAI0000AWPR001**) and listed on the government portal, enabling collaborative restoration with the concerned agencies. The technical execution of the project is being supported by HPWWMA to ensure scientific planning, regulatory compliance, and long-term sustainability.
As also discussed under SDG 1: No Poverty, the demographic profile of Asawarpur highlights the need to strengthen natural resources that support community well-being and sustainable livelihoods. Rejuvenating the village pond will not only improve the local environment and enhance water availability but also create opportunities to support income-generating activities, ultimately contributing to a healthier and more resilient future for Asawarpur's residents.

#### Implementing Sustainable Restoration Techniques within Asawarpur

Our rejuvenation plan incorporates a range of nature-based and engineering solutions to improve water quality and ecological health.

Proposed interventions include the installation of a Root Zone Treatment (RZT) system using plants, soil, gravel, charcoal, and microorganisms for natural wastewater filtration.

Additionally, desilting and removal of accumulated waste to restore water capacity, strengthen embankments to prevent erosion, plant native aquatic vegetation to enhance biodiversity.

It also endorses creating groundwater recharge zones to support aquifer replenishment.

**Upon completion of the pond rejuvenation works, the restored Asawarpur pond is envisioned as a sustainable community resource with carefully planned public-use spaces along its banks, including:**

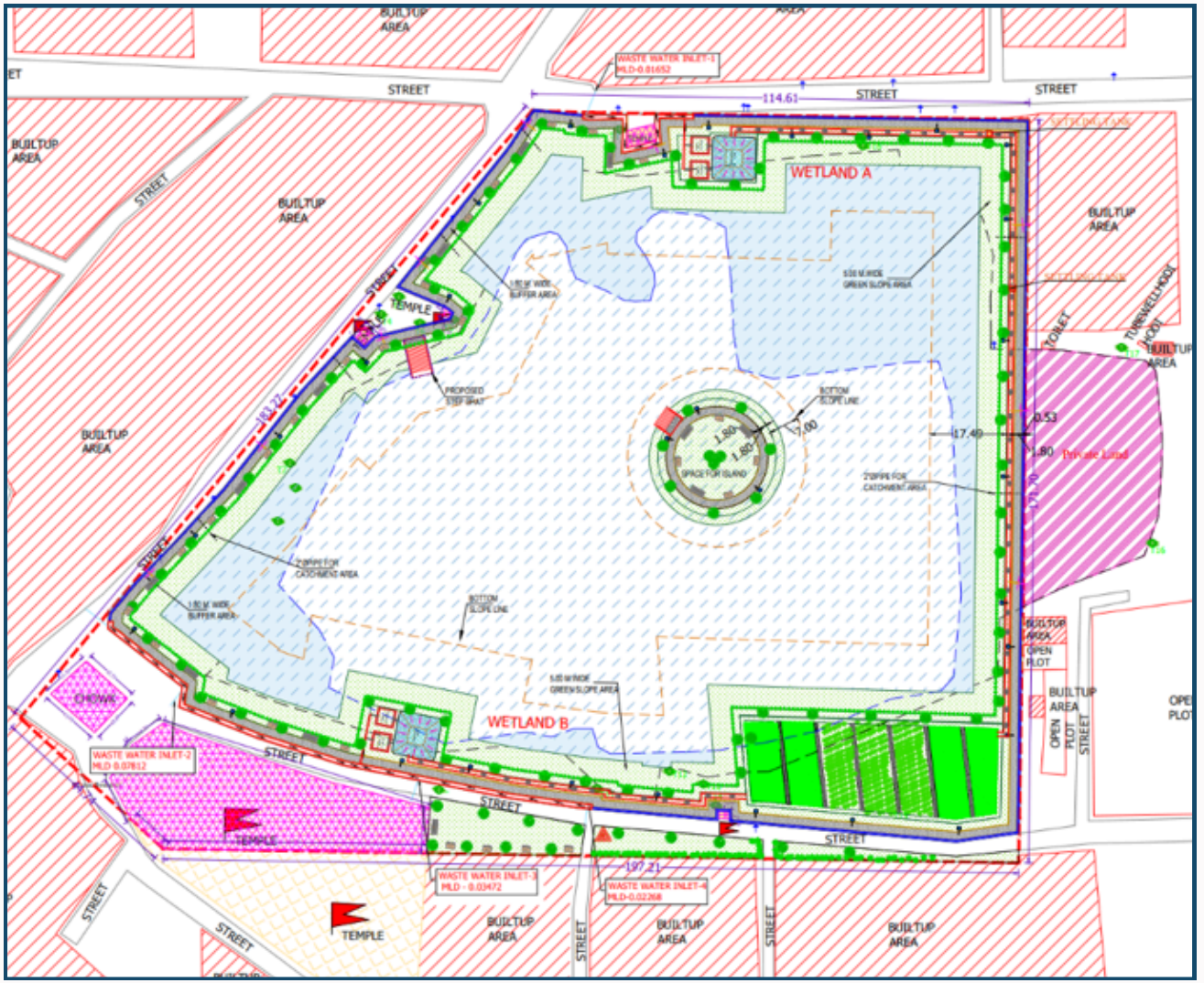
- Artisan kiosks and local food cafés set up by village members and local communities
- Future proposals such as boating facilities and an artificial island are intended to encourage community stewardship of restored water bodies
- These are ideal to demonstrate the long-term social value of investments in water conservation, wastewater treatment, and ecosystem revival.

**Designing Water: Morphologies and Histories of Water Architecture in India**

**Partnerships**

The Department of Visual Arts hosted Dr Jutta Jain-Neubauer, PhD in Indian Art History, where she explored the relationship between water, architecture and urban space in India, examining the social, ecological, aesthetic and ritual significance of water structures. Through examples including stepwells and other water monuments, the session traced how water bodies have historically been integrated into settlements, trade routes and pilgrimage networks. The discussion highlighted the hydrological ingenuity of traditional water architecture while also examining how these spaces influenced patterns of mobility, urbanisation and social interaction. Questions of gender, patronage and access further demonstrated that water infrastructure is closely connected with social organisation and inclusion. By bringing together architectural history, hydrology, cultural practices and urban development, the session encouraged students to consider historical water systems as important examples of how built environments can respond to ecological needs while simultaneously serving social, cultural and community functions.

Restoration plan for Asawarpur Pond Rejuvenation



**The Social Life of Water**

**Teaching**

Associate Professor and Head of the Department of Environmental Studies, Mitul Baruah, taught 'The Social Life of Water', examining water through cultural, political and ecological perspectives, with a particular focus on South Asia. The course explored how water shapes and is shaped by social relations, cultural practices and structures of power, including the ways in which access to and control over water are distributed across societies. Students examined water governance, hydraulic infrastructure, water grabbing, privatisation and conflicts over water, alongside the recognition of access to safe drinking water and sanitation as a human right. The course also incorporated field visits within Delhi-NCR to enable students to engage directly with questions of urban water, sanitation and water justice. By combining interdisciplinary scholarship with field-based learning, the course provided students with a detailed understanding of the social and political dimensions of water access, governance and justice.

**Monsoon Dynamics and Climate Change**

**Teaching**

Guided by Visiting Professor Parthasarathi Mukhopadhyay, Monsoon Dynamics and Climate Change develops a scientific understanding of the Earth's climate system, with a particular focus on atmospheric and oceanic processes, monsoon dynamics and the drivers of current and future climate change. The course examines the physical mechanisms governing climate, including atmospheric water, severe storms, global warming and the Earth's energy budget. These scientific processes are connected to human livelihoods, particularly through the importance of monsoon systems for agriculture, water resources and the Indian economy. Students develop an understanding of the climate system and the scientific basis underlying observed variability and long-term change, rather than viewing climate events as isolated or arbitrary phenomena. By building foundational knowledge of climate processes and feedback mechanisms, the course prepares students to better understand climate risks and engage with future projects, research and professional opportunities related to climate change and environmental management.








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

Reliable and sustainable energy is fundamental to the functioning of a university as large as Ashoka. At Ashoka University, we recognise that our responsibility extends beyond ensuring uninterrupted electricity supply - given that we mantain we are equally committed to improving energy efficiency, integrating renewable energy, and strengthening systems that enable responsible energy management. Through a combination of infrastructure improvements, renewable energy procurement, monitoring mechanisms, smart thinking and operational best practices, we strive to build a campus that supports long-term sustainability while meeting the evolving needs of our community.

**1. Clean Energy Infrastructure and Renewable Integration**

**Campus**

At Ashoka University, we have made significant strides in advancing clean energy adoption through the installation of solar power infrastructure across campus. The campus features a substantially large 893 kWp system implemented through strategic power purchase agreements with leading clean energy providers, namely Amplus and Cleantech.

Further, we are also exploring how to efficiently scale our energy portfolio to include alternatively carbon positive sources of energy that do not only reduce dependence on carbon-intensive resources, but also build on resource consciousness. Keeping this in mind, our solar installations don't require battery storage, enabling solar energy generated during the day to be consumed directly across the campus. By eliminating the need for batteries, the system avoids the environmental impacts associated with battery manufacturing, replacement and end-of-life disposal, while reducing material consumption and electronic waste.

**2. Improving Energy Efficiency Across Campus**

**Campus**

Alongside renewable energy integration, we continue to enhance energy efficiency across academic, residential, administrative, and recreational facilities. Electricity is distributed through a dedicated campus electrical network supported by high- and low-tension distribution systems that enable reliable power supply across our campus infrastructure. We operate with a 4 MW sanctioned load and maintain a power factor of approximately 0.99 to minimize transmission losses and improve power efficiency and quality. Further, we utilise LED lighting fixtures throughout campus operations across the campus to improve energy efficiency by delivering better illumination while lowering electricity consumption.

We maintain a reliable backup system to ensure uninterrupted campus operations during grid outages through five diesel generator (DG) sets, comprising four 750 kVA units and one 500 kVA unit. These generators provide backup power to academic, residential, and operational facilities, while their operation is restricted to emergency situations to minimise fossil fuel consumption and associated emissions. In line with the applicable regulatory requirements for the National Capital Region (NCR), all DG sets are equipped with Retrofitted Emission Control Devices (RECDs) installed to comply with the latest applicable CPCB-IV+ emission norms.

Routine monitoring of electricity consumption enables our operational teams to identify consumption trends, as presented under pointer 6 of the campus operations section of SDG 7 – 'Energy Consumption Profile at Ashoka University'. These insights support improved system performance, timely preventive maintenance, and more efficient energy management across campus operations.

Energy-efficient equipment and operational practices are incorporated within campus to optimise electricity use while maintaining comfort and reliability.

Further, we have adopted intelligent load management practices to enhance energy use during power interruptions. We sequence DG set operation based on actual campus demand and operate only the required backup capacity, thereby reducing diesel consumption, improving energy efficiency, and ensuring reliable power for critical campus operations. In parallel, we optimise electricity demand through occupancy-based energy management, with air conditioning in academic buildings primarily operated during teaching hours and in residential facilities during the night when hostels are fully occupied. Air conditioning systems in academic buildings are also switched off during weekends when regular classes are not in session, preventing unnecessary energy consumption and further improving operational efficiency.

**3. Optimising Cooling Efficiency through Smart Air Conditioning Practices**

**Campus**

We maintain centrally controlled indoor spaces at 26 ± 1°C during summer with fans and 18 ± 1°C during winter to provide a comfortable environment while using energy efficiently. These temperature settings are based on how people naturally feel comfortable in different seasons, considering factors such as air temperature, humidity, and airflow.

Keeping air-conditioned spaces at these temperatures in summer and winter reduces the amount of energy needed to cool or heat buildings without compromising comfort. This helps lower electricity consumption, reduce operating costs, and minimise the University's carbon footprint, supporting more sustainable and responsible energy use across the campus.

**4. Embedding Green Building Principles and Climate-Responsive Campus Design at Ashoka**

**Campus**

We integrate energy efficiency and sustainability considerations into the planning, design and development of our campus infrastructure, guided by recognised green-building principles including LEED and IGBC guidelines. Given the local climate, our campus design incorporates passive strategies that reduce energy demand while maintaining thermal comfort during hot weather.

Features such as outdoor corridors and jaali screens enhance natural ventilation, daylight and airflow while reducing reliance on artificial cooling and lighting. The campus also uses double-wall construction with brick cladding and AAC blocks, which limits heat transfer and improves the thermal performance of buildings.

These climate-responsive design features work alongside energy-efficient systems and renewable energy solutions to reduce the University's overall energy consumption. By considering sustainability from the design stage, we create buildings that are more responsive to their surroundings, require less energy to operate and support more sustainable campus operations.



**5. Promoting Sustainable Mobility through Shared Transportation and Cleaner Fuels**

**Campus**

The way we travel has a significant influence on both local air quality and our emissions. To promote cleaner mobility, we operate a fleet of CNG-powered shuttles and buses connecting the University with key transit and residential locations.

Further, these shuttles and buses provide a reliable shared transport network encouraging the use of public mobility over individual vehicles within our student and staff networks, helping reduce traffic congestion in Sonepat, fuel consumption and emissions associated with daily commuting.

By making the use of shared vehicles for several thousands a part of our core operations, we optimise transport efficiency while lowering our overall environmental footprint. Together, these initiatives contribute to cleaner air, reduced carbon emissions, and a healthier environment for our campus community and neighbouring areas.

**Understanding Sonipat's Climate**

Located in the semi-arid region of Sonipat, Haryana, Ashoka University experiences a climate characterised by prolonged hot summers, high solar exposure, dry conditions, and seasonal dust storms. During summer, the temperatures frequently exceed 40°C, while the pre-monsoon months of April to June are marked by hot, dusty winds and recurring dust storms that increase student and staff discomfort. The southwest monsoon provides seasonal relief between July and September, followed by cool winters with occasional fog. These climatic conditions present unique challenges for maintaining comfort while ensuring efficient energy use, reinforcing the importance of designing and operating campus infrastructure that is responsive to the local environment and resilient to seasonal weather variations.

## 6. Energy Consumption Profile at Ashoka University Campus

Effective energy management begins with reliable data. At Ashoka, we have established systems to monitor electricity consumption across campus, enabling informed decision-making and continuous improvement in energy performance. Regular monitoring of grid electricity, renewable energy utilisation and equipment performance allows us to better understand operational energy demand and identify opportunities for efficiency improvements.

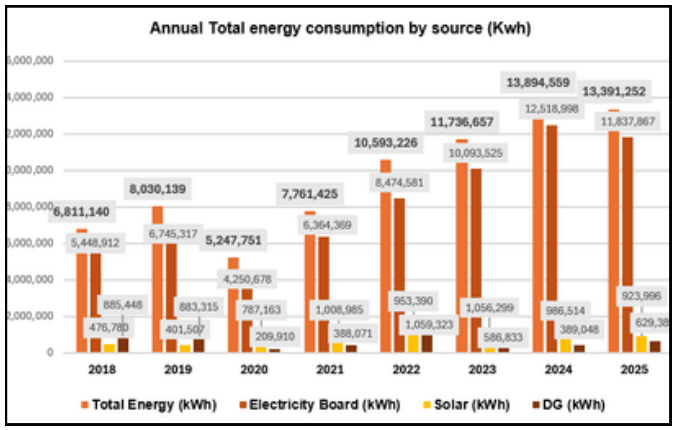
These monitoring practices also support sustainability reporting, greenhouse gas accounting, and long-term energy planning. By integrating energy monitoring into day-to-day operations, At Ashoka University, we strive to strengthen evidence-based decision-making while improving accountability in resource management.

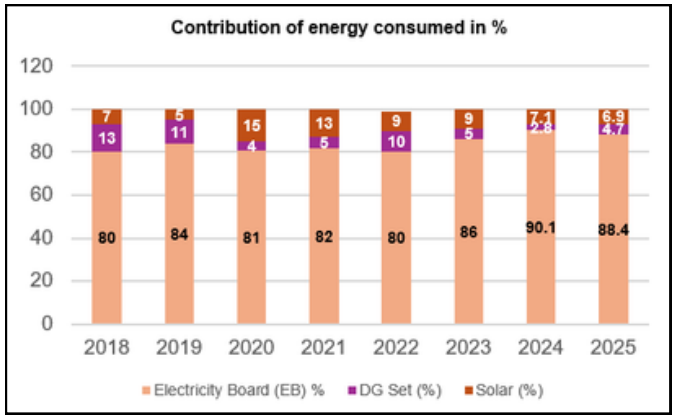
## 7. Supporting Climate Action Through Energy Management

### Campus

Energy consumption remains one of our most significant environmental aspects and contributes substantially to our greenhouse gas emissions profile. Recognising this, we adopted the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol for measuring emissions associated with our campus operations, including electricity consumption and backup power generation. Adopting the GHG Protocol enables us to calculate and report our greenhouse gas emissions using a globally recognised methodology, ensuring consistency, transparency, and comparability while supporting decision-making; in the future it will also enable us to develop an effective climate action strategy.

During CY 2025, approximately 924,000 kWh of electricity was sourced from solar energy, contributing 6.9 per cent of our total electricity consumption. At Ashoka, we continue to integrate renewable energy into campus operations while monitoring the share of grid, solar, and diesel-based electricity to support informed energy management and long-term decarbonisation efforts.




**2025 DG share**
**4.7%**
Share of electricity from DG sets in 2025

**2025 Renewable share**
**6.9%**
Share of total electricity from solar in 2025

**2025 Renewable electricity**
**923,996 kWh**
Solar electricity consumed/procured in 2025



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

*'The true measure of an energy transition is not just how quickly we decarbonise, but how many people we bring with us. Achieving SDG 7 means building an energy system that is clean, affordable, reliable and fundamentally people-centric.'*

**Calculation Methodology**
The annual electricity consumption from **DG sets** presented in this bar graph has been **derived** using **total annual electricity consumption (kWh)** and the corresponding annual percentage share of electricity sourced from the **Electricity Board (EB), Solar, and Diesel Generator (DG) sets**, as disclosed in our CY 24-25 Sustainability Report.

### 8. Reducing Energy Consumption through IGBC-Certified Infrastructure

**Campus**

AC04, also known as Ashoka's library building, is an IGBC-certified academic building, reflecting our commitment to reducing energy consumption through sustainable building design. The building incorporates passive architectural features, including natural daylighting, climate-responsive design, and energy-efficient systems that minimise cooling and lighting requirements while enhancing comfort. By reducing energy demand without compromising the learning environment, the building contributes to improved energy efficiency and supports our transition towards a more sustainable and low-carbon campus.

### 9. Bringing Clean Energy to the Community

**Campus**

At Ashoka, we also installed 10 solar-powered lights in Asawarpur, extending access to clean-energy infrastructure beyond the campus. The initiative improved lighting and visibility within the community, supporting safer movement and access to shared spaces after dark. Powered by solar energy, the lights reduced reliance on conventional electricity while demonstrating the practical application of renewable energy at the community level. The installation also helped promote awareness of clean-energy solutions and strengthened engagement with the neighbouring community, supporting broader efforts towards inclusive and sustainable development.

### ACPET–Rajasthan Energy Department Research Collaboration

**Partnership**

During the reporting period, ACPET (Ashoka Centre for a People-centric Energy Transition) entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Energy Department, Government of Rajasthan, to advance consumer-centric research and evidence-based solutions for the state's power sector. Led by Dr Gaurav Bhatiani, Senior Fellow, ACPET, the collaboration focused on key areas including time-of-day tariffs, demand flexibility and energy-saving interventions (SIPs). The partnership aimed to generate robust, context-specific evidence on electricity consumption and translate research findings into practical, field-ready solutions that could improve the experience and efficiency of electricity consumers in Rajasthan. The MoU also strengthened collaboration between academic and government stakeholders, creating a platform for research to directly inform energy-sector planning and implementation. Through this engagement, ACPET contributed to advancing a reliable, efficient and consumer-oriented electricity system, while supporting evidence-based approaches to energy management and demand-side transition.



आजीविका के अवसरों को बढ़ावा देने के लिए राजहरा महिला किसानों को मिला ग्रीन एंटरप्राइज विकास का प्रशिक्षण

उत्कल मेल संवाददाता

**राजहरा (पलामू):** कोयला खनन प्रभावित क्षेत्रों में पर्यावरण अनुकूल आजीविका के अवसरों को बढ़ावा देने और हरित उद्यम की अवधारणा को विकसित करने के उद्देश्य से राजहरा पंचायत सचिवालय में एक दिवसीय प्रशिक्षण कार्यक्रम का सफल आयोजन किया गया। यह प्रशिक्षण राजहरा कोल माइन्स रिहैबिलिटेटेड फार्मर प्रोड्यूसर कंपनी लिमिटेड के तत्वावधान में आयोजित किया गया था।

**स्वच्छ ऊर्जा और स्वास्थ्य पर शोध:** प्रशिक्षण कार्यक्रम का शुभारंभ अशोका सेंटर फॉर ए पीपल सेंट्रिक एनर्जी ट्रांजिशन, नई दिल्ली के निदेशक श्री वैभव चौधरी के संबोधन से हुआ। उन्होंने सोलर लिफ्ट सिंचाई प्रणाली और स्वच्छ ऊर्जा के महत्व पर प्रकाश डालते हुए बताया कि संस्था कोयला खनन क्षेत्रों में आजीविका और जीवन स्तर पर निरंतर शोध कर रही है।

**वैभव चौधरी, निदेशक (ACPET, नई दिल्ली) :** दो साल पूर्व गठित किसान उत्पादक संगठन और स्थापित सोलर लिफ्ट सिंचाई प्रणाली के धरातलीय प्रभावों का आकलन किया जा रहा है। अब इस शोध में खनन क्षेत्रों के निवासियों के स्वास्थ्य मापदंडों का अध्ययन भी शामिल किया जा रहा है। यदि यह मॉडल सफल रहता है, तो देश के अन्य खनन क्षेत्रों के लिए भी एक प्रेरक उदाहरण बनेगा।

**हरित उद्यम से आय और पर्यावरण संरक्षण:** रांची से आए विषय विशेषज्ञ डॉ. शकील उर रहमान ने किसानों को 'ग्रीन एंटरप्राइज' के तकनीकी व व्यावहारिक पहलुओं की जानकारी दी। उन्होंने बताया कि हरित उद्यम व्यवसाय का एक ऐसा प्रारूप है जिससे पर्यावरण को नुकसान पहुँचाए बिना प्राकृतिक संसाधनों का संरक्षण होता है, ऊर्जा और पानी की बचत होती है और स्थानीय स्तर पर रोजगार व आय में वृद्धि होती है।

उन्होंने हरित आजीविका के अंतर्गत निम्नलिखित मॉडलों का सुझाव दिया: जैविक खेती एवं वर्मी कंपोस्ट निर्माण, मशरूम उत्पादन तकनीक, मल्टी-लेयर आजीविका (हॉर्टिकल्चर) मॉडल, सोलर आधारित कृषि व व्यावसायिक सेवाएँ, , जैविक खाद एवं प्राकृतिक कीटनाशक निर्माण।

**मशरूम खेती का मिला व्यावहारिक प्रशिक्षण :** डाल्टनगंज से आईं मशरूम विशेषज्ञ श्रीमती सुषमा देवी ने मशरूम को एक बेहतर हरित उद्यम बताते हुए इसके व्यावसायिक उत्पादन की विस्तृत प्रक्रिया और आवश्यक सामग्रियों की जानकारी दी। इसके साथ ही, स्थानीय रिसोर्स पर्सन लालमुनी देवी ने उपस्थित महिला किसानों के समक्ष मशरूम उत्पादन का व्यावहारिक प्रदर्शन (डेमो) करके दिखाया।

**40 महिला किसानों की रही सक्रिय भागीदारी:** इस प्रशिक्षण में राजहरा एफपीओ से जुड़ी सरिता देवी, सीमा देवी, श्वेता देवी, गुड़िया देवी, विमला देवी, कंचन कुमारी सहित कुल 40 महिला किसानों ने भाग लिया।

कार्यक्रम के सफल संचालन और प्रबंधन में एफपीओ के सीईओ श्री बीरेंद्र कुमार, निदेशक मनिता कुमारी तथा सामाजिक कार्यकर्ता श्री जयाहर मेहता एवं श्री अनिल पासवान ने मुख्य भूमिका निभाई।



**Designing Better Renewable Energy Auctions for India's Clean Energy Transition**

**Research Seminar**

Professor Anshuman Bharti presented the seminar 'Contract Design in Renewable Energy Auctions: Evidence from India', examining how auction contract design influences investment decisions and the successful deployment of renewable energy projects. The research explores the challenges created by future uncertainty, where incomplete contracts can discourage developers from investing in solar energy projects despite winning procurement auctions.

Drawing on auction and post-award deployment data from India's solar energy procurement programmes, the study estimates how developers respond to different contractual incentives under varying levels of risk. The findings show that conventional contract structures often lead developers to delay or forgo project implementation when faced with high-cost scenarios, reducing the effectiveness of renewable energy procurement. The research demonstrates that carefully designed incentive-based contracts—incorporating selective bid indexation and well-calibrated penalty mechanisms—can significantly improve project deployment, with simulations indicating the potential to increase deployment rates by nearly 80% while requiring only a modest increase in procurement tariffs.

The seminar highlighted how evidence-based improvements in contract design can strengthen renewable energy markets, improve investor confidence, and accelerate India's transition towards a more reliable, affordable, and sustainable energy system.

**Advancing Sustainable Hydrogen Production through Computational Catalysis**

**Research**

Dr Amrita and Professor Sourav Pal also collaborated with Dr. Mudit Dixit to investigate the potential of high-valent iron (Fe-III) pincer-type transition metal complexes for the dehydrogenation of ammonia-borane, a promising hydrogen storage material. Using density functional theory (DFT), the study demonstrated that iron-based catalysts can enable hydrogen release at room temperature while reducing energy requirements and improving catalytic efficiency. The findings provide valuable insights into the design of cost-effective catalysts for hydrogen production and storage, supporting the development of cleaner and more sustainable energy technologies. Published in Chemistry – An Asian Journal, the research advances computational catalysis for a future hydrogen-based energy economy.

**Exploring the Impact of Electrification on Agriculture and Women's Time Use**

**Research**

Professor Digvijay Singh Negi, Assistant Professor of Economics, collaborated with economists Dr Tanu Gupta and Dr Md. Tajuddin Khan to investigate how rural electrification influences agricultural livelihoods and household dynamics through the working paper Agriculture, Electrification and Gendered Time Use in Rural Bangladesh. The study examines how improved access to electricity affects agricultural productivity while also changing the way men and women allocate their time between paid work, household responsibilities, and caregiving. The findings highlight the broader social and economic benefits of rural electrification, demonstrating its potential to improve productivity while reducing gender disparities in unpaid work.



**Professor Sourav Pal**
**Department of Chemistry**

*"My research group and the Department of Chemistry is working on SDG-7 'Affordable and Clean Energy.' One of the biggest challenges we face towards achieving sustainability is to fulfil the objectives of SDG 7 and its objectives.*

*Energy is of vital interest and fuels all our activities; however, conventional sources of energy produce polluting gases, like Carbon dioxide which is crucial to mitigate.*

*We are actively working on ways to capture $CO_2$ and utilize it to make value-added chemicals. At the same, it is realised that hydrogen is a clean source of energy. Hence, much of our work is directed to produce hydrogen from water in an environment-friendly manner and from other active sources of hydrogen, like ammonia-borane.*

*While working towards these, we realised that one needs alternative procedures to produce ammonia, a critical chemical for the life of the universe, which will save energy. This is a global challenge and our efforts are work in progress."*

### Advancing Carbon Capture and Clean Hydrogen Technologies

**Research**

Professor Vidya Avasare from the Department of Chemistry is leading research to develop sustainable technologies that address two critical challenges in the clean energy transition - reducing carbon emissions and producing low-emission fuels. The research focuses on innovative carbon capture and utilisation (CCU) strategies, alongside the conversion of captured carbon dioxide into methanol and the production of clean hydrogen from methanol using efficient transition metal catalysts. By developing scalable catalytic systems, the work seeks to reduce industrial carbon footprints while enabling cleaner chemical processes and reliable energy storage solutions.

Supporting this research programme are several publications exploring catalytic carbon dioxide reduction, hydrogen production, advanced catalytic materials, and photo-harvesting systems for sustainable energy applications. The findings contribute to improving catalyst performance, increasing energy efficiency, and advancing technologies that can support industrial decarbonisation.

Professor Avasare's work has also gained international recognition through an invited presentation at the 30th American Chemical Society Green Chemistry and Engineering Conference (2026), highlighting the global relevance of the group's contributions to sustainable chemistry and clean energy research.

### Developing Sustainable Catalysts for Green Hydrogen and Clean Energy

**Research**

Professor Munmun Ghosh is advancing research on sustainable hydrogen generation through innovative electrocatalytic and photocatalytic systems designed to improve efficiency while maintaining high atom economy. The research programme focuses on developing earth-abundant metal catalysts, particularly iron- and cobalt-based systems, to enable cleaner hydrogen production and reduce dependence on expensive precious metals. Through a series of published studies, the group has investigated proton transfer mechanisms, molecular electrocatalysts, and catalyst design strategies, particularly those which enhance hydrogen evolution under environmentally sustainable conditions.

Building on this work, the research group is also developing next-generation photocatalysts for the solar-driven production of hydrogen peroxide ($H_2O_2$), an emerging clean energy carrier that offers a promising alternative to molecular hydrogen by overcoming many of the challenges associated with hydrogen storage, transportation, and handling. The ongoing project explores self-assembled photocatalytic materials capable of efficiently generating hydrogen peroxide using solar energy, contributing to the development of safer, more practical, and sustainable energy technologies for the future.

### Enabling People-Centric Energy Transition through Circular Economy: Evidence from Rajhara, India

**Research**

Animesh Ghosh, Research Fellow at the Ashoka Centre for a People-centric Energy Transition (ACPET), and Vaibhav Chowdhary, Director-in-charge of ACPET, examine how discontinued coal-mining regions can pursue a people-centric energy transition through circular-economy approaches in Rajhara, Jharkhand. Also under SDG 12, this study combines household and farmer surveys with key-informant interviews and focus-group discussions to assess the feasibility of repurposing post-mining assets for sustainable livelihoods. Particular attention is given to a Solar Lift Irrigation intervention, a Farmer Producer Organisation and complementary clean-cooking diagnostics. The research demonstrates how renewable-energy infrastructure can be integrated with livelihood regeneration, with early evidence indicating improved water access, increased agricultural aspirations and potential income gains for participating farmers. The study also highlights the importance of local institutions, including Water User Groups and Farmer Producer Organisations, in ensuring that clean-energy interventions remain operational, affordable and locally accountable. By linking solar energy, circular economy principles, livelihood resilience and a just transition away from coal, the research demonstrates how energy transitions can be designed around communities rather than solely around technological decarbonisation.

### Recent Developments in Amyloid-Based Electronic Materials: From Molecular Engineering to Biotechnology

**Research**

Viraj Singhal and Santu Bera, Faculty Fellow and Ramanujan Fellow of Chemistry at Ashoka, review recent developments in amyloid-based functional materials and their potential applications in energy-related and electronic technologies. The research examines how the highly ordered self-assembly and electrical properties of proteins and peptides can be harnessed to develop advanced biomimetic materials for applications including energy storage and conversion, bioelectricity, piezoelectric nanogenerators, electrodes, sensors and semiconductors. Particular attention is given to the ability of amyloid structures to provide controlled molecular architectures, tunable functionality, mechanical strength and stability, making them promising building blocks for emerging electronic and energy technologies. The review also identifies current engineering challenges and research directions required to translate these properties into practical devices. The authors highlight the potential of these materials for renewable-energy-related applications and energy harvesting.

The paper was published in ChemNanoMat in March 2026, with both authors affiliated with Ashoka University's Department of Chemistry.

### Ashoka–Environmental Defense Fund: Climate Workforce Summit

**Partnerships**

In November, a collaboration between Ashoka and the Environmental Defense Fund brought together around 150 participants from business, policy, academia and the Climate Corps network at the Workforce Summit in Mumbai. The gathering marked five years of the Climate Corps Fellowship and focused on developing the skilled workforce required to deliver the country's climate and energy transition. Sustainability leaders, policymakers, entrepreneurs and fellows discussed the skills, career pathways and institutional capabilities needed to translate climate ambition into implementation. By connecting higher education with employers and practitioners working across climate and sustainability, the initiative strengthened opportunities for knowledge exchange, professional development and capacity-building for India's emerging green economy.



**Dr Santu Bera**
**Department of Chemistry**

*Electron transfer (ET) in biological systems is a fundamental process that drives essential energy-conversion pathways, including respiration, photosynthesis, and metabolic reactions. Inspired by these natural processes, researchers are increasingly exploring biomolecule-based electronic materials that combine desirable electrical properties with key advantages such as biocompatibility, biodegradability, renewability, and environmental sustainability. These bio-inspired materials offer significant potential for diverse applications, including tissue engineering, wound healing, antibacterial therapy, anti-tumor treatment, biosensing, and green energy harvesting. However, their practical implementation is often constrained by limited stability under harsh environmental conditions, particularly elevated temperatures and low-moisture environments. The self-assembly of biomolecules into amyloid fibrillar structures provides a promising strategy to overcome these limitations owing to their high aggregation propensity, distinctive structural features, large surface-to-volume ratios, extensive hydrogen-bonding networks, and exceptional stability. Amyloid fibrils exhibit remarkable resistance to high temperatures, low moisture, extreme pH conditions, and proteolytic degradation. Consequently, amyloids have emerged as robust and versatile templates for developing electronic materials with promising applications in biotechnology, medicine, and sustainable bioelectronics.*

**Celebrating Our Entrepreneurs: Quintinno Labs Advances Clean Energy Innovation with QUINT**

**Partnerships**

Quintinno Labs, founded by Divasjyoti Parashar and incubated at the InfoEdge Centre for Entrepreneurship, received the INR 15 lakh Assam Startup Scale-Up Grant from the Government of Assam. During the reporting period, the venture also showcased its technology at the Advantage Assam 2.0 Summit 2025 and was recognised in the Mobility Track at the Startup Maharathi Challenge 2025 during Startup Mahakumbh 2.0. Building on its focus on sustainable energy innovation, Quintinno Labs developed QUINT, a compact, solar-compatible portable power station designed as a cleaner alternative to conventional diesel generators and emergency power systems. The product advances the accessibility of reliable, portable and lower-emission energy solutions, demonstrating how entrepreneurship and innovation can contribute to the transition towards cleaner energy technologies.

**Energy Transition: People, Politics, and Sustainability**

**Teaching**

Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies Sumedha Basu taught Energy Transition: People, Politics, and Sustainability, examining the transformation of energy systems through social, political and environmental perspectives. The course considers energy transition not simply as a technological shift but as a process shaped by questions of politics, sustainability, institutions and social interests. Students engage with the challenges involved in moving away from conventional energy systems while considering how transitions affect different communities and development priorities. The course provides a framework for understanding the policy and governance dimensions of energy transformation and the competing interests that influence how energy systems evolve. Its emphasis on people-centred approaches places questions of equity and sustainability alongside technological change, allowing students to critically assess the opportunities and challenges associated with the transition towards cleaner energy systems. This makes it a strong teaching contribution to understanding the social and policy dimensions of sustainable energy transitions.



**Vidya Avasare**
**Professor, Department of Chemistry**

*'True energy sustainability means transforming today's carbon problem into tomorrow's resource. Our work on $CO_2$ capture, conversion to methanol, and subsequent methanol-to-hydrogen conversion demonstrates a circular carbon economy in action. These are the key emerging pathways driving the transition to a low-emission, sustainable energy future , reflecting Ashoka's core vision and commitment to the SDGs.'*

**Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration on India's Energy Transition**

**Partnerships**

During September 2025, ACPET convened a consultative workshop on India's delayed thermal coal phase-down and the Net Zero 2070 trajectory, bringing together policymakers, researchers, economists and energy-sector institutions. Participants included representatives from TERI, NTPC, Coal India Limited, Prayas Energy Group, IRADe, WRI India, JNU, the Central Electricity Authority, FSR Global, HSBC, Chintan Research Foundation, CMPDI and TrustBridge Rule of Law Foundation. Discussions examined the balance between renewable-energy expansion, energy security, grid stability and the socio-economic implications of reducing coal dependence. Particular emphasis was placed on a people-centric transition that safeguards coal-dependent communities and livelihoods. The engagement demonstrated cross-sector collaboration to develop evidence-based approaches to India's long-term transition towards a cleaner and more secure energy system.

**SCALEHI: Strategic Climate Action and Local Evidence for a Healthy India**

**Partnerships**

At Ashoka, the Ashoka Centre for a People-centric Energy Transition (ACPET) entered into a collaboration, 'the Strategic Climate Action and Local Evidence for a Healthy India' or SCALEHI project launched in March 2026, to advance research on climate action that placed health, equity and local socio-economic outcomes alongside emissions reduction. The project brought together ACPET's interdisciplinary expertise with partners including the Wellcome Trust, C40 Cities and Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, while engaging with NITI Aayog and local stakeholders to translate evidence into actionable climate strategies. SCALEHI assessed the long-term health implications of India's climate mitigation pathways, supported the development of city-level climate action plans for Delhi and Chennai, and examined financial incentives for cleaner cooking in coal-affected communities such as Rajhara, Jharkhand. By combining AI/ML, agent-based modelling and field-based evidence, the project sought to generate practical tools and recommendations that enable policymakers and communities to pursue climate solutions delivering measurable benefits for public health, livelihoods and equity.

**Macroeconomic Impacts of Coal to Renewable Energy Transition**

**Partnerships**

Through ACPET, a macroeconomic energy modelling project examined the economic, social and energy-system implications of India's transition from coal towards renewable energy. The research assessed how coal phase-down and renewable energy expansion could influence electricity supply, economic activity, livelihoods, employment and fiscal revenues as India progresses towards its Net Zero by 2070 and Viksit Bharat goals. Working with a broad consortium of government institutions, energy-sector organisations, research bodies and think tanks - including the Ministry of Coal, Coal India Limited, Central Electricity Authority (CEA), TERI, WRI, CEEW, Chintan Research Foundation and JNU - the project modelled long-term thermal coal demand, electricity capacity requirements and alternative generation from a 2047 baseline. Through working papers, op-eds and a consultative workshop involving government, utilities and research organisations, the project highlighted the importance of jobs, regional economic impacts, energy security and grid stability in planning India's coal transition, advocating for people-centred strategies that balance climate objectives with inclusive economic development.

**COMPASS: Coal Mine Methane Policy Action and Scientific Support**

**Partnerships**

Through the Coal Mine Methane Policy Action and Scientific Support (COMPASS) project, ACPET collaborated on advanced research and policy support on methane emissions associated with India's expanding coal sector. The project examined fugitive methane emissions across coal exploration, production and handling activities, with projections indicating a substantial increase as coal production and underground mining expand. Working with partners including the Global Methane Hub, NITI Aayog, Coal India Limited, NTPC Ltd. Ministry of Coal, IIT (ISM) Dhanbad, Directorate General of Mines Safety and Central Pollution Control Board, alongside other coal-sector stakeholders, COMPASS combined systematic reviews, bibliometric analysis, Q-methodology, surveys, stakeholder consultations and field-based methane measurements. The research sought to strengthen emissions estimates and reporting, assess the technical and economic feasibility of methane capture and utilisation, and identify gaps in current measurement approaches. Its findings aimed to support people-centred policy recommendations and practical roadmaps for integrating mine-methane mitigation into national energy planning while improving energy security through the productive use of captured methane.



NATION 04

Ashoka University hosts meet on Coal phase-down by 2047

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

The Ashoka Centre for a People-Centric Energy Transition (ACPET) , Ashoka University, held a high-level consultation workshop titled "Viksit Bharat @2047 and Net Zero @2070 Trajectory — Delayed Thermal Coal Phase Down in India" to estimate thermal coal demand in India up to 2047 while sustaining rapid economic growth, ensuring energy security, and accelerating the shift towards renewable energy sources.

The workshop opened with a special address from Dr. Anil Kumar Jain, Chairman, PNGRB, who affirmed that with the continued and increased use of coal in power generation even in 2047, it was imperative for this collective knowledgedissemination through this workshop to guide national energy policies. To meet the challenges this throws up requires collaboration. In the first session, researchers shared insights from ACPET's modelling work on future coal demand scenarios, electricity requirements, and renewable energy expansion to facilitate dialogue on the timeline for a meaningful coal phase-down.

Researchers from ACPET's Energy Futures Lab presented estimates on whether renewable capacity can and Net Zero 2070.

Using a regression-based approach, ACPET examined installed capacity of coal and renewables required to meet these goals through a sectoral assessment of electricity demand.

The analysis views how growth of clean energy sources in electricity generation mix will impact demand for thermal coal in its Viksit Bharat growth path.

The findings challenge the perception that an increase in RE supply will lead to a decline in coal use.

The findings show that thermal coal demand will range from 1,228 million tonnes, with 60 per cent RES in the generation mix and manufacturing contributing 27 per cent to GDP, to a high of 3,682 MT in a 15 per cent RES scenario and manufacturing as 34.5 per cent of GDP.

The discussions also make the case for restructuring the just transition to push for cleaner coal usage through sequestration and carbon capture, more efficient coal usage and stricter emissions norms, and considerations for energy security. The discussions also make the case for restructuring the just transition to push for cleaner coal usage through sequestration and carbon capture, more efficient coal usage and stricter emissions norms, and con-





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

**Total students on scholarship as per Academic Year**

| AY | Students Supported | % on Scholarship | Estimated Workforce Impact* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2021–22 | 484 | 50.20% | High |
| 2022–23 | 460 | 55.20% | High |
| 2023–24 | 409 | 44.40% | Moderate–High |
| 2024–25 | 440 | 44.70% | Moderate–High |
| 2025–26* | 416 | 43.70% | Moderate–High |

Also highlighted under SDG 4: Quality Education, we contribute to inclusive economic growth by expanding access to higher education for students who may otherwise face financial barriers. Through scholarships supporting over 400 students annually, we enable talented individuals to acquire the knowledge, skills, and competencies required to participate in the workforce. By strengthening employability and creating pathways to meaningful careers, we help foster a more skilled, inclusive, and productive workforce that contributes to sustainable economic development.

| Condition | Interpretation |
|---|---|
| **>50% coverage** | **High impact** – large number of individuals enabled into future workforce |
| **40–49% coverage** | **Moderate–High impact** – strong but slightly lower scale |
| **20-39% coverage** | **Low impact** – Lower scale |

***Note****: *Estimated workforce impact is a proxy indicator we have utilised based on the number and proportion of students enabled to access higher education through need-based and merit-based scholarships, reflecting potential contribution to future employability and economic participation.*

*The table showcases the scholarship data for undergraduate programmes, including YIF and master's.*

## Placement *Outcomes*

**100%*** Placement rate

**450+** Offers received

**42.5 LPA** Highest salary

**27.1 LPA** Average salary Top 10%

**27.6 LPA** Median salary Top 10%

**22.5 LPA** Average salary Top 20%

**22 LPA** Median salary Top 20%

**163** Recruiting organisations

**48%** First-time recruiters

**650+** Internship offers

**1.5 LPM** Highest internship stipend



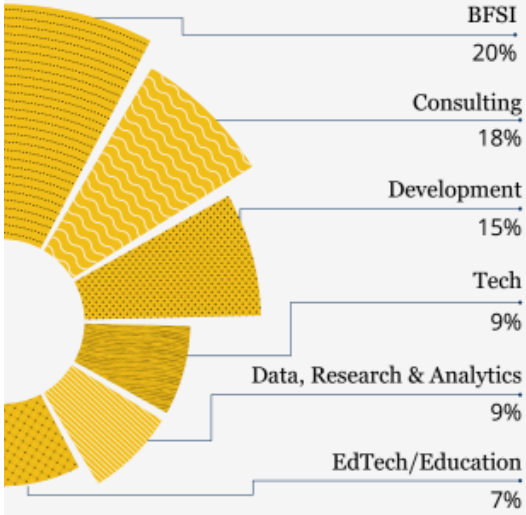
**Priyanka Chandhok**
**Vice President – Career Advancement**

'At Ashoka, career readiness means more than getting the first job. It is about helping students find purpose and create impact in an AI-driven world. Employers increasingly value graduates who can solve problems, think critically, and work effectively with AI. To build this readiness, students receive one-on-one personalised guidance, role- and sector-specific preparation, mock interviews, and a checklist of questions to ask themselves before pursuing a master's degree. Our job is not just to make them sought after by employers, but to shape leaders who can thrive across any career with confidence and maturity.'

## Our performance during the year (Academic Year 2025-2026)

### Industry-wise Breakup

**~80%** of placements were concentrated across these six sectors




**20%** placements in other sectors that include

**FMCG/E-commerce & Retail**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ITC | Uniqlo | Flipkart | Licious |

**Pharma & Healthcare**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| GSK | Indegene | OneSource | Trinity Life Sciences |

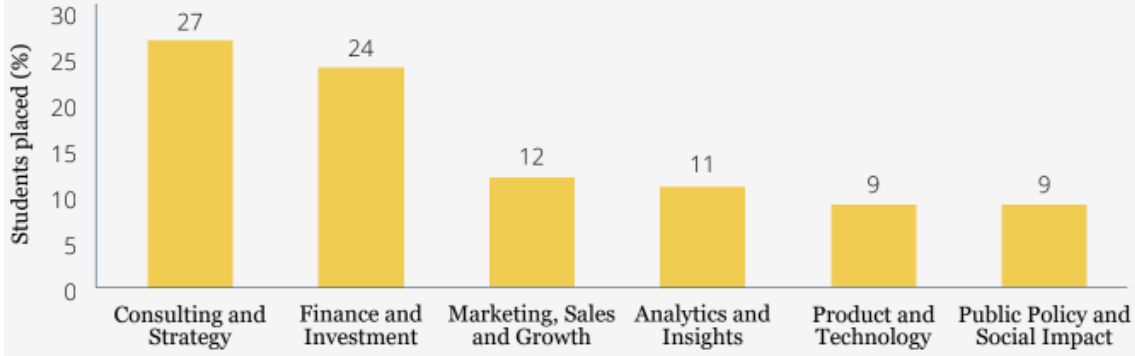
**Professional Services**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ABC Consultants | Egon Zehnder | Spencer Stuart | Positive Moves Consulting |

**Media, Advertising & PR**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Publicis Groupe | Leo Burnett | FCB group | Ogilvy |

### Function-wise Breakup




*Others include functions such as Teaching & Design, Content/Media/Comms, and Operations/Programme/People.*

### Top Recruiters

McKinsey & Company · BCG · EY · KEARNEY · Dalberg
accenture · Deloitte. · pwc · AM · Samagra
Avendus · GS · World Bank Group · D E Shaw & Co · Whitedak
Oxane Partners · citibank · HSBC · Axis Bank · Barclays
Microsoft · zomato · Swiggy · amuselabs · stripe
Kotak · ITC · Flipkart · GSK · Dr. Reddy's

## Class of 2026

**11** Countries

**29** States & Union Territories

**58** Percentage of women

### Interdisciplinary by design

Nearly **half** of Economics majors pursue Entrepreneurship as a minor or concentration.

Nearly **one-third** of Biology majors pursue Psychology.

More than **one in four** Computer Science majors combine their studies with Economics.

More than **one in ten** English majors complement their studies with Entrepreneurship.

Average CTC
Median CTC
Highest CTC

*CTC figures are indicative of top 80% placements*

**1. Skill Development and Employment Pathways through ITI Training**

**Campus**

As earlier mentioned under SDG 4 of this report, we initiated a structured training-to-employment pathway for the local youth. We enrolled individuals from nearby communities in two-year Industrial Training Institute (ITI) programmes to build practical technical and professional skills.

At present, four participants are actively undergoing training in relevant courses. Upon completion, they will be offered assured employment within Ashoka University itself in operational and technical capacities, contributing to stable livelihoods and productive employment. This initiative directly contributes to local workforce development and promotes inclusive economic growth.

**2. Generating Employment through Pond Rejuvenation**

**Campus**

The pond restoration and rejuvenation initiative goes beyond just water management, as elaborated more descriptively under SDG 6 of this report, we chose to view it as an opportunity to generate a meaningful livelihood for local community members residing at Asawarpur.

At the operational stage of the project, a single resident will be engaged to support maintenance efforts and care for the revived ecosystem. Further, at a later stage of the project we are planning to set up small artisan stalls and cafés run by local community members with the additional aim of creating sustainable income opportunities, while gradually transforming the area into a clean, vibrant, and welcoming space - one that fosters both community well-being and a sense of safety for all.

**3. Rotaract: Project Adhikaar**

**Project Adhikaar**, a project undertaken by the members of the Ashokan community, enables strengthening legal awareness, financial literacy, and livelihood exploration among women and youth beyond the age of 16. By passing on the ability of more informed decision-making and income-generation planning, the project contributes to SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, supporting economic participation and stability.

Throughout the duration of the project, five sessions were conducted, benefiting over 225 individuals ( 40-50 beneficiaries per visit ). A total of 20 volunteers contributed throughout the lifecycle of the project (four volunteers per visit) and a total of 40 hours were invested.

**4. Neev: A Diverse Range of Community-Oriented Initiatives**

**Campus**

Neev supports economic participation within the Asawarpur community by creating opportunities for local vendors to showcase and sell their products at campus events. By connecting community entrepreneurs with the Ashoka student community, Neev helps generate income while also encouraging small-scale entrepreneurship.

**4. i. Community Entrepreneurship and Livelihood Support through Campus Marketplaces**

NEEV facilitated income-generating opportunities for local entrepreneurs by connecting them with the Ashoka community through campus marketplaces and events. During the reporting period, a local entrepreneur (Parlour Didi) generated INR 6,155 through jewellery sales, while women from Asawarpur operated paid mehndi stalls during the Diwali Haat, creating an additional source of income through their participation. NEEV also organised two pottery workshops, engaging 36 participants and enabling a local artisan to generate INR 5,750 in revenue. By providing access to new markets and customers, these initiatives strengthened local entrepreneurship, enhanced livelihood opportunities, and promoted inclusive economic development within neighbouring communities.

Additionally, to support local entrepreneurship and create sustainable economic opportunities for members of the Asawarpur community, Neev organised a five-day Vendor Week on the Ashoka University campus. The initiative brought local vendors directly into a university setting, enabling them to access a new customer base while generating additional income through their products and services. Each day featured a different vendor and product category, ranging from food stalls to locally made handicrafts.

*Also featured under: SDG 1: No Poverty (livelihood enhancement through income generation)*

**4. ii Community Engagement and Capacity Building in Asawarpur Village**

Neev was also responsible for initiating the Women for Women programme, which offers women from the village a platform to engage in discussions on issues such as sanitation, financial literacy, and household financial management. In addition, the initiative supports local entrepreneurship by promoting small businesses from Asawarpur within the Ashokan community, thereby contributing to community development and economic inclusion.

**5. Enactus: Promoting Sustainable Livelihoods and Women's Economic Empowerment**

**Campus**

Enactus advances social impact through sustainable, community-based enterprise initiatives. The organisation works to create livelihood opportunities for underprivileged women by enabling them to develop and market products that draw on their creative skills. With a focus on responsible consumption and economic empowerment, Enactus collaborates with partner NGOs on initiatives such as **Project Swachh** and **Project Lakeer**. These projects support marginalised communities by generating sustainable income through the production of handcrafted goods, including organic soaps, candles, masks, and handmade diaries. By combining skill development with market access, these initiatives promote environmental responsibility, economic independence, and inclusive growth.

The following initiatives, while rooted in advancing **SDG 4 (Quality Education)**, also contribute meaningfully to **SDG 8** by preparing students to transition more effectively into the workforce.

**6. Office of Learning Support: Bridging gaps through Inclusive Programmes**

We recognise that SDG 8, which focuses on productive employment and decent work, is a key institutional responsibility. Beyond imparting academic knowledge, it is essential to equip students with the practical skills and competencies needed to succeed in professional environments. In this context, the Office of Learning Support (OLS) plays a vital role at Ashoka University by enabling students with disabilities to build strong academic, cognitive, and technological capabilities that enhance employability and independence.

### 6. i. Executive Function Coaching Programme

The Executive Function Coaching Programme strengthened students' workplace readiness by developing essential skills in time management, organisation, planning, and self-regulation. During the reporting period, the programme delivered 141+ coaching sessions, supporting students in building competencies critical for academic and professional success.

### 6. ii. Individualised Academic Support

Individualised Academic Support provided personalised learning assistance to help students overcome academic barriers and successfully progress through their degree programmes. During the year, 110+ students received tailored academic support, strengthening learning outcomes and long-term educational success.

### 6. iii. Assistive Technology Training Programme

The Assistive Technology Training Programme enhanced digital accessibility by equipping students with the technical skills required to effectively utilise assistive technologies in academic and professional settings. The programme supported 30–50 students, promoting greater independence, digital inclusion, and employability.

### 6. iv. College Readiness Programme (CRP)

The College Readiness Programme prepared students for higher education and future career pathways through structured guidance and academic support. The programme benefited 85+ users, equipping participants with the knowledge and skills required to successfully transition into higher education and the workforce.

***Student Testimonials***

*'As the only person with a visual impairment in my YIF class, I was quite nervous after my interview. However, the Office of Learning Support (OLS) reached out to me and provided much-needed relief. OLS has been instrumental in helping me navigate my YIF journey by providing academic accommodations. This includes accessible study materials, receiving slides before class so I can follow along on my own device, extra time for exams, and exemptions from visual tasks like drawing graphs.*

*Most importantly, OLS provided me with an iPad loaded with assistive features.*

*As someone with low vision, being able to read content with my own eyes rather than relying solely on screen readers has been a game-changer. The iPad's numerous accessibility features have made a tremendous difference in my learning. Additionally, having a dedicated OLS point of contact available to discuss any issues at any time has been incredibly valuable. OLS's support has empowered me to fully participate in classroom discussions, engage with the material, and occupy an equal place in the YIF cohort. I am grateful and appreciate OLS for all the support.'*

***- A student of the Young India Fellowship, Ashoka University***

**Exploring the Intricacies of Inverse Hydride Shuttle Catalysis in Azabicyclic Scaffold Construction**

### Research

Professor Vidya Avasare together with Damanpreet Kaur, Saurabh Vinod Parmar and Aniket Nigade from the Department of Chemistry, investigate the molecular mechanisms underlying inverse hydride shuttle catalysis for constructing complex azabicyclic molecular structures. Using computational chemistry approaches, the researchers examine how different fluoro-aryl boranes influence catalytic activity and stereoselective product formation. The study provides detailed insights into the relationship between catalyst structure, reaction pathways and efficiency, helping explain experimentally observed catalytic behaviour. Such fundamental understanding is important for developing more selective and efficient approaches to chemical synthesis. By investigating ways of improving catalytic processes at the molecular level, the research contributes to innovation in chemistry and supports the broader development of more efficient approaches to chemical production.



### Automation and Local Labour Markets: Impact of Immigrant Mobility

**Research**

Assistant Professor Ronit Mukherji from the Department of Economics, collaborated with Dr Anand Chopra, from the University of Liverpool, to examine how low-skilled immigrant mobility helps local labour markets adjust to automation through the paper Automation and Local Labour Markets: Impact of Immigrant Mobility. Using a shift-share instrumental-variable approach, the research demonstrates that low-skilled immigrants are more geographically mobile in response to exposure to robots than comparable native workers. This mobility acts as an adjustment mechanism for local labour markets, helping to reduce the adverse wage effects of automation experienced by low-skilled native workers. The study finds that wages decline less in regions with higher shares of low-skilled immigrants, indicating that immigrant mobility can partially cushion workers against technology-driven labour-market disruptions. The research also identifies human-capital accumulation as an important factor influencing the relatively lower mobility of native workers. By examining how technological change, migration and labour mobility interact to shape employment and wage outcomes, the study contributes directly to understanding how labour markets can adapt to technological transformation while limiting negative impacts on workers. The research particularly addresses employment, labour-market resilience, technological change and the economic consequences of automation, and was published in Labour Economics in 2026.

### Understanding the Role of Automation in Employment Recovery

**Research**

Professor Abhishek Rai collaborated with Lalit Contractor and Ronit Mukherji, Assistant Professors of Economics, where they investigated how automation influences employment recovery following major economic downturns through the study Automation and Employment Recovery After the Great Recession. Combining empirical analysis with an economic model of firm behaviour, the research found that regions with greater pre-recession investment in automation experienced faster employment recoveries following the Great Recession. The study demonstrates that firms with higher levels of automation were better equipped to withstand economic shocks and recover more rapidly, highlighting the complementary relationship between automation and labour rather than a purely substitutive one.

These findings provide valuable evidence for policymakers and industry on the role of technology adoption in building resilient labour markets and supporting sustainable economic recovery.

### A People-Centric Approach to Repurposing India’s Coal Mines: From Frameworks to Action

**Research**

Dr Aishwarya Ramachandran, Research Manager at the Ashoka Centre for a People-centric Energy Transition (ACPET) collaborated with her colleagues at ACPET including Animesh Ghosh, Research Fellow and Vaibhav Chowdhary, to develop a people-centred framework for the closure and repurposing of India's coal mines. The research examines the socio-economic consequences of mine closure in coal-dependent regions, where mining has historically supported local employment and livelihoods while leaving behind degraded land and environmental risks. The authors explore approaches that combine land rehabilitation, livelihood diversification, community participation and sustainable economic opportunities to help mining-dependent communities transition towards alternative sources of income. The work emphasises that mine closure cannot be treated solely as an environmental or technical exercise; it requires planning for workers, households and local economies whose livelihoods have historically depended on extractive industries. The framework therefore integrates socioeconomic vulnerability with ecological restoration and post-closure development, identifying opportunities for agriculture, renewable energy and other productive uses of former mining areas. By focusing on livelihood resilience, economic diversification, worker and community transition, and productive reuse of degraded assets, the research contributes directly to the objective of promoting sustained, inclusive economic growth and productive employment during structural economic transitions. ACPET identifies the work as part of its broader people-centric coal-transition research.

### Analysing Regional Drivers of India's Economic Growth

**Research**

Professor Abhishek Rai worked together with Professors Sabyasachi Chatterjee and Sanjay Lamba, from the Department of Economics at Ashoka University, and examined the regional dynamics shaping India's economic development through the working paper A Spatial Dive into India's Growth Story. The study explores how economic activity, productivity, and regional interconnections influence patterns of growth across different parts of the country. By analysing spatial variations in development, the research identifies the factors that contribute to regional disparities and examines how infrastructure, market integration, and economic linkages can drive more balanced and sustained growth. The findings provide valuable insights for policymakers seeking to promote inclusive regional development and strengthen long-term economic resilience through evidence-based planning.

### Understanding Migration Patterns and Regional Labour Mobility in India

**Research**

Professor Abhishek Rai also released a paper which investigated the economic implications of labour mobility through the working paper Temporary vs. Permanent Migration in a Spatial Economy: Evidence from India. The research examines how temporary and permanent migration shape labour markets, regional productivity, and economic opportunities across the country. By analysing migration decisions within a spatial economic framework, the study explores how mobility influences the allocation of labour, regional development, and economic efficiency. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of internal migration patterns in India and provide evidence to support policies that promote inclusive labour markets, balanced regional development, and improved economic opportunities for migrant workers.

**Ashoka–Zeiss Certified Professional Course in Advanced Microscopy**

**Partnerships**

Led by Ashoka Global Research Alliances (AGRA), in collaboration with Carl ZEISS Germany, the Ashoka–Zeiss Certified Professional Course in Advanced Microscopy was launched in June 2025 as a three-month hybrid professional training programme. The course was designed for graduates and working professionals and combined classroom teaching, hands-on laboratory sessions, online modules and field visits. Through specialised training in advanced microscopy techniques, the programme builds technical capabilities relevant to clinical research, diagnostics, product development and manufacturing. The partnership demonstrates how industry–academia collaboration can extend beyond research infrastructure to directly strengthen workforce capabilities and provide professionals with industry-relevant skills. The initiative also forms part of AGRA's wider effort to develop professional courses aligned with emerging workforce and industry requirements. By creating pathways for specialised technical training and improving access to advanced scientific capabilities, the collaboration supports the development of a future-ready workforce and strengthens links between higher education, research and industry.

**Lodha Genius-Ashoka University Programme – Developing Future-Ready Talent**

**Partnership**

The Lodha Genius-Ashoka University Programme (LG-AUP) a joint initiative with the Lodha Foundation, continued during the year with its 2025 edition. The fully funded, multi-year programme supports talented students from Grade 9 through their early careers, combining academic learning with practical life skills, sustained mentorship and access to prestigious internship opportunities. The 2025 cohort brought together 278 shortlisted students for an immersive month-long programme, with students engaging with academics, researchers, industry experts and practitioners through classroom and laboratory experiences. The programme's emphasis extends beyond academic achievement to developing capabilities, understanding career pathways and connecting young people with mentors and professional opportunities. Its Great Ideas Seminar series also exposes participants to leading scientists, industry experts and practitioners working on contemporary challenges. Through sustained investment in talent development and early exposure to professional environments, the partnership contributes to building future-ready human capital and expanding pathways towards productive and meaningful careers.

**Climate Workforce Summit – Building India's Green Workforce**

**Partnerships**

The Centre for Climate Change and Sustainability (3CS), together with the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) and the Career Development Office, convened the Climate Workforce Summit in Mumbai on 1 November 2025. The summit brought together more than 150 representatives from business, government, philanthropy, academia and civil society, including organisations such as the Skill Council for Green Jobs, MITRA, Mahindra Group, JSW Group, IndusInd Bank, L&T, ICICI, Aditya Birla Group, Eternal and Godrej. With AXA Climate and The Climate Party serving as anchor partners, the collaboration focused on developing India's future-ready workforce for the green economy. Discussions addressed green skills, blue-collar skilling, climate career pathways and integrating sustainability into workforce development and HR systems. The initiative builds on the Climate Corps Fellowship, which had placed 100+ fellows across 30+ organisations in India over five years, working on sustainability projects spanning agriculture, manufacturing, finance and logistics.

**Data Science for Social Impact; Workforce Capacity Building**

**Partnerships**

AshokaX and the Centre for Data Science and Analytics collaborated with DataDotOrg through the India Data Capacity Accelerator (IDCA) to deliver the Professional Executive and Development Programme in Data Science for Social Impact. The third cohort began in September 2025, with the programme designed specifically for working professionals seeking to strengthen their technical and managerial capabilities. Delivered through 20 weeks of online learning, the programme combines training in modelling, forecasting, visualisation, statistics, coding and data literacy with real-world assignments, group projects and mentoring. Its two tracks cater both to technical data professionals and mid-career managers working in areas such as sustainability, climate resilience, public systems and social impact. Faculty from Ashoka and experts from institutions including IIT Delhi and IIT Bombay contributed to the programme. By building advanced digital and analytical capabilities among professionals already working across development-oriented sectors, the partnership directly contributes to workforce upskilling and improved employability while strengthening the capacity of professionals to apply data-driven approaches to real-world challenges.



### Development Economics

#### Teaching

Associate Professor Anisha Sharma taught Development Economics, examining why some countries remain poor while others achieve sustained prosperity and how public policy can address structural barriers to development. The course explored the relationships between markets, institutions, education, health, economic growth, poverty and inequality, drawing on contemporary research and empirical evidence from developing countries. Students examined how development interventions can be evaluated and how economic policies influence the opportunities available to individuals and communities. By combining theoretical frameworks with survey-based empirical analysis, the course enabled students to critically assess both the causes of persistent poverty and the effectiveness of interventions designed to address it. The focus on development challenges in low- and middle-income settings, alongside questions of inequality and human well-being, provides a direct academic contribution to understanding the economic and institutional pathways through which poverty can be reduced.

Another course of the same title was taught by Professor Bharat Ramaswami, examining the patterns and mechanisms through which economies develop and the factors that determine economic opportunity and mobility. The course considered questions around economic growth, poverty, well-being, government intervention and regional disparities, with particular attention to the constraints faced by poorer countries and communities. Students explored whether economic growth automatically improves welfare, how governments can aid development, and how interventions can be evaluated for their effectiveness. Through economic models, causal inference, country case studies and economic history, students developed an analytical understanding of poverty and development processes. The course therefore provided a rigorous foundation for examining the structural and policy dimensions of poverty reduction and inclusive economic development.

### International Political Economy

#### Teaching

Assistant Professors Amit Julka and Arun Sukumar, Department of International Relations, teach this course which examines the interaction between politics and economic systems at the international level. The course provides students with a framework for understanding how states, markets and international institutions interact, and how political decisions shape economic relations across borders. It enables students to examine the distribution of economic power, the institutions governing economic activity and the political forces influencing economic outcomes. By connecting economic processes with questions of power, governance and international cooperation, the course helps students understand the institutional and political conditions underlying global economic development. Its direct engagement with international economic structures makes it particularly useful for demonstrating curriculum-level engagement with the political dimensions of economic development, global markets and international economic governance.

### International Trade

#### Teaching

Assistant Professor of Economics Abhishek Rai taught International Trade, examining why countries trade, who benefits from international trade and how global trade patterns have evolved. The course explored major theoretical frameworks including comparative advantage, factor endowments and economies of scale, alongside empirical research on the welfare consequences of trade and the role of trade policy. Students also examined the relationship between international trade and economic development, enabling them to assess how participation in global markets influences economic opportunities and growth. The course's focus on the movement of goods, production and economic activity across countries provided students with analytical tools for understanding how international economic integration affects firms, workers and economies. By connecting trade theory with questions of development and welfare, the course contributes to understanding the international economic structures that influence productivity, employment opportunities and economic growth.

### Labour, Urbanization and Migration: Past and Present

#### Teaching

Visiting Professor Anindita Chatterjee, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, teaches Labour, Urbanization and Migration: Past and Present, examining the interconnected processes through which labour, migration and urbanisation have shaped societies over time. The course enables students to understand how changing economic structures and patterns of urban growth influence the movement of people and the organisation of work. By connecting migration with labour markets and urban transformation, it provides insight into questions of employment, economic opportunity, mobility and the social consequences of urbanisation. The course is particularly relevant to understanding how cities and economies respond to population movement and changing labour relations, while also drawing attention to the experiences and vulnerabilities of migrant and working populations. This makes it useful curriculum evidence at the intersection of decent work, inclusive urbanisation and sustainable development.

### Economics of Biodiversity

#### Teaching

Professor of Economics Karthik Muralidharan taught Economics of Biodiversity, examining the economic challenges associated with the loss of biodiversity. The course questioned whether conventional approaches to economic growth can simultaneously protect biodiversity and maintain productive economies. Students explored the emerging idea of the ‘green economy’ and critically examined the financialisation of nature, including the proposition that nature can be assigned economic value or incorporated into market mechanisms as a means of conservation. The course considered the benefits and risks of treating ecosystems and biodiversity through financial and market-based frameworks. By connecting biodiversity with economic production and consumption, the course enabled students to examine the trade-offs between development and ecological protection. Its emphasis on economic systems and nature provides a useful perspective on sustainable growth and the economic dimensions of climate and biodiversity crises.




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



**1. Climate-Responsive Architectural Design**

**Campus**

At Ashoka, our campus infrastructure is designed to respond to local climatic conditions, as also emphasised earlier in SDG 7, the campus building design incorporates long-term flexibility and reduced environmental stress. We have utilised strategies- including optimal building orientation, natural ventilation, and jaali-based exterior surface designs which help regulate indoor temperatures and minimize heat gain. These approaches reduce dependence on mechanical cooling systems while enhancing comfort, making infrastructure more adaptable to rising temperatures and climate variability.

**2. Energy-Efficient and Low-Carbon Construction Systems**

**Campus**

Further, our infrastructure additionally incorporates energy-efficient construction techniques and materials that enhance thermal performance and reduce lifecycle emissions to supplement smarter design. The use of double-wall systems, brick cladding, and Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (AAC) blocks improves insulation and reduces energy demand for cooling and heating. Prioritising our choice of materials when deciding on our built environment also directly contributes to long-term resource efficiency while supporting low-carbon infrastructure development.

### 2. i. AAC Blocks - Contribution to Environmental Responsibility

Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (AAC) blocks are lightweight, precast building materials made from a mix of cement, lime, sand (or fly ash), water, and a small amount of aluminium powder. The aluminium reacts to create tiny air bubbles within the mixture, giving AAC its characteristic porous structure. The material is then cured in high-pressure steam chambers called autoclaves, which enhances its strength and durability.

They possess the following properties that make them suitable for resource-conscious building design as well as a favourable alternative to the usage of virgin materials:

**Reduced Energy Consumption in Buildings**: High thermal insulation reduces heat transfer, lowering reliance on air conditioning and cutting energy use.
**Lower Material and Structural Load:** Lightweight composition reduces structural load, requiring less steel and concrete in construction.
**Resource Efficiency and Waste Reduction:** Incorporates materials like fly ash and allows precise cutting, minimising raw material use and construction waste.
**Water Efficiency:** Requires less water in production and construction due to uniform size and reduced mortar usage.
**Reduced Carbon Footprint:** Lower material use, lighter transport load, and long-term energy savings reduce overall lifecycle emissions.

### 3. Water-Efficient and Resource-Conscious Systems

Further, our overall environmental resilience is further strengthened through the integration of water-efficient systems and resource-conscious planning. As also mentioned under SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), our infrastructure design minimises water consumption through efficient construction practices and material choices, while also supporting long-term conservation.
These measures, following the 3R principle, help mitigate water resource stress and ensure sustainable campus operations in the face of increasing water scarcity.

### 3. i. Replenishing groundwater resources

As expanded under SDG 6, and directly related to resilient infrastructure under SDG 9, at Ashoka, we have a total of 15 rainwater harvesting pits that support efficient stormwater management and groundwater recharge. This infrastructure enhances long-term water security while contributing to sustainable resource management and regional aquifer replenishment.

### 3. ii. Water Reduction, Reuse and Recycling

Additionally, the campus operates one water treatment plant, two Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) of capacity 100 KLD and 300 KLD, enabling effective daily treatment and reuse of wastewater, further, we also operate two ETPs of 5 KLD each. Treated water is actively utilised for landscape irrigation, gardening and solar panel cleaning, significantly reducing the use of potable water in everyday usage applications, contributing to a more sustainable campus.
At Ashoka, we have also adopted smart water technologies such as low-flow faucet aerators, sensor-based urinals, specialised cleaning machines and smarter irrigation systems which enable reducing the overall water wastage within our operations and minimising water wastage across campus.

### 4. Advancing Circular Waste Management Systems

We integrate waste management into our campus infrastructure to promote resource efficiency and circularity. Through systematic waste segregation, reduction, reuse practices and developing recycling channels through collaborations, we minimise waste sent to landfill while maximising resource recovery.
By embedding these resources into our daily operations, we seek to reduce our environmental footprint, and strengthen the efficiency within campus operations.

### 4. i. Organic Waste Composting and Circular Resource Use

Organic waste from dining, horticultural activities such as landscaping is processed through composting systems that convert biodegradable material into nutrient-rich compost. The facility handles substantial daily volumes, producing usable compost within a short cycle for campus horticulture.
This closed-loop system reduces landfill dependency while enabling resource reuse, ultimately strengthening waste circularity within our operational boundary.



**Himanshu Sachdev**
**Vice President**
**Campus Administration**

*'A sustainable university is built not only through its academic and research contributions, but also through the way its campus is planned, operated and experienced every day. Responsible resource management, safe and inclusive infrastructure, efficient energy and water use, and environmentally conscious operations are integral to creating a campus that supports both people and the planet. Through our campus administration, we strive to embed sustainability into everyday decisions and practices, translating the Sustainable Development Goals into meaningful action across campus.'*

**Generative AI in India**

**Research**

Debayan Gupta, Assistant Professor, examines the opportunities and challenges associated with generative artificial intelligence in the Indian context. The research considers how India's technological capabilities, digital infrastructure, economic conditions and social diversity will shape the country's experience of the rapidly developing technology. Importantly, it highlights that the benefits of generative AI will depend not only on technological development but also on appropriate regulation and attention to the needs of marginalised populations, who may be disproportionately affected by its negative consequences. The chapter therefore considers questions around technological innovation, governance, fairness, privacy and the distribution of benefits from emerging technologies. Its examination of India's capacity to harness generative AI provides a direct connection to SDG 9.

### 4. iii. E-Waste Management and Responsible Disposal Practices

We have established a structured e-waste management system through partnerships with authorised vendors, ensuring the safe collection, processing, and disposal of discarded electronic equipment containing hazardous materials, including toxic heavy metals and chemicals. Supported by campus-wide collection mechanisms, as elaborated under SDG 12, this approach promotes responsible handling and environmentally sound disposal of electronic waste. In addition, our battery-less solar photovoltaic systems eliminate the need for battery storage, thereby avoiding the generation of battery waste and reducing the environmental impacts associated with battery manufacturing, replacement, and disposal. Together, these measures strengthen resource-efficient infrastructure by minimising waste generation and promoting sustainable lifecycle management of electronic assets.

### 4. iv. Biomedical Waste Management Systems

Biomedical waste is managed through a standardised, infrastructure-led system aligned with regulatory (SPCB and CPCB) protocols. Colour-coded segregation through bins placed at regular intervals where student traffic is highest helps streamline collection, and access to authorised disposal channels to ensure efficient processing and risk mitigation, reinforcing robust institutional systems for handling waste streams. Currently, we have a contract with Divya Waste Management Services for the disposal of biomedical waste.

### 4. v. Hazardous and Industrial Waste Handling

At Ashoka University, hazardous waste generated through campus operations- including used lubricating oil from diesel generators, spent oil filters, laboratory-chemical waste, and discarded paint containers-is managed through specialised processing infrastructure in collaboration with government-authorised agencies such as Divya Waste Management, in compliance with the Haryana State Pollution Control Board (HSPCB) guidelines.

Our waste management system encompasses the safe collection, segregation, storage, transportation, and environmentally sound disposal of hazardous waste that is further supported by regular monitoring and regulatory compliance. Through these practices, we minimise environmental risks while ensuring the responsible management of hazardous materials across our campus operations.

### 4. vii. Organic Waste Management through Composting

We transform organic waste from campus dining facilities, landscaping and horticultural activities into a valuable resource through our on-campus composting facility. With a processing capacity of 500 kg of organic compost per day, the facility converts horticultural biomass into nutrient-rich compost for reuse across the campus. To further strengthen our circular resource management practices, we also incorporate treated sludge recovered from our two Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) into the composting process. Rich in organic matter and nutrients, the treated sludge enhances and improves the quality of the compost, which is subsequently utilised across campus landscapes and horticultural areas as a viable alternative to fertilisers and manure. By integrating organic waste and by-products of wastewater treatment, we minimise waste generation and maximise resource recovery sustainably.

### 5. Progressing Campus Technologies to Meet the Needs of an Evolving world

We also recognise that the scope of building resilient and inclusive infrastructure goes beyond sustainable physical spaces to include the systems and technologies to facilitate and shape how learning is delivered.

In this regard, our campus incorporates digital systems that enhance operational efficiency, accessibility, and resilience. We have integrated platforms which support seamless management of academic, administrative, and residential functions to support differently abled students, staff and stakeholders, improving the adaptability of infrastructure to changing needs.

### 5. i. Accessible Ashoka: A Smart Digital Navigation Ecosystem

To strengthen accessibility across campus, we have expanded Accessible Ashoka, an indoor navigation platform that enhances mobility for individuals with visual and mobility impairments. The platform integrates Bluetooth Low Energy (BLE) beacons, QR-code enabled Braille-signages, and real-time audio navigation to provide seamless wayfinding across academic buildings, administrative offices, residential halls, the Sports Complex, Student Commons, and the Infirmary. Beyond navigation, the application has been designed to provide centralised access to academic calendars, dining information, emergency contacts, personalised notifications, and campus announcements through an accessible digital interface. By integrating inclusive design with digital infrastructure, we have created a smarter and more resilient campus environment that enhances operational efficiency while improving accessibility for all members of the Ashokan community.



### 5. ii. Integrating Assistive Technologies into Digital Learning

To make learning more accessible, we have expanded the use of assistive technologies across our academic environment. We have introduced digital tools such as Claude AI, Mathpix, and MathType, along with assistive devices including voice recorders and noise-cancelling headphones, to better support students with diverse learning needs. These technologies help students create accessible documents, convert mathematical content into readable formats, improve compatibility with screen readers, and enhance communication in the classroom. We have also conducted demonstration sessions for faculty to encourage the effective use of these technologies in teaching. By integrating assistive technologies into everyday academic practices, we have created a more inclusive digital learning environment that enables every student to participate and succeed.

**Deregulation of Labour Laws and the Jobs Promise**

**Research**

Professor Kanika Mahajan examined the relationship between labour-law deregulation and employment outcomes, addressing an important policy question around how regulatory frameworks influence job creation and labour-market performance. The research contributes to debates on how labour regulations can be designed to balance the interests of workers, employers and broader economic objectives. By examining the employment implications of deregulation, the work provides an evidence-based perspective on the conditions under which regulatory reform may influence labour-market opportunities. The topic is particularly relevant to India's efforts to expand productive employment while maintaining an institutional framework that supports workers and enterprises. The research therefore connects labour-market policy with questions of economic growth, employment generation and the quality of work. Its policy-brief format also facilitates the translation of academic analysis into accessible evidence for policymakers and other stakeholders engaged in debates around labour reform and employment policy.

### 5. iii. Developing Digital Platforms for Inclusive Higher Education

Extending our impact beyond the campus, we also launched IdeaPal, an open-access digital platform that helps higher education institutions strengthen inclusive education practices. Launched during Conclave 3.0, the platform provides practical guidance, templates, and resources to support institutions in areas such as inclusive admissions, reasonable accommodations, campus support systems, and progress monitoring. By making these resources freely accessible, we have enabled institutions across the country to adopt and implement inclusive practices more effectively. Through IdeaPal, we continue to use digital innovation to share knowledge, encourage collaboration, and strengthen inclusive infrastructure across India's higher education ecosystem.

**Advancing Carbon Nanomaterials for Explosive Detection**

**Research**

Dr Sobitri Sen, Postdoctoral Fellow, and Professor Sourav Pal collaborated with Souvik Santra and Dr Arijit Bag of Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad University of Technology to investigate the potential of cyclo[16]carbon ($C_{16}$) as a next-generation material for the detection and safe handling of energetic compounds such as TNT and TATB. Using density functional theory (DFT), the study demonstrated that cyclo[16]carbon forms stable molecular complexes with these explosives while exhibiting tunable optical and electronic properties suitable for spectroscopic sensing. The findings highlight the material's dual capability for passive explosive detection and hazard mitigation, offering new opportunities for safer handling of high-energy materials in defence, industrial safety, and security applications.

**Understanding the Growth of Digital Commerce after COVID-19**

**Research**

Professor Prachi Mishra, Professor of Economics, collaborated with Professors Joel Alecido, Alberto Cavallo, Thomas S. Murphy, Chief Economist, Mastercard, Bricklin Dwyer, and Professor Antonio Spilimbergo, Deputy Director, International Monetary Fund (IMF), to investigate the long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on digital commerce through the journal article 'Back to Trend: COVID Effects on E-commerce in 44 Countries'. Drawing on data from 44 countries, the study examines whether the rapid rise in online shopping observed during the pandemic represented a permanent structural shift or a temporary response to mobility restrictions. The findings provide valuable insights into the resilience of digital markets and changing consumer behaviour, informing policies that support digital transformation, innovation, and inclusive economic growth.

**Cross-Border Spillovers: How US Financial Conditions Affect M&As Around the World**

**Research**

Professor Prachi Mishra, together with Katharina Bergant, Freddy Pinzon-Puerto and Raghuram Rajan, contributed research examining how financial conditions in the United States can influence cross-border mergers and acquisitions around the world. The research explores the international transmission of financial conditions and the ways in which changes in major markets can affect investment and corporate activity across economies. Its focus on financial spillovers provides insight into the interconnectedness of global financial systems and the factors influencing international investment. The work was published as an NBER Working Paper and was conditionally accepted by the American Economic Journal: Macroeconomics in January 2026. The research contributes to understanding the international financial conditions that shape investment, capital flows and economic activity, providing evidence relevant to policymakers and researchers examining global financial integration and economic resilience.

**Evaluating the Impact of Transport Infrastructure on Industrial Productivity**

**Research**

Professor Abhishek Rai, Assistant Professor of Economics, investigated how investments in transport infrastructure influence manufacturing productivity and firm performance through the study 'Roads, Inputs, and Productivity: Evidence from India's Golden Quadrilateral.' The research examines how improved road connectivity reduces trade costs, enhances firms' access to production inputs, and enables more efficient allocation of resources across manufacturing activities. By analysing the economic effects of India's Golden Quadrilateral highway network, the study demonstrates that better transport infrastructure improves firm productivity and strengthens industrial competitiveness by allowing firms to optimise their production processes and product portfolios. The findings provide valuable evidence for infrastructure planning and public policy, highlighting the role of strategic transport investments in promoting sustainable industrial growth, economic efficiency, and long-term regional development.

**Sashakt Bihar Economic Roadmap**

**Partnerships**

Professor Prachi Mishra, Director and Head, led work on a comprehensive 20-year economic roadmap for Bihar, developed in consultation with the Government of Bihar and co-authored with ADRI, Patna. The roadmap identified three potential engines of structural transformation — agro-industrialisation, tourism and Global Capability Centres - with the objective of accelerating the state's economic growth trajectory from approximately 8 per cent to 12 per cent. The work connected long-term economic planning with questions of employment, productive sectors and regional development, providing a policy framework for strengthening Bihar's economic base. Its focus on agro-industrialisation is particularly relevant to agricultural livelihoods and rural economic development, while the emphasis on new growth sectors highlights opportunities for employment generation and diversification. Insights from the roadmap were also shared with the Prime Minister's Office, demonstrating how research and policy analysis were translated into high-level government engagement. The project represents a direct interface between academic expertise, state-level policymaking and long-term economic planning.

**Developing AI-enabled Remote Healthcare Solutions through Interdisciplinary Research**

**Partnerships**

Koita Centre for Digital Health at Ashoka (KCDH-A) has established a strategic research partnership with Shiv Nadar Institution of Eminence (SNIoE) to accelerate innovation in AI-enabled remote healthcare monitoring. Through a Memorandum of Understanding, the collaboration brings together expertise in engineering, artificial intelligence, sensor technologies, and digital health to develop advanced remote patient monitoring systems capable of supporting more efficient, accessible, and technology-driven healthcare. By integrating sensor technologies with data analytics and AI/ML methodologies, the partnership seeks to design practical healthcare solutions that enhance patient monitoring, enable earlier clinical interventions, and improve the delivery of healthcare services beyond traditional clinical settings. The collaboration also promotes interdisciplinary research and knowledge exchange, contributing to the development of next-generation digital health technologies that address evolving healthcare needs while strengthening India's capacity for healthcare innovation.

**Progressing Metal-Free Catalysts for Sustainable Ammonia Synthesis**

**Research**

Dr Sobitri Sen and Professor Sourav Pal also collaborated together on another research publication with Anu Arora to investigate the potential of silicon-disubstituted cyclo[18]carbon as a transition metal-free catalyst for ammonia synthesis. Using density functional theory (DFT), the study demonstrated that the proposed catalyst can efficiently activate nitrogen and facilitate ammonia production without relying on conventional transition metals. The findings offer new insights into designing environmentally friendly catalysts for sustainable chemical manufacturing and clean energy applications. Published in ChemPhysChem, the research advances innovative computational approaches for greener ammonia production.

**Adaptive Drift-aware Multi-stage Deep Learning Framework for EEG-based Schizophrenia Diagnosis**

**Research**

Yash Varshney from Lodha Genius-Ashoka University Programme (LG-AUP) undertook research to develop an adaptive deep-learning framework for EEG-based schizophrenia diagnosis. The study addresses a key challenge in machine-learning-based diagnosis: models can lose accuracy when EEG signal distributions change across patients, recording conditions, medication status and levels of noise. The proposed framework combines deep feature learning with concept-drift detection and adaptive parameter updating, enabling the system to respond to changes in EEG data over time. The NEXUS model achieved a reported 98.12 per cent accuracy in the study and demonstrated improved robustness under changing data conditions. The research highlights the potential of adaptive artificial intelligence to support more reliable neurological and psychiatric diagnosis in real-world settings. Such technologies could contribute to scalable diagnostic support and expand the potential for data-enabled healthcare, particularly where specialist diagnostic resources are limited.

**Nanomaterials: Building Foundations for Materials Innovation**

**Teaching**

Professor Deepak Asthana teaches Nanomaterials, a course focused on the chemistry, properties, and applications of materials at the nanoscale. The course introduces students to the distinctive physical and chemical characteristics that emerge when materials are engineered at extremely small scales, providing a foundation for understanding how nanostructures can be designed for advanced technological applications. Nanomaterials represent an important area of contemporary scientific research, with potential applications spanning healthcare, energy, electronics, sensing, and environmental technologies. The course therefore connects fundamental chemical principles with emerging areas of materials science and technological innovation. Ashoka's Department of Chemistry identifies molecular materials, material chemistry, supramolecular systems, and light-harvesting among Professor Asthana's research interests, reflecting the broader materials-innovation ecosystem within which the course is situated. By developing students' understanding of advanced materials and nanoscale phenomena, the course supports the development of scientific capabilities required for future innovation in materials and technology.

**Introduction to Computing in Biology**

**Teaching**

Taught by Dr Tanmoy Roychowdhury, Introduction to Computing in Biology equips students with essential computational skills for analysing biological data in an increasingly data-driven scientific landscape. The course introduces learners to UNIX-based bioinformatics tools, R programming, data visualisation, and statistical analysis, enabling them to interpret complex datasets generated across genomics, molecular biology, and biomedical research. Through practical demonstrations and hands-on computing exercises, students develop the ability to manage biological information, automate analytical workflows, and apply computational approaches to real-world research problems.

By bringing together biology and computer science, the course highlights the growing importance of bioinformatics and data analytics in advancing scientific discovery, precision medicine, and digital health. It prepares students to engage with emerging interdisciplinary fields where computational thinking is becoming indispensable for biological research and innovation.

**Smart and Biomaterials: Developing Materials for Emerging Technologies**

**Teaching**

Professor Deepak Asthana and Dr Santu Bera teach Smart and Biomaterials, which introduces students to the design, properties and applications of advanced materials with specialised biological or technological functions. The course explores how materials can be engineered to respond to particular physical, chemical or biological conditions, providing a foundation for understanding emerging applications across healthcare, biotechnology, energy and advanced technology. The interdisciplinary nature of the course demonstrates how chemistry can contribute to the development of innovative materials and technologies that address contemporary societal challenges. The course also complements research within the Department of Chemistry on molecular materials, biomimetic systems and functional materials, helping students connect fundamental chemical principles with emerging applications.

**Introduction to Machine Learning**

**Teaching**

Professor Lipika Dey and Prasenjeet Roy, Department of Computer Science, Ashoka University, teach Introduction to Machine Learning, introducing students to the foundations of statistical and computational approaches to machine learning. The curriculum spans supervised and unsupervised learning, regression, clustering, neural networks, deep learning, convolutional neural networks, transformers, generative models and model explainability, while students also gain hands-on experience working with real datasets. The course develops capabilities in data-driven prediction, classification, model evaluation and computational problem-solving, preparing students to engage with rapidly evolving technologies such as AI and large language models.

**Science, Technology and Social Change**

**Teaching**

Visiting Professor Harish Naraindas, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, teaches Science, Technology and Social Change, examining the relationship between science, technology, medicine and transformations in society. The course considers how scientific and technological developments emerge within particular social worlds and, in turn, reshape those worlds. It engages with Science and Technology Studies and examines questions surrounding the non-human, technological change, medicine, knowledge systems and the social consequences of scientific practice, including through a South Asian perspective. This provides students with a critical framework for understanding that technological progress is not socially neutral and can alter institutions, knowledge systems and everyday life. The course is particularly relevant to understanding the social dimensions of technological innovation and the relationship between scientific advancement and societal transformation. Professor Naraindas's research spans the history and sociology of science and medicine.

**Logistics Cost Index for EXIM Trade Routes**

**Partnerships**

A partnership between the Isaac Centre for Public Policy (ICPP) and the Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority has established a framework to develop India's first comprehensive Logistics Cost Index for EXIM trade routes. It aims to create a systematic framework for understanding logistics costs associated with international trade routes, supporting more effective trade facilitation. By generating evidence on logistics costs, the project aims to help identify inefficiencies across supply chains and provide information to strengthen India's trade competitiveness.

It was formalised through an MoU signed in the presence of the Union Minister for Ports and Shipping, highlighting direct engagement between research institutions and public-sector infrastructure authorities. The initiative provides a strong example of research being translated into a policy and measurement tool with potential implications for supply-chain efficiency, infrastructure planning and participation in global trade.




# REDUCE INEQUALITY WITHIN AND AMONG COUNTRIES

At Ashoka University, we recognise that reducing inequalities is essential to building a fair and inclusive society. At Ashoka, we go a step further by actively removing barriers that may prevent students from fully participating in university life - whether these are financial, social, or related to disability. Through need-based scholarships, inclusive admissions processes, and dedicated support systems, we ensure that students from diverse and often disadvantaged backgrounds are not only able to enrol but also thrive. By creating an environment where every student has the opportunity to succeed, we are working towards a more equitable and inclusive educational ecosystem.

At Ashoka University, we have worked to ensure that financial circumstances do not limit access to higher education. Through our need-based scholarships and financial aid programmes, students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds can pursue the same high-quality educational opportunities. Since AY 2021–22, 44–55 per cent of newly admitted students have received need-based scholarships, while 18–24 per cent have been awarded 100% scholarships, along with support for housing, meals, transportation, and other out-of-pocket expenses. These efforts have expanded access to higher education, fostering a diverse and inclusive learning community where talent and potential are nurtured irrespective of financial-need.

Total students on scholarship annually (as per Academic Year)

| Academic Year | No. of Total new students | Students on Scholarship | % of students on scholarship | % of students on 100% scholarships or more |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2021-22 | 964 | 484 | 50.21 | 23.55 |
| 2022-23 | 833 | 460 | 55.22 | 22.93 |
| 2023-24 | 921 | 409 | 44.41 | 18.02 |
| 2024-25 | 984 | 440 | 44.72 | 23.27 |
| 2025-26** | 953 | 416 | 43.65 | 23.08 |

*The table above showcases the scholarship data for undergraduate programmes, including YIF and master's*

**1. NEEV: Expanding Equitable Access to Higher Education Opportunities**

**Campus**

Neev works with students from Asawarpur village to reduce gaps in academic guidance and access to higher education opportunities. Through sustained mentorship and structured academic support, students from Classes 9 to 12 receive one-on-one guidance from dedicated mentors. These sessions focus on subject preparation, board examinations, and long-term educational planning, helping students navigate key academic transitions and explore pathways to higher education that may otherwise remain inaccessible.

**1. ii. Strengthening Access to Scholarships and Financial Aid Information**

In addition, to support informed decision-making, Neev representatives and members developed a Scholarships and Colleges Repository that compiles information on colleges, courses, admission requirements, fee structures, scholarships, CSR programmes, and government schemes. This resource helps mentors and students understand higher education options and financial aid opportunities, making complex application and funding processes easier to navigate.

**1. iii. Bridging Aspirations through University Exposure and Admissions Awareness**

Neev also creates transformative learning experiences through outreach sessions and campus visits that bring students closer to higher education, reinforcing initiatives discussed under SDG 4.

During the reporting period, Class 12 students attended an admissions outreach session and a guided campus tour led by student ambassadors, gaining insights into eligibility criteria, application procedures, and university life.

For many students, this was their first direct encounter with a university environment - an experience that demystified the path to higher education and sparked new academic aspirations.

**2. Rotaract: Undertaking proactive donations and charities to bridge gaps through Asha Campus**

As also expanded earlier in the report within SDG 1 (No Poverty), Project Asha is a sustained community engagement initiative focused on building trust and enabling long-term well-being in underserved communities near campus. The project prioritises continuity, empathy, and collaborative action towards relationship-building through a combination of dialogue, learning, and material support to ensure dignity of rural communities.

These insights from community interactions directly determine future actions and planning. The project also works to align grassroots needs with organised student-led capacity building, empowering local communities, ultimately bridging gaps.

**2. ii. Engaging Senior Citizens through 'Project Sahara'**

Through Project Sahara, members of the Rotaract Club engaged with senior citizens residing in old-age homes and elderly care centres through regular visits, interactive activities, celebrations, games, and meaningful conversations. The initiative also supported these institutions through donation drives and the provision of essential supplies, fostering companionship, dignity, and enhanced well-being among elderly community members.

During the reporting period, we conducted four elderly care engagement sessions at elderly care institutions, providing recreational activities and meaningful social interaction for senior citizens. Through these initiatives, 16 student volunteers contributed 32 volunteer hours, engaging with 40–60 elderly individuals, fostering intergenerational inclusion and community well-bein



### 3. Office of Learning Support: Creating Equal Opportunities for Every Student

**Campus**

The Office of Learning Support (OLS) works to ensure that every student can participate fully in university life, regardless of disability or learning differences. OLS provides personalised academic, residential, and accessibility support through reasonable accommodations, assistive technologies, peer mentoring, and faculty collaboration. By working closely with students and departments across the University, we have created an environment where individual learning needs are recognised and supported. These efforts help students overcome barriers, participate confidently in campus life, and succeed academically alongside their peers.

#### 3. i. Accessible Campus Infrastructure

Creating an accessible campus is central to ensuring that everyone can move around and use university facilities independently. We have continued to strengthen campus accessibility through initiatives such as the Accessible Ashoka navigation platform, Braille-signage, tactile maps, and accessible geometry kits. Improvements have also been made to library resources and other shared spaces to ensure that students with disabilities can access academic and campus facilities with greater ease. By reducing physical and digital barriers, these initiatives promote greater independence and make everyday campus experiences more inclusive for all.

#### 3. ii. Assistive Technology for Inclusive Learning

Technology plays an important role in making education accessible. We have expanded the use of assistive technologies to support students with different learning needs by introducing digital tools such as Claude AI, Mathpix, and MathType, along with voice recorders, noise-cancelling headphones, and other specialised learning resources. These tools help students read, write, communicate, and engage more effectively with coursework and classroom activities. Faculty training sessions have also encouraged wider adoption of these technologies, ensuring that digital learning remains accessible and responsive to the needs of every learner.



*Accessible Geometry Kit*

#### 3. iii. Inclusive Teaching and Accessible Learning

Meaningful inclusion extends beyond infrastructure into the classroom. OLS has worked closely with faculty members to make teaching and assessment more accessible by embedding design principles into academic practices. This includes designing accessible course materials, adapting assessments where required, and providing reasonable accommodations that enable students with disabilities to participate fully in classroom learning, laboratory sessions, and other academic activities. Through ongoing collaboration with faculty, we continue to strengthen an inclusive learning environment where every student has an equal opportunity to learn, contribute, and succeed.

#### 3. iv. College Readiness Programme

Preparing students for higher education begins well before they enter university. Through our College Readiness Programme, we have supported neurodiverse and disabled students in building the academic, personal, and independent living skills needed to transition confidently into university life. The programme combines mentorship, career guidance, self-advocacy training, and exposure to assistive technologies, helping students develop the confidence and practical skills required for higher education. By extending this support beyond our campus, we are enabling more students to access and thrive in inclusive higher education.

***Student testimonial***

***The College Readiness Programme*** *was such a fantastic experience for me. Everything was organised really well, and I felt like every session was a step toward getting ready for college life. We covered super important topics like time management, communication, career planning, and taking care of our mental health and skills I know will be super helpful in the long run.*

*What I loved most was the support from mentors and teachers. They were always there to help us out, share their stories, and guide us through any questions we had. This programme not only got me ready academically but also made me feel more confident and excited about what's ahead!*

***– K. Kamya Shivani***

*Glendale Academy, Hyderabad*

**Evaluating the Role of Digital Connectivity in Rural India During the Pandemic**

**Research**

Professor Aparajita Dasgupta collaborated with Anulya Parameswaran and Yashveer Singh to examine how digital connectivity influenced rural livelihoods during the COVID-19 pandemic through the working paper Digital Connectivity and Learning in Rural India During COVID-19. The research explores how access to digital technologies shaped education, access to information and economic resilience in rural communities during a period of restricted physical mobility. By examining the opportunities and limitations associated with digital inclusion, the study demonstrates how unequal access to connectivity can affect people's ability to continue learning, access essential information and participate in economic activity during periods of disruption. The findings highlight the importance of expanding digital infrastructure and ensuring that connectivity reaches communities that may otherwise be excluded from emerging digital opportunities. The research is particularly relevant to SDG 10, as it addresses inequalities in access to essential digital resources and the resulting differences in people's ability to participate in education and economic life. It also has a secondary connection with SDG 4 through its focus on learning.

**Understanding the Long-Term Impact of Social Discrimination on Child Development**

**Research**

Professor Ashwini Deshpande, Professor of Economics, collaborated with Rajesh Ramachandran to investigate how social discrimination affects children's development through the journal article Discriminatory Social Norms and Early Childhood Development. The study examines the influence of discriminatory social norms on children's early developmental outcomes, highlighting how unequal social environments can shape health, learning, and future opportunities from a young age. The findings provide valuable evidence for designing policies that promote equitable childhood development and reduce the long-term effects of social inequality on human capital formation.



**Aparajita Dasgupta**
**Associate Professor**
**Department of Economics**

*Our research began with a simple question: how digital connectivity shaped rural children's educational outcomes during COVID-19 school disruptions in India? We study nearly 2.2 million children across rural India and find larger declines in reading and mathematics outcomes in more connected districts, with these learning deficits persisting even after schools reopen. The evidence suggests that increased connectivity is accompanied by a shift in children's time away from learning and towards indoor entertainment, particularly among adolescents, girls, and children attending government schools. It is also associated with adults in more connected districts spending more time on indoor entertainment. Our findings suggest that unstructured digital access may have deepened and prolonged pandemic learning losses. The findings are especially relevant today, as India and other countries grapple with the growing use of smartphones and digital media among children. The broader takeaway is that expanding digital access alone may not be sufficient; without appropriate supervision, monitoring, structure, and meaningful educational engagement, connectivity may not translate into better learning outcomes.*

**Expanding Disability-Inclusive Admissions through National Outreach**

**Partnership**

During the year the University led a nationwide outreach effort to strengthen disability representation in higher education by engaging with 21 disability-focused organisations across India. The initiative involved sharing accessible and updated information on the Undergraduate Programme and Young India Fellowship while building relationships with organisations including the Blind People's Association, Help the Blind, National Association for the Blind, XRCVC and ADAPT Mumbai, among others. OLS also engaged with mentors associated with organisations such as Bookshare and Cherish Accessibility, prospective students and parents, and worked with the Office of Admissions to support students with disabilities throughout the application process.

The outreach created a broader network through which prospective students could access information on higher education opportunities, accessibility and available support.

By connecting the University's admissions ecosystem with organisations working directly with persons with disabilities, the initiative strengthened outreach to underrepresented student groups and created additional pathways for students to access inclusive higher education.

**Designing Fairer Economic Systems**

**Research**

Professor Ratul Lahkar examines how economic systems can achieve both efficiency and fairness through the journal article Implementing Efficiency with Equality. In collaboration with Professor Sarvesh Bandhu (Indian Institute of Management Lucknow), the study develops theoretical frameworks that explore how public policies and institutional design can balance efficient resource allocation with equitable outcomes. By analysing mechanisms that promote both economic efficiency and social welfare, the research offers valuable insights into the design of inclusive institutions and policies that reduce inequality while supporting sustainable economic development.

**Of Statues, Struggles, and Subaltern Memory: The Aesthetics of Commemorating Birsa Munda**

**Research**

Ananya Sharma, Assistant Professor of International Relations, examined the contested politics of memory-making through the commemoration of Birsa Munda, an Adivasi anti-colonial leader. The research explores how state-sponsored monuments and representations can appropriate historical figures while selectively framing their legacies within narratives of national belonging. Such representations can simultaneously obscure contemporary struggles involving dispossession, violence and political recognition. The study contrasts these commemorative practices with community-led efforts, including the Pathalgadi movement in Jharkhand, through which Adivasi communities reclaim Birsa Munda's legacy and assert their own historical and political agency. By treating monuments and memorial practices as forms of political action, the research contributes to debates around subaltern memory, decolonisation and representation. It demonstrates how marginalised communities participate in shaping historical narratives and how interpretations of the past remain connected to contemporary questions of rights, recognition and justice.

**The Wood for the Trees: Conflicts over Value in a Forest in India**

**Research**

Professor Amita Baviskar from the Department of Environmental Studies examined competing understandings of the value of forests through the case of the Saranda forest in east-central India. The research explores conflicts surrounding proposed forest clearance for coal mining and considers how ecological, economic and livelihood values are negotiated through government decision-making. It examines the perspectives of forest-dependent communities, environmental advocates and forest officials and shows how conventional economic valuation can fail to capture the ecological and social importance of forests. The study also considers the implications of forest diversion for Adivasi communities whose livelihoods and cultural relationships are closely connected to forest ecosystems. By examining the institutional processes through which decisions about forests are made, the research highlights the tensions between extractive development, ecological conservation and community rights. It provides important evidence on sustainable forest governance, protection of ecosystems and the social dimensions of environmental decision-making.

**Voice-Based Chatbots for English Speaking Practice in Multilingual Low-Resource Indian Schools: A Multi-Stakeholder Study**

**Research**

Sneha Shashidhara, Assistant Professor of Psychology and Senior Research Consultant at the Centre for Social and Behaviour Change, and researchers from the University of Pennsylvania examine the use of voice-based AI chatbots to provide English-speaking practice in four low-resource schools in Delhi. The six-day field study incorporates perspectives from students, teachers and school principals and identifies strong demand for accessible opportunities to practise spoken English. Students reported increased confidence, while the research also identifies differences between students' preference for open-ended conversation and administrators' preference for curriculum-aligned assessment. The study provides design recommendations for developing AI-enabled educational tools that are accessible and appropriate for multilingual, low-resource settings, including simpler interfaces, more intelligible speech and actionable analytics for teachers. By exploring how AI can expand learning opportunities where conventional resources are limited, the research addresses educational inequality and the potential of technology to improve access to quality learning.

**An Ashoka Centre for Translation Series – Westland Books**

**Partnerships**

In April 2026, the Ashoka Centre for Translation launched a series in partnership with Westland Books, creating a new platform for landmark Indian fiction to reach English-language readers. The series brings modern and classic works from different Indian languages into English through carefully curated translations, enabling literature shaped by diverse linguistic and cultural contexts to circulate across wider audiences. The first instalment features English translations of Bengali short fiction, with the first book comprising selected stories by Saratchandra Chattopadhyay, translated by Anchita Ghatak, released through Westland Books' Ekadā imprint on 13 April 2026. Beyond expanding access to regional literature, the initiative positions translation as a means of connecting linguistic communities and preserving literary traditions. By bringing works rooted in India's multilingual heritage to new readerships, the partnership strengthens cultural exchange and broadens access to knowledge and literature.

**When We May Not Experiment: On the Ethics of Randomized Controlled Trials in Policy and Development**

**Research**

Professor Bastian Steuwer examined the ethical limits of using randomised controlled trials (RCTs) in public policy and development research. He questions whether ethical justifications for randomising citizens between different policy interventions are sufficient, particularly when randomisation creates unequal treatment or potentially disadvantages certain groups. He argues that even where two policy options appear equally permissible, randomisation can raise concerns about inequality. The paper also examines the costs of experimentation and the conditions under which governments, researchers and non-governmental organisations should be permitted to conduct policy experiments. By placing questions of fairness, equal treatment and accountability at the centre of development experimentation, the research contributes to broader debates on ethical governance and responsible policymaking.

**Corporate Diversity Hiring Toolkit: Advancing Inclusive Recruitment Practices**

**Partnerships**

The Office of Learning Support (OLS), as part of its work on accessibility in job placements and internships, collaborated with V-Shesh Learning Services and Spandan to develop the Corporate Diversity Hiring Toolkit. Launched during the Career Development Office's 'Fostering Diversity and Inclusion Through Transformative Leadership' event on 13 February 2025, the toolkit addresses accessibility gaps in campus recruitment for students with disabilities. It provides employers with practical resources, including an inclusive hiring checklist and reasonable accommodation request form, to support more equitable recruitment processes. The launch also brought together perspectives from Ashoka alumni with lived experience of navigating higher education and professional environments. By connecting the University's learning-support expertise with external organisations specialising in inclusion and accessible employment, the initiative translates principles of disability inclusion into practical tools for employers. The collaboration strengthens pathways between higher education and inclusive workplaces while supporting more accessible and equitable recruitment practices.

**Industry-Academia Dialogue on Disability Inclusion in the Workplace**

**Partnership**

At Ashoka, we also contributed to the national dialogue on disability inclusion through the Disability in the Workplace Roundtable, hosted by Disability:IN in partnership with Bank of America on 6 February 2025. Representing the University, Reena Gupta, Senior Director, OLS, shared insights on the placement challenges experienced by students with disabilities and highlighted the need for stronger collaboration between higher education institutions and employers. The roundtable brought together 48 representatives from 25 leading Indian businesses, creating a platform for discussion on leadership engagement, accessible product design, workplace accommodations and equitable hiring. The University's participation enabled student and academic perspectives to inform a broader corporate conversation on disability inclusion, while strengthening connections with organisations working to improve employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. The engagement reinforced the importance of creating accessible career pathways that extend beyond university admissions and academic support into professional environments.

**UK Asian Film Festival and Tongues on Fire**

**Partnerships**

Professor Monia Acciari, Department of Media Studies, has also contributed to the UK Asian Film Festival, organised by Tongues on Fire, through curatorship of festival programming in London and Leicester and service as an advisor to the festival board. The engagement extends academic expertise into an international cultural platform that creates space for Asian cinema, filmmakers and diverse cultural narratives. Through programme curation and advisory involvement, the collaboration supports the visibility of voices and stories that may otherwise receive limited representation within mainstream cultural spaces. The partnership also creates opportunities for cross-border cultural exchange and engagement with international audiences around questions of identity, representation and belonging. As an example of sustained academic engagement with an external cultural organisation, the initiative demonstrates how media scholarship and professional expertise can contribute to more inclusive cultural representation while strengthening international networks in the arts and media.

**Visual Dialogue on Conflict and Displacement**

**Partnerships**

The Department of Visual Arts hosted a talk by Veer Munshi, visual artist/curator at Ashoka University which explored memory, identity, conflict and displacement through his longstanding artistic engagement with Kashmir. Drawing on paintings, embroidery, installations, photography, video and sculpture, Munshi reflected on how personal and collective experiences of displacement have shaped his visual language. His practice returns to histories of people forced to leave their homes and examines the emotional and political consequences of exile, while also exploring possibilities of reconciliation, healing and rebuilding lives in new spaces. The session demonstrated how visual art can provide a platform for documenting experiences that may otherwise remain absent from dominant historical narratives. By foregrounding memory and lived experience, the discussion encouraged students to consider how artistic practice can create space for marginalised voices and contribute to understanding conflict, migration and belonging.

**Building Support Pathways for Neurodiverse Students with Evoluer Solutions**

**Partnership**

OLS initiated a dialogue with Evoluer Solutions, led by Founder and Chief Service Provider Shaloo Sharma, to explore approaches for advancing inclusive education and strengthening support for neurodiverse students. Evoluer Solutions works with young adults with disabilities through transition-support programmes focused on employability skills, hands-on training, internships and emotional-intelligence development. The engagement explored opportunities to strengthen accessibility, provide tailored support for neurodiverse students and promote independent-living skills. By connecting OLS's experience in supporting students within higher education with an organisation focused on transition and employability, the collaboration opened avenues for strengthening the pathway from education to professional and independent life. The engagement also provided an opportunity to exchange perspectives on the forms of academic, social and career support required by neurodiverse learners, contributing to broader efforts to develop more inclusive and responsive higher education environments.

**Animating Memory: Narratives of Displacement and Migration**

**Partnerships**

The Department of Visual Arts also held a colloquium with Nina Sabnani, Animator, Educator and Former Head of Animation, NID Ahmedabad. The colloquium involved analysing three animated films that explore memory as a fragile yet persistent archive of displacement and forced migration following the Partition of India in 1947 and the aftermath of the 1971 war between India and Pakistan. Drawing from personal recollections, intergenerational memories, and community narratives, the films engage with histories that remain largely absent from official records.

Through fragmentary memories of childhood friendships interrupted by violence, intimate recollections of homes and objects left behind, and the collective voices of women whose lives were shaped by migration, the films reveal how displacement continues to inhabit everyday memory. Textile practices such as appliqué and embroidery emerge as narrative forms through which experiences of migration, loss, and resilience are articulated, transforming cloth into a visual archive of lived history.

Rather than reconstructing historical events, the films attend to the emotional and sensory traces of migration - memories of separation, interrupted childhoods, and the lingering presence of places and relationships that could not travel across borders. Animation becomes a means of translating these fragile recollections into visual narratives, allowing personal and community memories to surface as alternative histories.

Together, the works suggest that memory - carried through stories, images, and stitched surfaces - can serve as a powerful medium for recalling experiences of displacement, preserving fragile inheritances, and reclaiming histories that might otherwise remain untold.

**Borders, Citizenship, and Belonging**

**Teaching**

Associate Professor Swargajyoti Gohain, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, teaches Borders, Citizenship, and Belonging, examining national and territorial borders alongside symbolic, cultural and social boundaries. The course considers populations that cross borders or live deterritorialised lives and explores how ideas of citizenship, belonging and identity are shaped by political and social structures. Students examine how borders can generate unequal citizenship, exclusion and marginalisation, while also considering how people negotiate, cross and reshape boundaries through everyday practices. The course's engagement with migration, citizenship, belonging, territoriality and unequal access to rights provides strong curriculum evidence around inclusion and inequality. It is especially relevant given Professor Gohain's research on borderlands, indigenous politics, mobility, infrastructure, development and ecology.

**Gender Lens Reporting**

**Teaching**

Neha Dixit teaches Gender Lens Reporting, a course that develops students' ability to examine journalism and public discourse through an intersectional gender lens. The course explores how media representation can reproduce or challenge stereotypes affecting women, LGBTQI communities and other marginalised groups, while examining the intersections of gender with caste, class, ethnicity, nationality, migration, conflict and development. Students analyse reportage across areas including politics, economics, war, poverty, crime, health, sexuality, reproductive rights, migration and displacement, learning to identify how gender shapes both the experiences being reported and the processes through which stories enter public discourse. Through reporting exercises, films, fieldwork, seminars and discussions, students develop skills to produce more inclusive and responsible journalism. The course therefore combines practical journalistic training with critical engagement with representation, inequality and participation in public life.

**Examining Environmental Justice and Social Inclusion**

**Teaching**

This course taught by Professor Mukul Sharma examines the intersections between environmental justice, social exclusion, and equitable access to natural resources. Through a critical exploration of issues relating to race, caste, class, ethnicity, and community rights, students investigate how social inequalities influence access to land, water, forests, and other environmental resources. Drawing on both Indian and global perspectives, the course analyses environmental conflicts, social justice movements, and governance frameworks that shape environmental rights and inclusion. By fostering a deeper understanding of environmental equity and inclusive resource governance, the course equips students to address structural inequalities and contribute towards more just and sustainable societies.

**Wealth and Inequality in China (1500 to the Present)**

**Teaching**

Professor Eloise Wright's Wealth and Inequality in China (1500 to the Present) examines the historical development and distribution of wealth and inequality in China over five centuries. By tracing changes in economic structures, social hierarchies and patterns of wealth distribution, the course enables students to understand how inequalities emerge and evolve within societies. Its focus on the distribution of wealth and the social and economic factors shaping inequality makes it directly relevant to questions of inclusive development and equitable societies. The course provides students with a historical perspective for examining how economic transformation can influence different sections of society and how patterns of inequality can persist or change over time. SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities is therefore a strong and direct alignment, as understanding the causes and evolution of economic and social disparities is central to addressing inequality within and across societies. Ashoka's China Studies programme lists the course as a China Studies offering taught by Professor Eloise Wright.

**Cross-Cultural Psychology**

**Teaching**

Assistant Professor Mary Jane Arneaud from the Department of Psychology and Cognitive Sciences teaches Cross-Cultural Psychology, examining how cultural contexts influence human thought, emotion, behaviour and psychological processes. The course critically considers the representation of different cultures within psychological research, including the relative under-representation of non-Western populations, and encourages students to examine how psychological theories and findings may vary across cultural settings. By developing cultural competence and encouraging greater recognition of diverse experiences and perspectives, the course contributes to a more inclusive understanding of human behaviour and psychological knowledge.

**Decolonisation: An International History**

**Teaching**

Assistant Professor Pallavi Raghavan, Department of International Relations, teaches Decolonisation: An International History, examining decolonisation as a transformative process that reshaped the international political order. The course explores the interaction between global ideological and economic processes and local political actors, examining how different forms of colonial rule and struggles for independence produced varied pathways towards political transition. It also considers how decolonisation challenged existing international hierarchies while, in some cases, reproducing aspects of those hierarchies. Students examine competing understandings of territory, including empire, nation-state, locality and mandate systems, alongside debates around self-determination, colonialism, political sovereignty and the relationship between colonisers and oppressed populations. By encouraging students to critically examine the historical foundations of contemporary international inequalities and political institutions, the course provides substantive curriculum evidence around the legacy of colonialism and unequal international structures.

**Disability and Justice**

**Teaching**

Head of the Department and Assistant Professor Bastian Steuwer and Teaching Assistant Sarah Jackson from the Department of Political Science, teach Disability and Justice, which examines disability through the frameworks of political philosophy, justice and social inclusion. The course explores how social and institutional arrangements can generate or reinforce disadvantage, discrimination and unequal access to opportunities and resources for persons with disabilities. Students engage with questions concerning equality, rights, inclusion and the responsibilities of institutions towards people with different abilities and needs. By moving beyond an individual understanding of disability to consider the structural conditions that shape people's participation in society, the course encourages students to critically assess what an equitable and inclusive society should provide. Its focus on disability, justice and barriers to equal participation makes it particularly valuable as evidence of teaching that addresses the structural dimensions of inequality and inclusion.

**Energy Transition: People, Politics, and Sustainability**

**Teaching**

Taught by Sumedha Basu, Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies, Energy Transition: People, Politics, and Sustainability examines the transition towards sustainable energy through technological, policy, political and social perspectives. The course begins by establishing an understanding of energy systems, their historical evolution, associated emissions and their importance to development and societal welfare. Students then explore the challenges of transitioning these systems, considering governance structures, technologies, policies and political dynamics. A strong focus is placed on questions of energy justice, including who benefits from energy transitions, who may be excluded and how transitions affect different communities and scales. The course applies these perspectives to India’s evolving energy landscape while drawing on experiences from other geographies. Alongside conceptual learning, students develop practical capabilities to assess real-world energy challenges, evaluate policy options and contribute to strategy development and policy analysis.

**Dots and Dashes: The Politics of Space, Territory, and Maps**

**Teaching**

Visiting Faculty Natallia Khaniejo, Department of International Relations, teaches Dots and Dashes: The Politics of Space, Territory, and Maps, examining how maps, territorial boundaries and spatial representations shape political understandings of the world. The course engages with territory, borders, cartography, state-making and political power, encouraging students to question the assumption that maps simply represent an objective geographical reality. It provides a critical perspective on how spatial knowledge can influence political authority, territorial claims and the construction of identities and boundaries. The course is particularly relevant to understanding how political and institutional processes produce spaces of inclusion and exclusion, and how territorial arrangements affect communities and their relationship with states. Professor Khaniejo's broader research on political geography, colonial and postcolonial state-making, cartographic practices and epistemic violence reinforces the course's relevance to these questions.




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

Sustainable communities depend on infrastructure that is safe, inclusive, climate-responsive and designed around the needs of the people who use it. At Ashoka, our approach to sustainable communities extends beyond the University campus to the neighbouring communities of Asawarpur, while also integrating sustainability and resilience into our own built environment. Through improvements to community infrastructure, climate-responsive campus design, green spaces and lower-emission mobility, we are working to create environments that are healthier, more accessible and better equipped to respond to changing environmental and social needs.

**1. Strengthening Community Infrastructure in Asawarpur**

**Campus**

Our contribution to sustainable communities extends beyond the University campus through the development of public infrastructure at the Government Primary and Middle Schools in Asawarpur.

The initiative focused on improving the physical environments in which children learn and communities interact, including classrooms, sanitation facilities, drinking water infrastructure, ventilation, learning spaces and sports areas. These improvements have helped transform previously neglected or inadequate spaces into cleaner, safer and more functional environments for students and teachers alike.

The multiple projects also included practical improvements such as clearing overgrown vegetation around the schools, repairing classroom blackboards, upgrading lighting and electrical fittings, improving seating arrangements, and repairing window meshes and ventilation systems. Improvements to washrooms and access to safe drinking water have further strengthened the basic infrastructure available to students and teachers.

The initiative has demonstrated how investment in safe, functional and inclusive community infrastructure can contribute to stronger relationships with local communities.

**2. Designing a Climate-Responsive and Resilient Built Environment**

**Campus**

At Ashoka, our campus infrastructure incorporates design approaches that respond to the climatic conditions of Sonipat while improving the resilience and resource efficiency of the built environment. Since the execution phase of campus development, architectural strategies such as building orientation, natural ventilation and jaali screens have been incorporated to manage heat, daylight and airflow. These passive design features help improve occupant comfort while reducing dependence on artificial cooling.

The campus also incorporates double-wall construction, brick cladding and Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (AAC) blocks, which improve the thermal performance of buildings and reduce heat transfer. These construction choices contribute to more efficient and adaptable buildings while reducing the environmental pressures associated with maintaining indoor comfort in a hot and semi-arid climate.

The importance of this approach is particularly relevant to Sonipat's local climate, which experiences prolonged hot summers, high solar exposure, dry conditions and seasonal dust storms. Designing buildings to respond to these conditions strengthens the University's ability to maintain comfortable and functional spaces while reducing dependence on energy-intensive systems.

**3. Creating Healthy and Green Community Spaces**

**Campus**

Green and open spaces form an important part of a sustainable built environment by supporting environmental quality and creating a balance to cater to human well-being.

As discussed under SDG 15 in more detail, this balance is created through the maintenance of landscaped gardens, open green areas and extensive tree and shrub cover representing 54 floral species. These spaces contribute to improved air quality, local microclimate regulation and reduced soil erosion, while also providing areas for the campus community to interact with and benefit from the surrounding natural environment.

Our developed green spaces serve more than an aesthetic function, they form part of the campus's environmental infrastructure by helping moderate local conditions, supporting biodiversity and creating healthier shared spaces.

**Key indicators**

- **AC04- Indian Green Building Council (IGBC) certified**
- **1.5 million sq ft built-up area**
- **1,918 trees of 54 differing floral species**
- **Green area spanning approximately 13 acres**
- **654 sq m of shrub cover**

**4. Promoting Sustainable and Shared Mobility**

**Campus**

Transport is an important component of sustainable communities because our mobility choices influence congestion, air quality, emissions and accessibility. To encourage cleaner and more efficient travel, We operate six CNG-powered shuttles and two CNG-powered buses connecting the University campus with key locations including Azadpur Metro Station, TDI Lake Grove, White Lily, Sonipat and Parker Residency. By providing shared transport options, we reduce the need for individual vehicles travelling to and from campus, while helping improve connectivity between the campus and surrounding residential and transport hubs.

We also continue to integrate CNG vehicles into our transport fleet wherever feasible and optimise vehicle utilisation through shared mobility. This helps reduce dependence on conventional diesel and petrol vehicles, lower fuel consumption and limit emissions associated with daily commuting. Beyond the environmental benefits, shared transport contributes to a more interconnected campus by providing a reliable mobility option for students, faculty and staff of the University travelling between the campus and surrounding areas on a daily basis.

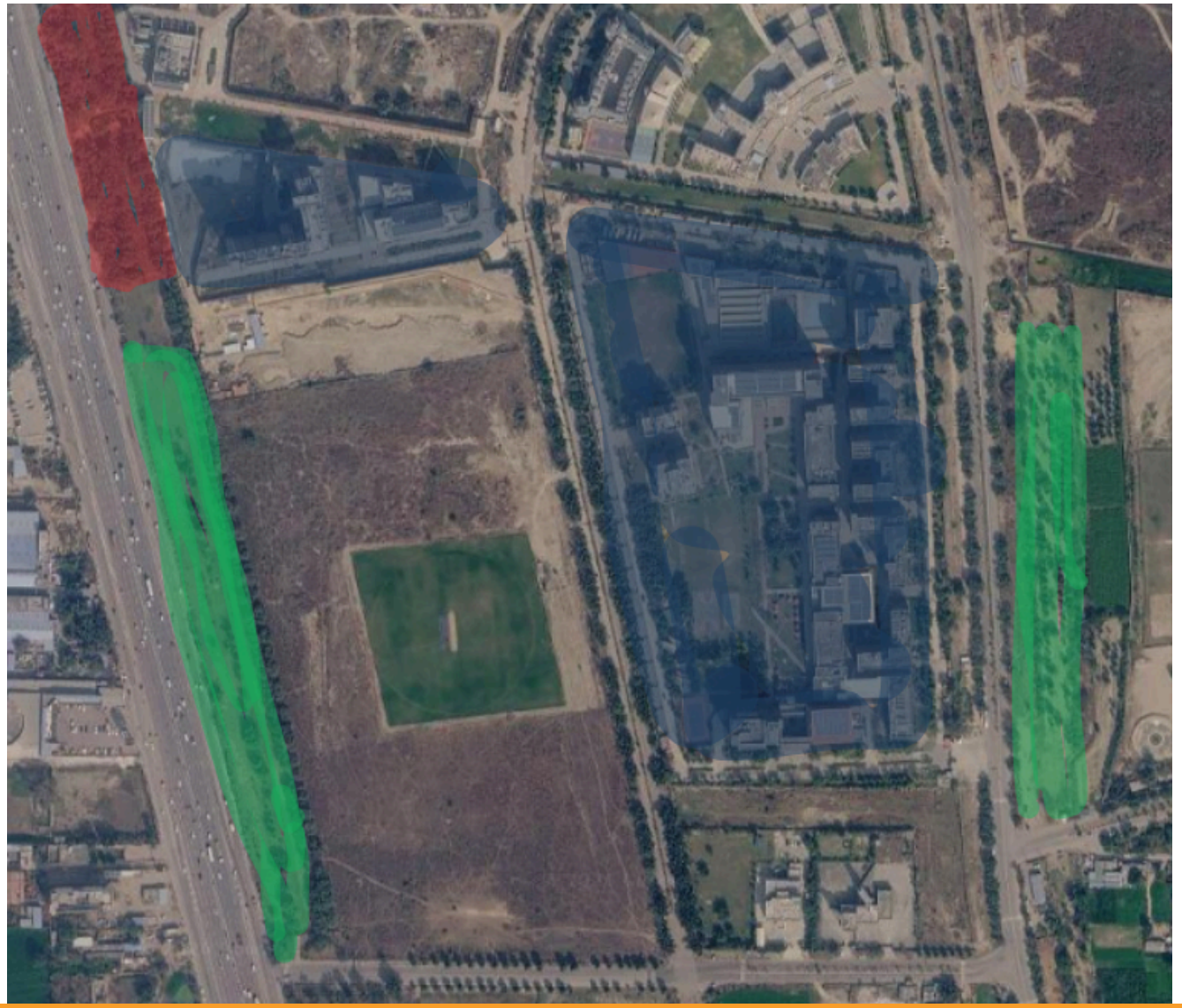
**5. Expanding Urban Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity**

**Campus**

We are also strengthening our role as a steward of local green infrastructure through the development and management of diverse green spaces across campus and surrounding areas. Our horticulture department manages a 2.5-acre Miyawaki forest, an experimental dense plantation designed to enhance biodiversity, reduce noise pollution, attract local fauna and strengthen the ecological balance of the campus and surrounding regions.

Additionally, we have also expanded tree cover, with the campus currently supporting 1900+ trees and 650 $m^2$+ of shrubs, while prioritising native species in the expanding campus landscape. Further, we are extending our environmental stewardship beyond the immediate campus boundary through the responsibility for the redevelopment and maintenance of Green Belt one and Green Belt two within Rajiv Gandhi Education City (RGEC).

The initiative provides an opportunity to restore and strengthen shared green infrastructure through native plantations, biodiversity-sensitive landscaping and improved ecological management.



**6. Student-Led Initiatives for Inclusive and Sustainable Communities**

**Campus**

Ashoka's clubs and societies contribute to the creation of a vibrant, inclusive and engaged campus community by providing students with platforms for cultural expression, community engagement, sustainability and social action. The Student Life Office supports a broad network of student-led organisations through mentorship, infrastructure, budgeting and event coordination, enabling students to design and implement activities that enrich campus life and strengthen connections within and beyond the University.

**Art and Design Collective – Creating Shared Cultural Spaces**

The Art and Design Collective provides a student-led platform for artists and designers to connect, collaborate and develop their creative practices. The Collective organises activities, workshops and interactive sessions and provides opportunities to showcase the work of both the University and external artists. By creating spaces for artistic exchange and participation, the Collective contributes to a culturally vibrant campus environment where creative expression can be shared across the student community.

**The Green Room and Performing Arts – Strengthening Cultural Life on Campus**

The Green Room, Ashoka's theatre society, works to build and foster a culture of dramatics on campus. Alongside other performing arts groups such as Abhinaya and Vistaar, it provides opportunities for students to participate in creative and cultural activities, develop artistic skills and engage with one another through performances and events. Abhinaya promotes Indian and Western dance traditions, while Vistaar focuses on creating an inclusive and accessible musical community irrespective of prior experience or skill level.

**7. Co-Curricular Mela – Performing Arts, Visual Arts and Cultural Expression**

**Campus**

The Co-Curricular Mela brought together more than 20 creative courses spanning performing arts, visual arts, languages and literature, creating a shared space for students, faculty and visitors to experience student work. The programme included dance, music, theatre, storytelling, photography, sculpture, architecture and spoken-word poetry, with live performances by students from the Odissi and theatre courses. Participatory music and storytelling workshops further encouraged visitors to engage directly with the arts rather than only observe performances. The Mela also highlighted multilingual literature and creative work, celebrating cultural diversity through translation and artistic expression. By creating an accessible setting for students and visitors to engage with diverse artistic traditions, the event contributed to a vibrant and inclusive environment.

**8. The Ashoka Literature Festival 2025 – Literature, Art and Music**

**Campus**

The Ashoka Literature Festival 2025 brought together visual arts, music and cultural events across three days, with 100+ guests participating alongside the Ashokan community. The festival included speaker sessions and workshops with Rekhta Learning, creating a platform for interaction between students, artists, writers and external cultural practitioners. The festival's combination of literary programming, artistic engagement and live performance strengthened access to cultural activities within the University and created opportunities for students to engage with a wider range of artistic and literary traditions.



**8. i. Indian Ocean at the Ashoka Literature Festival 2025**

As part of the Ashoka Literature Festival 2025, the fusion-rock band Indian Ocean also performed a set bringing together contemporary music with Indian literary and cultural traditions. The performance opened with Hari Om, a Sanskrit composition, followed by a rendition of the approximately 500-year-old poetry of Sant Kabir in Jhini Re Jhini.

**9. Jazbaa – Cultural Programming and Student-led Events**

**Campus**

Jazbaa, the Cultural Ministry of Ashoka University, organised a range of cultural events during the academic year, including Haats, Garba and Winter Ball, while collaborating with more than 50 student clubs and societies. These activities created shared spaces for students from different backgrounds to participate in cultural and social events and contributed to a more connected campus community. The scale of Jazbaa's collaborations is particularly relevant because it demonstrates how student-led cultural programmes can bring diverse groups together and create an inclusive community environment.

**Flooded and Forgotten: A Geospatial Study of Archaeological Sites of Deltaic Bengal**

**Research**

Samayita Banerjee, PhD Candidate in the Department of History, investigated the archaeological and historical significance of sites located within the dynamic Ganga–Brahmaputra–Meghna delta, with particular attention to the deltaic and coastal landscapes of Bengal. Drawing on archaeological evidence, fieldwork and spatial approaches, the research examines how human settlements and cultural remains have interacted with a landscape continually reshaped by river movement, erosion and changing ecological conditions. The study demonstrates the challenges involved in documenting and preserving heritage within a fluid landscape, where conventional fixed notions of archaeological sites and boundaries may not adequately capture historical patterns of occupation. Banerjee's work contributes to a more nuanced understanding of how communities have inhabited and interacted with changing riverine environments over time. By connecting archaeology, landscape transformation and heritage conservation, the research contributes through its focus on safeguarding cultural heritage and understanding sustainable human settlements within environmentally dynamic landscapes.

**Unearthing the Past: Finding Ancient Kannauj Through Remote Sensing and GIS**

**Research**

Debdutta Sanyal, PhD Candidate in the Department of History, uses remote sensing and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to investigate the historical urban landscape of Kannauj, an important centre of early medieval India. The research brings together historical and archaeological sources with digital spatial techniques to identify and interpret traces of the ancient settlement that may no longer be readily visible through conventional archaeological investigation. By combining Digital Elevation Models, historical cartography, satellite imagery and field-based evidence, the study examines the spatial extent of ancient Kannauj and its relationship with surrounding river systems and the wider landscape. The research demonstrates how geospatial technologies can complement traditional historical and archaeological methods by enabling researchers to reconstruct settlement patterns and investigate changes in historical landscapes. This approach is particularly valuable for documenting heritage where physical remains are fragmented or threatened by subsequent landscape transformation.

**Shadows of the Tomb Raider: The Portrayal of Archaeology and Exploration of South Asia**

**Research**

Akash Srinivas, Assistant Director of the Centre for Interdisciplinary Archaeological Research, collaborated with Saloni Diwakar to examine how South Asian archaeology, cultural heritage and landscapes are represented in the Tomb Raider franchise. The chapter critically analyses the representation of South Asian archaeological sites, cultural artefacts, ecological landscapes and local communities, contrasting these with the game's positioning of archaeology as an activity led by a Western protagonist. The authors explore how such representations can reproduce colonial narratives in which South Asian heritage is presented primarily as something to be discovered, excavated or appropriated by outsiders, rather than as cultural heritage with significance for the communities and societies in which it is situated. The research also considers how popular culture shapes perceptions of archaeology, conservation and cultural ownership, and argues for more inclusive approaches to representing archaeological landscapes and heritage. By interrogating the relationship between cultural representation, archaeological heritage and colonial legacies, the research contributes to broader discussions around inclusive heritage management and the protection and interpretation of cultural heritage.

**Bhashavaad 2.0 – National Translation Conference**

**Partnership**

The Ashoka Centre for Translation, in partnership with the New India Foundation (NIF), hosted Bhashavaad 2.0, a national conference focused on India's translation ecosystem and multilingual literary heritage in 2025. The conference brought together writers, translators, publishers, researchers and other practitioners to examine the role of translation in connecting India's diverse linguistic traditions. With Bhashavaad drawing participation from hundreds of attendees and students, the initiative created a national forum for conversations around the movement of literature and knowledge across languages. The conference also highlighted the institutional and cultural infrastructure needed to sustain translation practices and strengthen engagement between India's different linguistic communities. Bhashavaad supports greater accessibility of cultural and intellectual resources while recognising India's multilingualism as an important dimension of its social and cultural landscape.

**Bifunctional Proximity-Inducing Strategies for Targeted and Programmable Post-Translational Modifications**

**Research**

PhD researcher Sadiya Tanga, Department of Chemistry, working with Dr Basudeb Maji's chemogenetics research group, contributed to a review of emerging proximity-inducing technologies for manipulating protein function and cellular processes. The research traces the development of proteolysis-targeting chimeras and related technologies beyond conventional protein degradation towards approaches capable of directing biological molecules to specific cellular compartments and modifying their functions. It examines emerging platforms including PROTACs, LYTACs, AUTACs, RIBOTACs and other biomolecular chimeras, alongside advances in computational and AI-guided design and the identification of new molecular targets. The review highlights how these technologies could expand the range of biological molecules that can be therapeutically manipulated, including previously difficult-to-target proteins and RNA-associated complexes. By bringing together advances in chemistry, molecular biology and biotechnology, the research demonstrates the potential of proximity pharmacology to support next-generation therapeutic development. It therefore contributes to biomedical innovation and the development of new technological approaches to addressing complex diseases.

### Healing Earth 5.0 – Building Partnerships for Resilient Communities

**Partnerships**

At Ashoka we use our academic and research platforms to bring together diverse voices to address environmental challenges affecting communities. Through Healing Earth 5.0, our annual sustainability-focused conference, we created a space for researchers, practitioners, environmental activists, policymakers and community-oriented organisations to exchange knowledge and explore collaborative responses to environmental challenges. The discussions extended beyond environmental science to consider the role of communities, local knowledge and policy in addressing issues such as biodiversity loss, water insecurity and environmental degradation. By connecting academic knowledge with perspectives from practitioners and grassroots actors, we seek to support more locally relevant and resilient approaches to sustainable development.

Through discussions held at the Healing Earth conference, we also explored community-based approaches to address water challenges in urban and peri-urban areas. These included practices such as rainwater harvesting, the revival of lakes and wells, and the reuse of treated wastewater. The conversations highlighted the importance of combining scientific and technical knowledge with community participation when developing solutions for water-stressed communities. Through these platforms, we contribute to conversations on how cities and surrounding communities can become more resilient to growing water challenges.

### Field Visit to Nizamuddin Basti

**Partnerships**

As part of Rethinking Development and Sustainability, 33 students, under Professor Mitul Baruah, undertook a field visit to Nizamuddin Basti to examine how heritage-led urban renewal intersects with questions of poverty, marginalisation, environmental sustainability and the right to the city.

Led by the Aga Khan Development Network, the visit covered important built-heritage sites alongside the wider Basti settlement, enabling students to consider how state, non-state and community actors shape urban transformation. Students were introduced to the Aga Khan Trust for Culture's work on heritage restoration and conservation, alongside initiatives addressing community health, skills development, women's training and sanitation.

### Climate-Resilient Cities and Community-Based Environmental Action

**Partnerships**

Ashoka also engaged with EcoSattva Environmental Solutions and the Centre for Applied Research and People's Engagement to highlight the role of community-driven approaches in creating resilient and sustainable settlements. Founded by Young India Fellowship alumna Natasha Zarine, EcoSattva works at the intersection of solid waste management, ecological restoration, green-cover management, wetland restoration and climate resilience. EcoSattva's work demonstrates how municipal systems, community participation and ecological interventions can be integrated to address urban environmental challenges. The organisation's work on the Kham River Restoration Mission, for example, combined river restoration, waste management, public spaces, community engagement and livelihood opportunities, providing a model for integrated urban resilience.

### University of Toronto – School of Cities: Multidisciplinary Urban Capstone Project (MUCP)

**Partnerships**

Ashoka undertook a collaborative endeavour with the University of Toronto's School of Cities to seek to advance our interdisciplinary and community-driven approaches to addressing urban challenges in India. Through the MUCP, students from both institutions work in multidisciplinary teams to investigate locally identified urban challenges, engage with community partners and develop practical, evidence-based interventions.

The programme connected learning with field research, stakeholder engagement and solution prototyping, with areas of work including urban spaces, waste management, livelihood and skill development for marginalised communities, and inclusive urban development. The partnership strengthens experiential learning while creating opportunities to translate research into locall solutions. By bringing together students, researchers and community stakeholders, the initiative supports approaches to urban development.

### Rooted Cities: Citizen-Centric Approaches to Sustainable Communities

**Partnerships**

The Office of Sustainability collaborated with Rooted Cities, a citizen-centric initiative founded by Ashoka's Young India Fellowship alumni, to organise a Climate Fresk workshop in March 2026.

Rooted Cities works to create learning spaces, experiences and platforms that encourage people to actively engage with their locality and explore how human and non-human life can thrive together. The collaboration brought this approach into the Ashoka community through a science-based learning experience grounded in IPCC findings.

By creating opportunities for Ashoka's stakeholders to engage collectively with climate challenges, the initiative strengthens awareness of the relationship between climate change, communities and the built environment. The partnership contributes to encourage informed and active participation in shaping sustainable communities, while strengthening Ashoka's broader efforts to build environmental awareness and climate literacy across our campus community.

**Urban Edges and the Changing Landscape of Sonipat: A Collaboration with O.P. Jindal Global University**

**Partnerships**

During the reporting period, our academic engagement with OP Jindal Global University has contributed to conversations around the changing relationship between urban development and surrounding communities. In February 2026, Ashoka hosted Between Fields and Flyovers: Stories from Delhi's Urban Edges, featuring perspectives on the transformation of villages and peri-urban areas around Delhi and Sonipat's emergence as an education-oriented urban centre. The discussion examined how campuses, residential development, new economic activity and expanding urban infrastructure interact with established rural communities and livelihoods. Such engagement provides a locally relevant lens for understanding the social and spatial consequences of rapid urbanisation, particularly in regions surrounding Ashoka's own campus. By creating a platform for interdisciplinary dialogue on urban expansion, community change and rural–urban linkages, the engagement promotes a greater need of understanding inclusive and sustainable urbanisation and the need to account for local communities.

**Archives from Below, the Digital Humanities Turn**

**Partnerships**

In May 2026, Professor Monia Acciari, Department of Media Studies, delivered an invited talk at Università Orientale in Naples on Archives from Below, the Digital Humanities Turn. The engagement drew on her ongoing People Archive of Indian Cinema project and work on 3D archiving of film heritage, connecting digital humanities with approaches to preserving and interpreting India's cinematic history. The initiative demonstrates how contemporary digital tools can support the documentation, preservation and wider accessibility of cultural archives, while creating opportunities for international academic exchange. By engaging with archival practices through a digital humanities perspective, the talk also highlights the role of media scholarship in preserving cultural memory and making historical materials available for future research and learning. The international academic engagement further strengthened knowledge exchange and collaboration between scholars working across media, archives and digital humanities.



**Modern Megacities in History and Theory**

**Teaching**

Professor Aparna Vaidik, Department of History, teaches Modern Megacities in History and Theory, examining the historical and social processes through which some of the world's largest urban centres have developed. The course investigates how global, regional, national and local forces have combined over time to produce modern megacities, while considering their growth, resilience, diversity and dynamism. Students examine how cities and their populations respond to unprecedented concentrations of people, capital and infrastructure, and explore what it means to live within rapidly transforming urban environments. The course also considers the relationship between capitalism, modernity and urbanisation, providing students with an interdisciplinary framework for understanding the historical foundations of contemporary urban challenges. By examining both the opportunities and pressures generated by large-scale urbanisation, the course provides strong curriculum evidence around sustainable and resilient cities.

**Visual and Material Cultures of the Himalayas**

**Teaching**

Latika Gupta, Visiting Faculty of Visual Arts, taught Visual and Material Cultures of the Himalayas, which examined the relationship between objects, places, communities and cultural identities across the Western Himalayas. The course uses visual anthropology, material culture studies, museology and art history to explore how Himalayan cultures have been represented by both local communities and external observers. Students critically examine colonial and contemporary photography, museum collections, sacred objects, community museums and cultural institutions, with particular attention to the politics and ethics of representation. Field visits to a Tibetan exile settlement and a state museum in Delhi provide opportunities to understand how material culture changes meaning when objects move between sacred, community and museum contexts. The course also considers the relationship between heritage, religion and collective memory, encouraging students to examine whose histories and cultural practices are preserved, represented or excluded within institutional narratives.

**Cities, Ecology and Equity**

**Teaching**

Professor of Environmental Studies, Sociology and Anthropology Amita Baviskar taught Cities, Ecology and Equity, examining urbanisation through the interconnected lenses of ecology, social conflict, economic development and inequality. The course explored how cities generate wealth and opportunity while simultaneously producing ecological crises and unequal access to urban resources. Students examined relationships between cities and surrounding rural areas, including the movement of people and goods, while analysing the political and spatial processes through which urban populations and environments are managed. The course's focus on urban ecological pressures provides a relevant framework for understanding how climate change interacts with rapidly growing cities, particularly through questions of resource use, environmental vulnerability and unequal exposure to environmental risks. By bringing ecological concerns into conversation with questions of social equity and urban development, the course enabled students to examine the challenges involved in creating more resilient and sustainable urban futures.

**Art and Ecology in the Wake of Climate Change**

**Teaching**

Professor Srinivas Aditya Mopidevi, Visiting Faculty of Visual Arts, guided students through his course Art and Ecology in the Wake of Climate Change. The course examines the historical and contemporary relationship between artistic practice and ecological concerns. Beginning with Indigenous, Folk and Tribal practices and extending through Land Art, Earth Art, Environmental Art, Bio-art and community-based practices, the course explores how artists have engaged with land, materials, ecosystems and changing planetary conditions. Students consider art as a medium for communicating climate realities, strengthening public awareness and imagining approaches to adaptation and sustainability. Modules on materiality, community engagement, waste, environmental activism, Black Ecologies and the ethics of representation further broaden the discussion. The course also incorporates a practical 'Material Literacy' component examining the life cycle and use of everyday materials. Research-led modules draw on initiatives such as Climate Recipes and Sustaina India, demonstrating how artistic practice can contribute to conversations around sustainable livelihoods and climate action.

**Delhi's Air Pollution: Science and Politics**

**Teaching**

Taught by Meghna Agarwala, Department of Environmental Studies, 'Delhi's Air Pollution: Science and Politics' uses air pollution in the Indo-Gangetic Plains as a case through which students investigate the relationship between environmental science, data, economics and public policy. The course examines the biophysical and socio-economic drivers of pollution while asking how different explanations, areas of scientific consensus and policy responses have emerged. Students work with data to test assumptions and assess claims relating to pollution, its causes and potential solutions. The course also considers realistic interventions to address air pollution and the practical and political barriers that can affect their implementation. By combining theoretical concepts with hands-on data analysis, the course develops students' ability to critically evaluate environmental knowledge and evidence. This interdisciplinary approach connects a major urban environmental challenge with its implications for public health, economic activity, urban governance and climate.




# ENSURE SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION PATTERNS

**1. Integrated Waste Segregation and Processing System**

**Campus**

At Ashoka, we recognise that sustainability is not only about what we produce, but also about how thoughtfully we consume, use and manage the resources around us. Through responsible procurement, waste management, resource efficiency and conscious consumption practices, we are working to reduce our environmental footprint while encouraging a culture of accountability across campus.

From managing waste streams and promoting segregation to making more mindful choices about the resources we use, we are steadily building practices that support a more circular and sustainable campus. Through these efforts, we aim to ensure that our everyday operations reflect a simple principle: use what we need, minimise what we waste, and make every resource count.

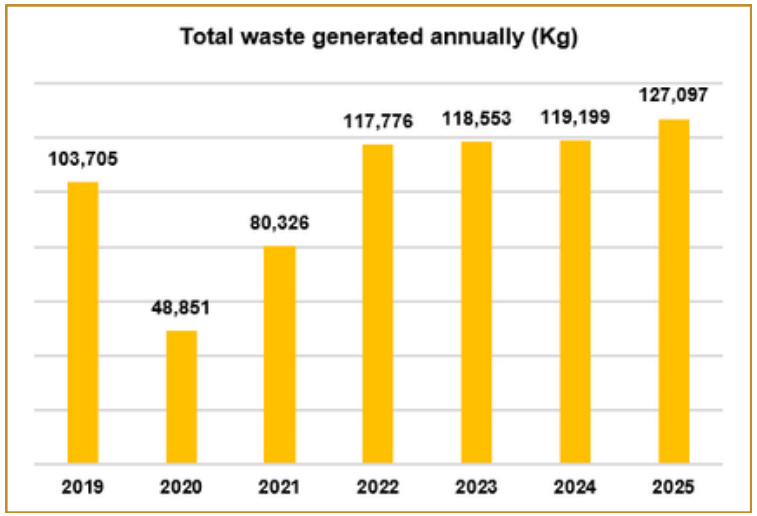
We have established a campus-wide, multi-stream waste segregation system that enables source-level separation of waste into organic, recyclable, inorganic (non-recyclable) and biomedical categories. We have strategically placed collection bins across residences, dining areas, academic spaces and laboratories throughout campus to support efficient collection, which subsequently avoids mixed waste generation, and improves downstream recovery and processing.

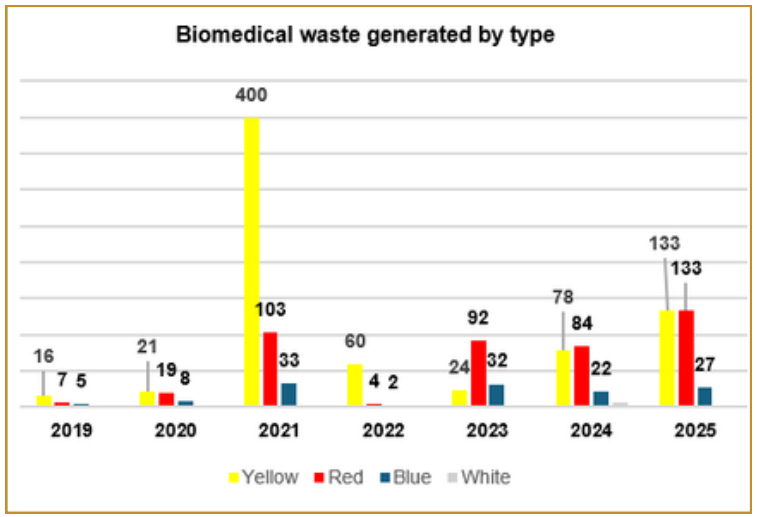
**2. Closing the Loop on Sanitary Waste through the PadCare Initiative**

**Campus**

The Office of Sustainability, through Ashoka's campus sustainability efforts, advanced circular waste management through the PadCare Initiative, a collaboration with Indian startup PadCare Labs. The initiative established a dedicated system for collecting and processing used sanitary products through Female Health Units on campus, enabling recovered material to be converted into reusable products.

More than 1,307 kg of sanitary waste has been processed through the initiative, reducing dependence on landfill disposal and demonstrating a circular approach to a traditionally difficult-to-manage waste stream. The initiative connects campus-level collection with specialised waste processing and material recovery, allowing discarded sanitary products to re-enter productive use rather than being treated solely as waste. The collaboration demonstrates how external technical expertise can complement institutional sustainability systems to create more resource-efficient and circular approaches to waste management, while also providing a measurable example of responsible consumption and production in campus operations.



### 3. On-Campus Organic Waste Composting

**Campus**

To manage biodegradable waste with a focus on circularity and environmental responsibility, Ashoka operates a high-capacity composting system with a capacity of 500 kg per day.

Within a few days, organic waste is converted into nutrient-rich compost, which is subsequently reused within campus for landscaping and nursery operations, contributing to better soil content, and directly enabling sustainable landscape management. This closed-loop system reduces food waste and subsequent waste sent to landfills.

### 4. Integrated Resource and Waste Management

**Campus**

At Ashoka, we follow an integrated approach to responsible resource and waste management, covering electronic waste, biomedical waste and the reuse of sanitary pads. Electronic waste is managed through authorised recycling partners, while dedicated collection points and campus-wide awareness initiatives encourage responsible disposal and recovery of valuable materials. Biomedical waste generated on campus is handled through a segregated, compliance-driven system using colour-coded bins and authorised disposal agencies, in accordance with the Biomedical Waste Management Rules, 2016.

### 5. Biomedical waste management

**Campus**

We follow a structured and compliance-driven approach to the safe management of biomedical waste across campus. Our system ensures proper segregation at source, secure collection and storage, authorised treatment and disposal, and final processing in line with the Biomedical Waste Management Rules, 2016 by the MoEFCC.

This helps us ensure safe handling, reduce environmental risk, and uphold our commitment to regulatory compliance and responsible waste management.

### 6. World Environment Day 2025

**Campus**

In June 2025, the Office of Sustainability launched a campus-wide Photography and Painting Competition around the United Nations' #BeatPlasticPollution theme for World Environment Day. The initiative invited members of the Ashoka community to reflect on the consequences of plastic consumption and waste and to use creative expression to advocate for sustainable alternatives. Student and staff submissions explored themes including plastic pollution, marine impacts, waste accumulation and the consequences of reliance on disposable materials. By bringing the issue of plastic waste into a university engagement activity, the campaign translated a global sustainability challenge into a campus-level conversation around choices and environmental responsibility.

**Submissions under the Photography and Painting Competition around the United Nations' #BeatPlasticPollution theme**








**7. Swachhata Jagrukta Karyashala: Training Ashoka's Housekeeping Team**

**Campus**

At Ashoka, we launched Swachhata Jagrukta Karyashala, a four-part training and awareness programme on waste management for our housekeeping team, in collaboration with Saahas Zero Waste as part of Earth Day 2025. We recognised the important role played by our housekeeping staff in maintaining a cleaner and more sustainable campus and designed the programme to strengthen their practical understanding of responsible waste management. Through interactive sessions, field-based learning and reflective discussions, we equipped participants with practical knowledge and greater confidence to support sustainable waste practices in their daily work. The programme also reinforced our approach of making sustainability an inclusive campus effort, where the people directly involved in maintaining campus spaces are recognised as important contributors to environmental stewardship.

**8. Student Exhibitions: Material Practice, Waste and Responsible Making**

**Campus**

The Department of Visual Arts concludes its practice-based courses with student exhibitions that provide an opportunity to translate studio learning into completed works presented for active public engagement. Students across drawing, cartooning, zine-making, sculpture and spatial practices learn to work continuously with materials, refine their ideas and consider how artworks are produced, mounted and experienced beyond the studio. Within the Art and Ecology course, the exhibition Aas Paas (Things Around Us) specifically explored different understandings of waste, encouraging students to reconsider the materials and objects that surround everyday life. The exhibition घिच Pitch – the mess we make similarly engaged with ideas of waste and materiality. Together, these practices encourage students to reflect on material choices, waste generation and the relationship between artistic production and environmental responsibility, connecting creative practice with more conscious approaches to consumption and resource use.

**Decoding the Pricing Determinants of Refurbished Smartphones Within Circular Business Model**

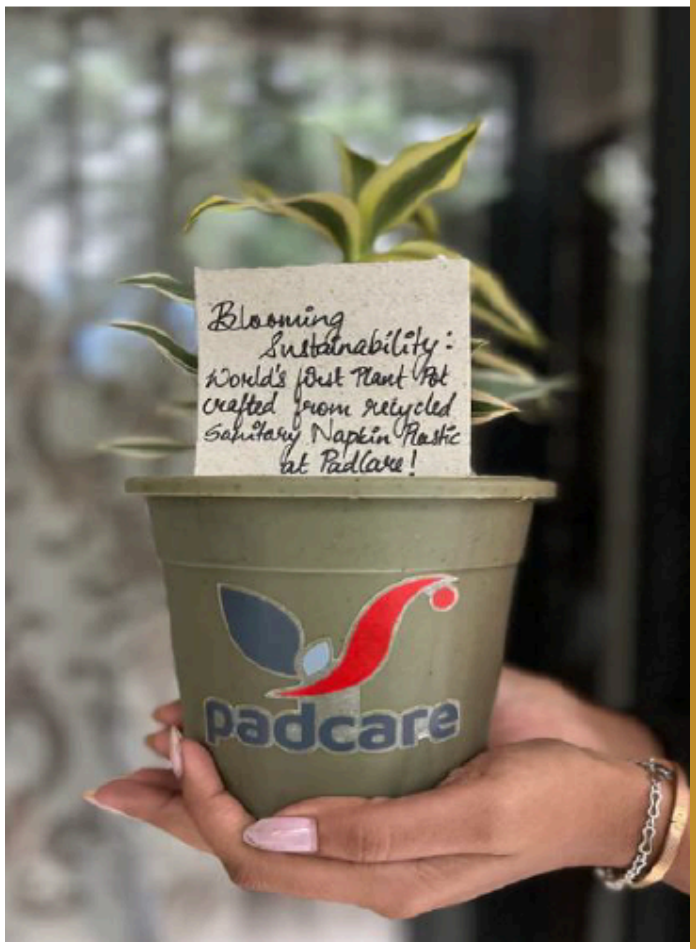
**Research**

Animesh Ghosh, Senior Research Fellow at the Ashoka Centre for a People-centric Energy Transition, alongside Debraj Bhattacharjee, Assistant Professor, Department of Operations and Analytics, FLAME University, K. Navaneethakrishnan, Assistant Professor, VIT-AP School of Business, VIT-AP University, and Naman Dubey, Assistant Professor, Department of Human Resource Management, FLAME University, examines the factors influencing the pricing of refurbished smartphones in Indian e-commerce markets. Using data from thousands of refurbished smartphone listings, the study applies analytical and machine-learning approaches to identify characteristics that influence pricing, including device age, specifications and brand perception. The research contributes to understanding the market mechanisms that can support circular business models by extending the useful life of electronic products. By examining the commercial viability and valuation of refurbished devices, the study addresses an important aspect of responsible consumption: keeping products and materials in use for longer and reducing the pressure associated with premature replacement. Its focus on circularity and product life extension makes SDG 12 a direct and defensible mapping.

**Enabling People-Centric Energy Transition through Circular Economy: Evidence from Rajhara, India**

**Research**

Animesh Ghosh and Vaibhav Chowdhary, Director-in-charge of ACPET, examine how circular-economy principles can support a people-centric transition in coal-mine-affected regions through evidence from Rajhara, Jharkhand. The research explores how discontinued mining assets can be repurposed rather than remaining environmental and economic liabilities, combining household and farmer surveys with qualitative consultations. A key intervention involved converting mine-water resources for Solar Lift Irrigation, enabling agricultural activity in a landscape previously dependent on rainfed farming. The study also examines the formation of a Farmer Producer Organisation to strengthen collective access to inputs, production planning, and markets, alongside clean-cooking practices and their affordability constraints. By assessing resource repurposing alongside institutional arrangements, livelihoods, and environmental feasibility, the research demonstrates how previously underutilised post-mining assets can be redirected towards productive uses. Its emphasis on circularity, resource efficiency, asset repurposing, and more sustainable patterns of production makes it a particularly strong research contribution.



**Mathematics and Creativity in Art and Education**

**Partnerships**

Through a UNESCO webinar held for the International Day of Mathematics, Professor Anni Kumari contributed a presentation exploring the relationship between mathematics, creativity, art and education. The session created an interdisciplinary platform for considering how mathematical ideas can be interpreted and communicated through artistic practice and how creative approaches can enrich educational engagement. By connecting quantitative and creative modes of thinking, the presentation demonstrated the potential of arts-based approaches to broaden how knowledge is communicated and understood across disciplines. The engagement also strengthened the visibility of artistic practice within wider educational and academic conversations, demonstrating how creative methods can contribute to interdisciplinary learning and public knowledge-sharing.

**Contributions of Arts to Sustainability – World Conference on Science and Art for Sustainability**

**Partnerships**

Professor Anni Kumari also represented the Department of Visual Arts at the World Conference on Science and Art for Sustainability in Belgrade, Serbia, contributing to the session Contributions of Arts to Sustainability.

Her participation highlighted the role of artistic practice in advancing conversations around sustainability and demonstrated the value of interdisciplinary engagement between creative practice, science and environmental thinking. The conference brought together academic, cultural and institutional perspectives on the contribution of arts to sustainability, providing a platform to examine how creative methods can communicate environmental challenges and support new ways of thinking about sustainable futures. Participation in such international academic forums also enables knowledge exchange beyond disciplinary boundaries and connects artistic education with wider global sustainability discourse.




During the year, Breathe ESG, founded by Shaayak Chatterjee and Karantaj Singh and incubated at the InfoEdge Centre for Entrepreneurship, was recognised as a Top Sustainable Organisation by Times Now and ET Edge for the second consecutive year. The recognition highlights the venture's continued contribution to advancing sustainability within the enterprise ecosystem and reflects the role of entrepreneurship in developing and promoting solutions that support more responsible business practices.



**Collaborative Consortium on Critical Minerals for Sustainable Energy Transition (3C-SET)**

**Partnerships**

Ashoka Centre for a People-centric Energy Transition (ACPET) launched the Collaborative Consortium on Critical Minerals for Sustainable Energy Transition (3C-SET), bringing together industry leaders, researchers, policymakers and civil society to address the challenges associated with sustainable and responsible critical-mineral supply chains. The consortium focuses on improving the sustainability of mineral use and strengthening approaches to responsible resource management, recognising the growing importance of critical minerals in the global clean-energy transition. By creating a platform where academic research, industry expertise and policy perspectives converge, the initiative seeks to support innovation, policy advocacy and more sustainable practices in critical-mineral management. Its emphasis on responsible supply chains and efficient resource use extends the University's contribution to sustainability beyond campus operations to broader production and consumption systems. The initiative therefore provides a strong example of Ashoka engaging with the systemic dimensions of responsible resource use and sustainable production.




**Strategies to Address India's Critical Minerals Vulnerability through Resource Efficiency**

**Partnerships**

ACPET examined strategies to strengthen India's critical minerals security while supporting the country's transition towards clean energy. The partnership-based research in collaboration with NITI Aayog, TERI, Battery 360 Alliance and Chintan Research Foundation (CRF), with research and consultation engagement from ICRIER and CSEP, assessed the mineral requirements associated with solar PV/CSP, onshore and offshore wind, battery energy storage systems and green hydrogen, using India Energy Security Scenarios (IESS) trajectories to project annual and cumulative demand for critical minerals through 2070 under both business-as-usual and net-zero pathways. The project explored resource efficiency, secondary mineral recovery, trade diversification and strategic reserves as pathways to reduce import dependence and supply-chain vulnerability. By integrating technology assessments with techno-economic modelling and circular economy approaches, the research generated policy recommendations to support resource-efficient renewable energy expansion, resilient supply chains and India's long-term clean energy transition.

**Living with Toxic Development: Shipbreaking in Coastal Bangladesh**

**Partnerships**

The Department of Environmental Studies hosted Dr Camelia Dewan for a colloquium examining the social and environmental consequences of shipbreaking in Sitakunda, Bangladesh. The session explored how workers and local communities navigate significant health risks and environmental pollution while remaining economically dependent on the shipbreaking industry. Through her ongoing research on 'toxic development,' Dr Dewan examined the uneven consequences of rapid industrialisation and questioned conventional assumptions that economic growth necessarily produces shared benefits. Particular attention was given to communities with limited access to land, capital and mobility, highlighting how environmental and occupational risks can disproportionately affect vulnerable populations. The discussion connected industrial development with pollution, livelihoods, health and environmental justice, enabling participants to consider the trade-offs embedded within development pathways and the unequal distribution of their social and ecological costs.



### Waste, Resources and Sustainable Food Systems

#### Teaching

Delivered by Associate Professor Mitul Baruah and Professor Mukul Sharma through the Environmental Studies Foundation Course, the curriculum examines the relationships between human societies, natural resources and contemporary systems of production and consumption. The course explores themes including waste, resource utilisation, water, pollution, agrarian systems and industrial food systems, enabling students to consider the environmental consequences of how resources are produced, consumed and managed. Through an interdisciplinary approach, students examine these challenges alongside their social, economic and ecological dimensions, developing an understanding of the pressures placed on natural systems by prevailing production and consumption patterns. Discussions around waste and resource use encourage students to critically consider efficiency, sustainability and environmental responsibility, while the exploration of food and agrarian systems highlights the wider implications of production choices.

### Economics of Biodiversity

#### Teaching

Professor Karthik Muralidharan taught Economics of Biodiversity. The course explored the growing policy emphasis on a green economy, questioning whether market-based approaches and the financialisation of nature can address biodiversity loss and the environmental costs of production. Students examined the financial approaches to nature and considered both their potential advantages and risks. The course is particularly relevant to responsible consumption and production because it asks students to interrogate the economic structures that influence how natural resources are valued and exploited. Rather than assuming that placing an economic value on nature automatically produces sustainable outcomes, students considered the possible unintended consequences of market mechanisms and financial incentives. The course therefore encouraged critical thinking around the relationship between economic growth, resource use, biodiversity conservation and sustainability.

### Global Supply Chains

#### Teaching

Professor of Economics Devesh Roy taught Global Supply Chains, examining how technological, institutional and political developments have transformed the organisation of production across countries. The course introduced students to Global Supply Chain and Global Value Chain analysis, examining how firms organise production internationally and how countries and regions participate within these systems. Students studied participation and positioning in value chains across agriculture, manufacturing and services, while also examining governance arrangements and the economic, social and environmental consequences of globalised production. The course placed particular emphasis on developing and emerging economies and required students to prepare country- and industry-level analyses and policy briefs. By examining how different regions and groups can participate in and move up global value chains, the course connected international production systems with questions of economic opportunity, productivity and development.

### Political Ecology of Food

#### Teaching

Professor Amita Baviskar taught Political Ecology of Food, examining food systems from farm to plate and the ecological, cultural, economic and political relationships embedded within them. The course explored how changing agrarian systems affect the availability and accessibility of food and how access to food intersects with existing structures of social inequality. Students considered food not simply as a biological necessity but also as a site where questions of identity, health, safety, deprivation, land and environmental well-being converge. By examining relationships between agricultural systems, land-based resources and human and non-human life, the course encouraged students to understand food security through a broader political-ecological lens. Its focus on the conditions under which food is produced, distributed and accessed provides a strong academic contribution to understanding contemporary food systems and the social and ecological factors influencing equitable access to food.

### Rethinking Development and Sustainability

#### Teaching

Offered by the Department of Environmental Studies, Rethinking Development and Sustainability, led by Professor Mitul Baruah with support from undergraduate teaching assistants Anandi Laxmi Somiah and Misha Dutta, critically examines the evolving relationship between development, sustainability, and social justice. Drawing on diverse development theories, the course explores how economic growth, environmental stewardship, governance, and equity intersect in addressing contemporary global challenges. Students engage with themes including sustainable development, gender and environment, agriculture, urbanisation, and the developmental implications of climate and environmental change. Through critical analysis of policy, theory, and real-world case studies, the course equips students with interdisciplinary perspectives to evaluate development pathways and contribute to more inclusive, equitable, and environmentally sustainable futures.

### Cities That Breathe: Environment and Sustainability

#### Teaching

Delivered by Professor Seema Mundoli, the Cities That Breathe: Environment and Sustainability programme introduces students to environmental challenges associated with rapidly urbanising spaces. The 30-hour online programme, delivered across four weekends, explores themes including urban heat, greenery, carbon storage, waste, water scarcity and flooding. Students examine the role of urban greenery in mitigating heat and undertake practical carbon-storage data collection, while a dedicated module on waste is complemented by a lifestyle project examining waste-management practices. The programme also encourages participants to reflect on their own lifestyles and carbon footprints, connecting individual choices with wider environmental pressures. By combining structured teaching with hands-on projects, the course enables students to understand urban sustainability challenges and explore practical approaches to climate mitigation, adaptation and responsible resource management. The programme strengthens students' ability to engage with sustainability through both individual and city-scale perspectives.




# TAKE URGENT ACTION TO COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE AND ITS IMPACTS

**1. Measuring and Reducing Our Carbon Footprint**

**Campus**

At Ashoka, we use the GHG Protocol to quantify emissions associated with campus operations, including electricity consumption and backup power generation. Building-wise energy monitoring enables us to track consumption patterns, identify opportunities for efficiency improvements, and support informed decisions on emission reduction.

In 2025, our total GHG emissions stood at 9,342 $tCO_2e$, with a carbon footprint of 1.94 $tCO_2e$ per person. We recorded an 18.5 per cent reduction in carbon footprint per person since 2019, reflecting progress in improving the carbon efficiency of campus operations. Our emissions inventory covers Scope 1, Scope 2 and Scope 3 emissions, providing a comprehensive understanding of our climate impact. By integrating emissions accounting with routine energy monitoring, we are able to establish measurable baselines, identify key sources of emissions and track progress towards reducing the carbon intensity of our operations.

| |
|---|
| **GHG emissions (Scope 1-3): 9,342 $tCO_2e$** |
| **18.5 per cent reduction in carbon footprint/person since 2019** |
| **Carbon footprint/person: 1.94 $tCO_2e$** |

**2. Expanding Renewable Energy and Reducing Fossil-Fuel Dependence**

**Campus**

We have expanded renewable energy generation across the campus through rooftop solar installations while simultaneously reducing our dependence on diesel-based backup generation. Our campus currently has 893 kW of installed rooftop solar capacity, which generated 924,751 kWh of electricity in 2025, meeting 6.9 per cent of total electricity consumption. At the same time, electricity generated through DG sets accounted for only 4.7 per cent of our electricity demand in 2025, compared with 13 per cent in 2018. This reduction reflects our continued efforts to limit fossil-fuel dependence through improved electrical infrastructure, energy monitoring and more efficient backup-power management. The dedicated electrical feeder has further reduced the need for DG operation during power interruptions, while intelligent sequencing ensures that only the required backup capacity operates when necessary. Together, these measures support a gradual transition towards a lower-carbon campus energy system.

**3. Climate-Responsive and Energy-Efficient Campus Design**

**Campus**

Our campus infrastructure incorporates passive design strategies that reduce heat gain, improve thermal performance and limit dependence on mechanical cooling. Buildings incorporate open corridors, natural ventilation, jaali screens and sunshades, enabling greater use of daylight and airflow while reducing energy requirements. Double-wall construction, brick cladding and Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (AAC) blocks further enhance thermal insulation and reduce heat transfer. These features are particularly relevant to our location in Sonipat, which experiences prolonged hot summers, high solar exposure, dry conditions and seasonal dust storms, with temperatures frequently exceeding 40°C during summer. By integrating climate-responsive features directly into campus design, we address both energy efficiency and resilience to local climatic conditions. This approach reduces reliance on mechanical interventions while creating indoor and outdoor environments that are better adapted to increasing heat and seasonal weather variability.

**4. Promoting Low-Emission and Shared Mobility**

**Campus**

To reduce emissions associated with daily commuting, we operate six CNG-powered shuttles and two buses connecting our campus with key locations including Azadpur Metro Station, TDI Lake Grove, White Lily in Sonipat and Parker Residency. These services provide students and employees with alternatives to individual vehicle use and improve last-mile connectivity with public transport. We also encourage the use of the metro and carpooling as lower-emission commuting options. By combining shared transportation with access to public transit, we seek to reduce dependence on private vehicles, fuel consumption and commuting-related emissions. The use of CNG-powered buses further supports the transition towards lower-emission mobility. Together, these measures contribute to a more efficient campus transportation system while supporting cleaner mobility and improved local air quality.

**5. Strengthening Green Infrastructure and Climate Resilience**

**Campus**

Across our 13-acre campus, 1,918 trees and extensive landscaped areas form an important component of our green infrastructure. These spaces provide shade, support local biodiversity and contribute to the regulation of the campus microclimate, helping moderate heat and improve environmental conditions. Our approach integrates green spaces with the built environment, creating natural buffers around academic, residential and recreational areas. The existing tree cover also complements our passive building-design measures by providing additional shade and reducing exposure to heat across outdoor spaces. Beyond their ecological value, these landscapes contribute to the campus's resilience to increasing temperatures and seasonal environmental stresses. The scale of our existing green cover provides a baseline against which we can continue to monitor and strengthen nature-based approaches to climate resilience, biodiversity conservation and campus environmental quality.

**6. 2025 SDG Report**

**Campus**

At Ashoka, during the previous academic year we released the 2025 SDG Report, presenting a comprehensive view of how sustainability is integrated across academic, research, operational and partnership activities within the University. The report brought together initiatives from departments, centres, student-led efforts and University functions that were mapped against the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

Through this exercise, we highlighted how sustainability extends beyond campus operations to include teaching, research, community engagement and institutional partnerships. The report also provided an opportunity to document Ashoka's progress and strengthen our understanding of the University's contribution to global sustainable development. By bringing these diverse efforts together in one publication, we sought to make sustainability more visible across the University and demonstrate how different parts of the Ashoka community contribute towards shared global goals.

**7. 2nd SDG Exposition**

**Campus**

At Ashoka, we hosted the second SDG Expo on UN SDG Flag Day during the month of September, bringing together members of the academic community, student-led initiatives, University offices and external partners. The Expo provided a platform to showcase the diverse ways in which the Ashoka community is contributing towards the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Through the event, we brought together initiatives that demonstrated how sustainability is being addressed across different areas of University life, while creating opportunities for members of the community to learn from one another. The Expo also strengthened visibility and dialogue around the SDGs on campus, reinforcing the University's commitment to making sustainable development a shared institutional endeavour. By creating a common space for students, staff, faculty and external stakeholders, we encouraged greater collaboration and engagement around sustainability.





**The Private Solution Trap in Collective Action Problems Across 34 Nations**

**Research**

Associate Professor Mihir Bhattacharya from the Department of Economics, contributed to an international research collaboration led by Eugene Malthouse, Charlie Pilgrim and Daniel Sgroi, alongside researchers from institutions across multiple countries, to examine how individuals respond to collective-action problems such as climate change. The study investigates a previously underexplored 'private solution trap', in which individuals facing shared problems may invest in private forms of adaptation rather than contributing to collectively optimal public solutions. Drawing on experimental evidence from participants across 34 countries, the research demonstrates that wealth inequality influences these choices: participants with greater initial resources were substantially more likely to adopt private solutions and less likely to contribute proportionally towards public solutions. The researchers also identify cultural factors associated with preferences for private versus public solutions and highlight two pathways that can encourage collective provision: early contributions and conditional cooperation. The findings have important implications for designing climate policies and collective responses to global environmental challenges, particularly where unequal access to resources can weaken participation in shared solutions. Published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS) in 2026, the research contributes through its analysis of collective action, climate adaptation, inequality and the institutional and behavioural conditions required for effective responses to climate change.

**Evolution, Environment and Changing Ecosystems**

**Research**

Professor Sudipta Tung, Faculty Fellow from the Department of Biology, Trivedi School of Biosciences, explores how organisms evolve as they respond to changing environmental conditions. The article uses examples from different biological systems to demonstrate how environmental pressures, biological constraints and chance interact to influence evolutionary outcomes. These include changes in plant populations in response to herbicides, the evolution of antibiotic resistance in bacteria, and changes in bird traits as environmental conditions shift between drought and rainfall. By examining how organisms respond and adapt to changing environments, the research provides insight into the relationship between biological systems and environmental change.

**Assessing the Impact of Crop Residue Burning Regulations**

**Research**

Professor Kanika Mahajan, Head of the Department of Economics at Ashoka University, worked alongside Shefali Khanna, Research Fellow at The London School of Economics and Political Science and Sudarshan Ramanujam, University of British Columbia to investigate the effectiveness of crop residue burning regulations through the working paper 'Are Crop Residue Burning Bans Effective? Evidence from India'. The study evaluates how regulatory measures influence farmers' crop residue management practices and examines their effectiveness in reducing agricultural burning and its associated environmental impacts. The findings provide evidence to support more effective policy interventions for improving air quality while balancing agricultural productivity and farmer livelihoods.

**Climate Change and Health in South Asia: A Systematic Mapping**

**Research**

Professor Gautam Menon from the Departments of Physics and Biology, contributed to a systematic mapping of research examining the relationship between climate change and human health across South Asia. The study reviewed 7,273 records and identified 308 relevant studies from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The research categorises the existing evidence across five broad areas: health impacts of climate change, interventions to protect health, climate adaptation and mitigation, policy and governance, and the development of analytical tools and frameworks. By consolidating a fragmented evidence base, the study identifies both areas where substantial research already exists and significant gaps that require further investigation. This regional mapping is particularly important given South Asia's vulnerability to climate-related risks and the potential for environmental changes to affect a wide range of health outcomes. The research provides a foundation for future evidence synthesis, priority-setting and policy development, helping connect climate action with the protection and resilience of human health.

**An Explainable Deep-Clustering Approach to Assess Climate Vulnerability in India**

**Research**

Professor Lipika Dey, Professor of Computer Science, assisted students Soumyajit Basu, Fiona Arora, Aryan Nath and Karan Kumar by co-developing an explainable deep-clustering approach to assess climate vulnerability across India. The research addresses the challenge of understanding how exposure to climate hazards, socio-economic conditions and adaptive capacity combine to create different patterns of vulnerability across regions. Using machine-learning and clustering techniques, the study identifies distinct vulnerability profiles while retaining interpretability, allowing the factors underlying different classifications to be examined. Such an approach can support more targeted climate adaptation planning by helping identify regions facing greater vulnerability and the factors contributing to those risks. The research demonstrates how artificial intelligence and data analytics can be applied to complex sustainability challenges and translated into actionable evidence for climate-risk assessment, resilience planning and more informed allocation of adaptation resources.

**Climate Change and Cardiovascular Health: Advancing Resilient Action Beyond COP 30**

**Research**

Poornima Prabhakaran, Director of the Centre for Health Analytics, Research and Trends (CHART), examines the relationship between climate change and cardiovascular health. Through her research, she highlights how rising temperatures, pollution and other climate-related changes can intensify cardiovascular risks and place additional pressure on health. She argues that climate action and cardiovascular disease prevention should not be treated as separate priorities, emphasising the potential of coordinated climate-health interventions to generate benefits for both planetary and human health. The authors also highlight the importance of resilient health systems, evidence-based urban interventions and stronger climate-health policy integration. By directly linking climate change with a global health burden, the research demonstrates the need for integrated approaches to climate adaptation and health planning.

**Diagnosing Cloudbursts over Indian Megacities Near Land-sea Boundary During the 2025 Monsoon**

**Research**

Professor Parthasarathi Mukhopadhyay, Visiting Professor, contributed to research investigating extreme rainfall and cloudburst events affecting Indian megacities during the 2025 monsoon. The study integrates satellite observations, Doppler weather radar, rainfall measurements, atmospheric reanalysis and high-resolution modelling to examine the atmospheric conditions responsible for short-duration, high-intensity rainfall. The research investigates the role of deep convection, enhanced atmospheric moisture and the organisation and movement of mesoscale convective systems in generating these events. It also evaluates the ability of forecasting systems to predict the timing, intensity and location of extreme rainfall. The findings can contribute to improved extreme-weather forecasting, early-warning systems and disaster preparedness, particularly in densely populated urban areas exposed to intense rainfall and flooding. By strengthening scientific understanding of the atmospheric processes underlying cloudbursts, the research supports efforts to improve climate resilience and reduce the risks associated with increasingly disruptive extreme-weather events.

**The Emerging and Escalating Consequences of Rural Depopulation in the Himalayas**

**Research**

Professor Ghazala Shahabuddin, Visiting Faculty of Environmental Studies at Ashoka University, contributes to research examining the emerging consequences of rural depopulation and agrarian transition across the Himalaya. The study draws on a horizon scan involving 34 experts from socio-environmental disciplines to identify issues expected to intensify over the next 10–15 years as migration and demographic change reshape mountain communities. Rather than treating depopulation solely as a demographic phenomenon, the research examines its interconnected implications for agriculture, forests, land use, livelihoods, ecosystem services and rural economies. The analysis identifies potential cascading social and ecological consequences associated with changes in settlement patterns and agricultural practices. By examining these processes together, the study provides a forward-looking evidence base for policy and planning in Himalayan regions. The findings highlight the importance of integrated approaches that strengthen mountain livelihoods while supporting sustainable land management, ecosystem conservation and resilience to environmental change.



**Ashoka University at the World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS) 2026**

**Partnerships**

During February 2026, Ashoka University, led by the Office of Sustainability, participated in the World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS) 2026 at the Taj Palace, New Delhi. Organised by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) with support from the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, the summit focused on transformative approaches to sustainable development and climate action. Ashoka delegates participated in discussions spanning climate-resilient conservation in the Eastern Himalayas, climate-resilience finance in the Global South, critical minerals, circular economy and the clean-energy transition. These engagements provided exposure to emerging approaches to ecological protection, climate finance and sustainable resource management, while strengthening engagement with broader national and international sustainability discourse. The delegation also brought back perspectives relevant to advancing Ashoka's ongoing sustainability initiatives and strengthening its role in conversations on climate resilience and sustainable development.

**Climate Ninja Programme**

**Partnerships**

The InfoEdge Centre for Entrepreneurship, in collaboration with The Sustainability Mafia, launched the Climate Ninja Programme to support the development of climate-focused startup ideas among students and alumni. The programme featured masterclasses with sustainability entrepreneurs and practitioners, including Manas Rath, Founder of LEAP Cities and Mumbai Donut CoLAB; Ankita Vijayvergiya, Co-founder of BillionCarbon; Lavanya Garg, Director of Growth at Good Business Lab; and Nidhi Verma, Senior HOMER Software Specialist. Through these sessions, participants gained practical knowledge of climate challenges, sustainability frameworks and entrepreneurial tools, alongside exposure to real-world climate ventures and practitioners. The programme also strengthened pathways for students to engage with and contribute to organisations advancing climate solutions.

**AshokaX - Data Science for Social Impact**

**Partnerships**

Delivered through AshokaX from September 2025 to April 2026, the Data Science for Social Impact programme builds participants' capacity to apply data science to complex social and environmental challenges, including those at the intersection of climate change and public health. Developed as part of the India Data Capacity Accelerator (IDCA) initiative, the 30-week programme combines lectures, tutorials, discussions, assignments and project-based learning. Participants undertake real-world group projects addressing health and climate-related challenges, enabling them to translate technical knowledge into practical applications. By connecting data science with climate and health, the programme highlights the role of evidence and analytical capabilities in understanding environmental risks and informing responses to a changing climate. The interdisciplinary approach equips participants to work across technical and social-impact contexts while strengthening data-driven approaches to climate resilience, public health and sustainable development.

**ACPET Advances Mineral Security and Circularity at World Sustainable Development Summit 2026**

**Partnerships**

On 25 February 2026, ACPET co-hosted a high-level thematic session, 'Securing Tomorrow: Critical Minerals and Circular Economy for Clean Energy Transition,' at the World Sustainable Development Summit 2026. The session provided a platform to advance dialogue on India's critical mineral security and the role of circular economy approaches in strengthening clean energy supply chains. Drawing on ACPET's ongoing research, the discussions examined pathways to reduce vulnerabilities associated with critical mineral imports while promoting domestic value addition, resource efficiency, circularity and international collaboration. The session highlighted the importance of integrating mineral security into India's broader clean energy transition to build resilient and future-ready supply chains. The event also featured the soft launch of the 3C-SET Forum and its website, establishing a collaborative platform focused on advancing India's transition towards a circular and sustainable critical minerals ecosystem.



**Understanding Environmental Justice and Equitable Resource Governance**

**Teaching**

Offered by the Department of Economics and taught by Professor Kavita Sardana, with support from Teaching Fellow Sreejita Roy, the Environmental Economics course equips students with the analytical tools to address contemporary environmental and climate challenges through economic policy. The course explores topics such as environmental valuation, pollution control, market failures, climate finance, and policy instruments including emissions trading and regulatory approaches. Through theoretical frameworks and practical analysis using environmental datasets, students develop an understanding of how economic principles can inform sustainable resource allocation, environmental protection, and climate decision-making. By strengthening knowledge of evidence-based environmental policy and sustainable development, the course prepares students to contribute to effective climate action.

**Analyzing Interdisciplinary Approaches to Environmental Sustainability**

**Teaching**

Delivered by Professor Asmita Kabra, with support from Teaching Fellows Manasi Narula and Bhavya Gupta, the Environmental Studies course introduces students to the complex relationships between society, development, and the environment through an interdisciplinary lens. Structured around ten fundamental questions on environmental sustainability, the course examines environmental policy, political ecology, ecological economics, institutional frameworks, and the historical evolution of environmental challenges and solutions. By integrating perspectives from the natural and social sciences, students develop a holistic understanding of contemporary sustainability issues and strengthen their ability to critically evaluate environmental decision-making. Through this multidisciplinary approach, the course equips students to contribute towards informed climate action and sustainable development.

**Exploring Environmental Citizenship and Socio-Ecological Systems**

**Teaching**

Led by Professor Mitul Baruah, with support from Teaching Fellows Syeda Raysha Alvir and Yogeshwar Gupta, the Environmental Studies course examines the complex relationship between society and the natural environment through historical, social, and political perspectives. Students engage with contemporary environmental challenges, including climate change, agrarian crises, industrialisation, water governance, disasters, and environmental justice, while exploring diverse theoretical frameworks that shape environmental thought. Through lectures, discussions, films, and collaborative projects, the course encourages critical thinking and fosters a strong sense of environmental citizenship. By equipping students with the knowledge to understand and address interconnected sustainability challenges, the course prepares them to contribute towards informed climate action and resilient communities.

**Strengthening Ecological Understanding for Climate Action**

**Teaching**

Led by Professor Divya Karnad, with support from Teaching Fellows Da O Emi Lamar and Krishanu Kashyap, the Environmental Studies course builds students' understanding of the interconnected relationship between ecological systems, environmental change, and human well-being. Through the study of global ecological processes, climate change, air and water quality, environmental health, and contemporary sustainability challenges, students critically examine the scientific and social dimensions of environmental crises. Using case studies and discussions on emerging ‘green’ solutions, the course encourages evidence-based analysis and systems thinking while equipping students to evaluate sustainable pathways for environmental stewardship. By fostering ecological literacy and informed decision-making, the course empowers students to contribute towards resilient and sustainable communities.

**Examining the Intersections of Environment, Politics, and Society**

**Teaching**

Guided by Professor Mukul Sharma, Department of Environmental Studies, with support from Teaching Fellows Shashank and Da O Emi Lamar, the Environmental Studies course explores the interconnected relationship between environmental issues, political systems, economic structures, and societal values. Students examine how environmental challenges are shaped by governance, public policy, cultural perspectives, and institutional frameworks, while critically engaging with contemporary environmental movements and debates in India and beyond. Through a multidisciplinary approach, the course strengthens students' understanding of environmental governance, policy-making, and the social dimensions of sustainability. By fostering informed and critical perspectives on environmental decision-making, the course equips students to contribute towards resilient and sustainable societies.

**Understanding the Interlinkages Between Environment, Development, and Climate Change**

**Teaching**

Taught by Professor Mukul Sharma, with support from Teaching Fellows Trusha Ganesh and Mukul Bhatt, the Environment, Development, Climate Change course examines the complex relationship between ecological systems, human development, and climate change through interdisciplinary perspectives. Students explore themes including sustainability, globalisation, environmental justice, energy transitions, renewable energy, carbon emissions, disaster resilience, and the socio-economic dimensions of climate impacts. The course also encourages critical engagement with concepts such as green growth, intergenerational equity, and climate governance, enabling students to understand the challenges and opportunities associated with sustainable development. By fostering systems thinking and evidence-based analysis, the course prepares students to contribute towards equitable climate action and resilient societies.

### Addressing Contemporary Environmental Challenges through Interdisciplinary Learning

**Teaching**

Facilitated by Professor Ghazala Shahabuddin, with support from Teaching Fellows Aali Dadhich and Junaid Ahmad Baba, the Environmental Studies: Contemporary Environmental Challenges course equips students with a multidisciplinary understanding of the pressing environmental issues shaping today's world. The curriculum examines climate change, water scarcity, biodiversity loss, pollution, forest degradation, and agrarian distress while encouraging students to analyse their scientific, social, and ecological dimensions. Through lectures, discussions, films, case studies, and collaborative projects, students develop critical thinking and systems-based approaches to understanding environmental challenges and identifying sustainable solutions. By strengthening environmental literacy and promoting informed decision-making, the course prepares students to contribute towards climate resilience and sustainable development.

### Mapping Environmental Change: Concepts and Skills

**Teaching**

Offered by the Department of Environmental Studies, and led by Professor Madhusudan Mysore Doreswamy, the course equips students with an interdisciplinary understanding of environmental change through the integration of environmental science, geospatial analysis, and remote sensing. The course explores the causes and consequences of land and water transformations while introducing practical skills in spatial data analysis, mapping, and environmental visualisation. Through a combination of conceptual discussions and hands-on laboratory sessions, students learn to interpret environmental patterns, analyse geospatial datasets, and communicate evidence-based insights on a changing planet. By combining scientific inquiry with digital mapping technologies, the course prepares students to address contemporary environmental challenges and apply geospatial thinking to sustainability-focused research, planning, and decision-making.

### Nature and Nation

**Teaching**

Professor Mahesh Rangarajan, Department of History and Environmental Studies, Archives of Contemporary India (ACI), teaches Nature and Nation, examining the changing relationship between nature, environmental change and political identity. The course explores how natural features - including forests, rivers, mountains and wildlife - have been incorporated into ideas of nationhood, while also examining how states have regulated, exploited and conserved natural environments. Students consider the environmental consequences of different political and economic systems and critically examine the social implications of conservation, including the ways protected areas and wildlife policies can affect indigenous and other local communities. The course therefore moves beyond environmental history as a study of ecological change to examine the interaction between environment, political power, conservation and society. This makes it particularly valuable as environmental sustainability and the political and social consequences of environmental change are central to the course.

### Climate Change Governance, Policy, and Politics

**Teaching**

Taught by Professor Sumedha Basu, Climate Change Governance, Policy, and Politics approaches climate change as a challenge shaped by science, institutions, political interests, governance structures and social inequalities. Students engage with contemporary concepts including planetary boundaries, net zero, historical emissions, decoloniality and degrowth, while examining approaches to climate mitigation. The course considers the actors, institutions, policy instruments and power structures that shape climate action at different levels. A central focus is the justice dimension of climate change, including the unequal distribution of climate impacts and the resources available to respond to them. Collaborative learning enables students to connect these debates with their interests while developing research, analytical and strategic skills. The course ultimately equips students to engage with climate policymaking and contribute to sustainable climate futures.



**Mahesh Rangarajan**
**Professor of Environmental Studies and History**

*Nature and Nation poses a question that sounds simple, are the two onveots related and how? Nation-states are crucial in the global arena and also in seeking dominion over nature to maximise economic growth.*
*Yet just as nations do so, they also claim to be products of nature. This is often done by declaring an animal, a tree , a mountain range or a river as a symbol of the nation. Doing so aims to tap into historical and cultural memory as also to rally support to protect these entities.*
*Both the meaning and control of nature and nation are contested in this course by looking at different societies at specific junctures, which gives a sense of time, place and context.*
*Why and by when will Poland see return of bisons to its forest as a national mission and why? What made the wiping out then preservation of the species (bison) so important in the US?*
*Moving well beyond Europe and North America, we examine countries such as South Africa, China, Egypt and Japan. In this, the rich and multi-hued tapestry of cultures of nature in India is especially important.*
*In doing so, we also seek insights on how global cooperation hinges on understanding why there is such huge impact on nature across many nations by the few developed ones. This is vital to move from inter-state conflict to cooperation for nature as much as people.*




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

**Community Water Ecosystem Rejuvenation**

**Campus**

At Ashoka, we are working to rejuvenate the Asawarpur village pond as a healthier and more resilient freshwater ecosystem. The water body, which originally covered 7.3 acres but had been reduced to 5.38 acres due to encroachment, has also faced significant pollution from untreated sewage and waste. With no sewage treatment facility or sustainable wastewater management system in the village, the pond had become a receptacle for wastewater, affecting both its ecological health and the well-being of surrounding communities.

Recognising that restoring the pond requires more than simply improving water quality, we are taking an integrated approach to revive its ecological functions. The proposed interventions include desilting and waste removal, strengthening embankments, introducing native aquatic vegetation, and developing groundwater recharge zones. A Root Zone Treatment (RZT) system using plants, soil, gravel, charcoal and microorganisms is also proposed to naturally filter wastewater before it reaches the pond. Together, these measures aim to improve water quality, restore aquatic habitats, support local biodiversity and strengthen the pond's role within the wider village ecosystem.

The project is also strengthening institutional collaboration for the long-term protection of the water body. Previously unregistered, the Asawarpur pond has now been assigned a unique identification number (Reg No 01HRSPTRAI0000AWPR001) and listed on the government portal. Its technical restoration is being supported by the Haryana Pond & Wastewater Management Authority (HPWWMA), enabling scientific planning and coordination with relevant authorities.

Beyond ecological restoration, we envision the rejuvenated pond as a shared community resource that encourages local stewardship. Proposed future uses include artisan kiosks, local food cafés, boating facilities and an artificial island along the pond's banks. Through this initiative, we are working to restore not only a water body, but a living freshwater ecosystem that can support biodiversity, groundwater recharge, community well-being and a more resilient future for Asawarpur.

The initiative contributes to SDG 14 by reducing pollution entering a freshwater ecosystem, restoring aquatic habitats, promoting native aquatic vegetation and strengthening the ecological health of the pond.




**Innovating for Just and Equitable Ocean Conservation**

**Campus**

At Ashoka, student-led innovation is helping explore new ways of protecting marine ecosystems while addressing challenges faced by communities that depend on them. One such endeavour is Cool Equity, founded by Ashoka undergraduate Layasree Vemmata Gopi (VG Layasree), which brings together her passion for ocean conservation, entrepreneurship and environmental justice.

Through Cool Equity, Layasree is developing a solution to address ocean pollution and post-harvest losses faced by small fishing communities. The initiative explores decentralised cold-storage solutions that can be deployed within communities, helping fishermen preserve their catch, reduce spoilage and minimise food waste. By bringing cold-storage infrastructure closer to fishing communities, Cool Equity seeks to address the problem at its source while creating more sustainable and equitable outcomes for those who depend on marine resources.

Her endeavour was further recognised through the Ocean Protection Challenge, where Cool Equity emerged as a winning idea. The experience enabled her to move beyond identifying the problem and begin exploring a practical, scalable intervention that connects technological innovation with community needs.

Her work demonstrates how student-led entrepreneurship can contribute to ocean conservation by looking beyond environmental degradation. By linking marine health with food security, livelihoods and environmental justice, Cool Equity represents an effort to make ocean conservation more inclusive, community-centred and sustainable.

**Preliminary Assessment of the Ecological Sustainability of a Data-Limited Shark Fishery in India**

**Research**

Associate Professor of Environmental Studies Divya Karnad collaborated with Trisha Gupta and E. J. Milner-Gulland, Department of Biology, University of Oxford, William N. S. Arlidge, Department of Fish Biology, Fisheries and Aquaculture, Leibniz Institute of Freshwater Ecology and Inland Fisheries, and other researchers to assess the ecological sustainability of a small-scale shark fishery in Goa. The research addresses the challenge of managing fisheries where conventional data on catches and population dynamics are limited. Using an adapted expert-elicitation approach involving local fishing communities, the study develops an exploratory assessment of shark catches and population sustainability. Such approaches can help generate useful evidence for fisheries where comprehensive monitoring systems are difficult to establish. By focusing on the conservation of sharks, sustainable fisheries management and the protection of marine biodiversity, the research has a direct and particularly strong connection to SDG 14.

**Field Visit to Aravali Nagar Van**

**Teaching**

As part of the Environmental Studies Foundation Course, Professor Mitul Baruah led students on a field visit to Aravali Nagar Van, a 180-acre urban forest located on the Delhi–Gurugram border. Once a seasonal catchment feeding the Sahibi River, the landscape has experienced prolonged ecological stress from mining, encroachment, waste dumping and invasive species. Students explored rewilding efforts led by iamgurgaon and The Rewilders, including the restoration of native vegetation, revival of water systems and protection of biodiversity. The visit emphasised that ecological restoration extends beyond tree planting and requires context-sensitive approaches to rebuilding functioning ecosystems. Discussions also examined the role of governance and public-private partnerships in balancing ecological objectives, accountability and resources. By engaging directly with a recovering urban ecosystem, students developed a deeper understanding of restoration, biodiversity and the importance of coexistence with natural systems.

**Groundwater Monitoring and Learnings from 24-Hour Agricultural Power in Hard Rock Aquifers**

**Research**

Senior Fellow at the Isaac Centre for Public Policy, E. Somanathan along with Eshita Gupta and Praveen Kumar examined groundwater monitoring and the implications of providing 24-hour agricultural electricity in regions dependent on hard-rock aquifers. The research addresses the relationship between agricultural energy access and groundwater management, highlighting the importance of monitoring groundwater resources when electricity availability can influence patterns of agricultural pumping. By examining these interactions, the work provides evidence relevant to the sustainable management of groundwater resources and the long-term resilience of agricultural systems. The research has particular relevance for regions where groundwater is an important source of irrigation and where agricultural electricity policies can affect resource-use behaviour. Its findings can support more informed approaches to water governance by connecting agricultural policy, energy provision and groundwater sustainability rather than treating these issues independently. The work therefore provides a useful evidence base for policymakers seeking to balance agricultural productivity and rural livelihoods with responsible management of increasingly pressured groundwater resources.

**Understanding Conflict and Cooperation over Natural Resources**

**Teaching**

Professor Divya Karnad taught Understanding Conflict and Cooperation over Natural Resources, examining how societies respond to conflicts arising from the use, allocation and depletion of environmental resources. The course combined economics and environmental conservation to examine resource governance, collective action and the conditions under which communities cooperate or compete over shared resources. Students engaged with concepts including game theory, common-property theory and approaches to cooperative resource management, while considering the relationship between environmental problems and social justice. By exploring how institutions and governance arrangements influence resource use, the course enabled students to understand the social and political dimensions of environmental sustainability. These questions are increasingly important in the context of climate change, where competition over land, water and other natural resources can intensify existing social inequalities and create new conflicts.

**Field Visit to Mandothi Wetlands, Bahadurgarh, Haryana**

**Teaching**

As part of Conservation Policy in the Developing World, Professor Ghazala Shahabuddin organised a field visit to the Mandothi Wetlands, a biodiverse landscape located approximately 50 km from the Ashoka campus. Students observed the diversity of birdlife in the wetland and developed practical skills in identifying common and endangered species, including the bar-headed goose and sarus crane. The visit also introduced students to the human dimensions of wetland conservation through interactions with the Rehbaris, a nomadic pastoralist community that uses the wetland seasonally for livestock grazing. Interviews with local residents helped students understand community attitudes towards birds and the potential for human–wildlife coexistence. Discussions further examined wetland reclamation, land-use change and the potential impacts of industrial development, demonstrating the complex challenges involved in conserving biodiversity within landscapes that also support livelihoods and economic activity.



**Protecting Critical Shark and Ray Habitats in the Western Indian Ocean**

**Research**

Professor Divya Karnad also contributed to a large international research collaboration examining the protection of Important Shark and Ray Areas (ISRAs) across the Western Indian Ocean. Her research focuses on marine conservation, fisheries management and the sustainable use of marine resources.

The study assessed 125 Important Shark and Ray Areas covering more than 2.8 million square kilometres and examined how these ecologically important areas overlap with existing marine protected areas. The research found that 1 per cent of these important areas were fully protected from fishing pressure, despite containing a substantial share of the region's shark and ray species, many of which are threatened with extinction. The study highlights significant gaps in marine protection and provides evidence that can support more effective conservation planning and fisheries management



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



**1. Fostering a Green and Resilient Environment**

**Campus**

We recognise the importance of healthy terrestrial ecosystems in this rapidly evolving world. At Ashoka, we work actively to develop and maintain a healthy biodiversity to support climate resilience and play our part for the protection of natural resources. Further, we recognise our responsibility to conserve the ecological value of our campus and contribute towards the protection and restoration of surrounding landscapes.

At Ashoka, we have planned our campus consciously to balance our built infrastructure with natural landscapes, creating an environment that supports people and biodiversity. Landscaped gardens, trees, and open green spaces help improve air quality, reduce soil erosion, regulate the campus microclimate, and provide habitats for a variety of birds, insects, and other local species. To sustain these green spaces, we reuse treated wastewater for landscape irrigation (as detailed under SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation), reducing our dependence on freshwater while supporting healthy vegetation and resource efficiency.

**2. Planning the Campus with Nature at the Forefront**

**Campus**

Environmental considerations are incorporated into campus in a way that ensures development takes place alongside the protection of natural ecosystems. As Ashoka expands, existing vegetation is preserved and land is planned to maintain ecological connectivity and minimise disruption to surrounding habitats. By balancing construction and expansion with responsible land management, we continue to strengthen biodiversity while creating a resilient and environmentally conscious campus.

### 3. Supporting Healthy Landscapes through Circular Resource Management

**Campus**

Healthy landscapes are synonymous with healthy soil. Hence, we have incorporated organic waste generated across the campus into our landscapes by processing in-house generated wastes and producing nutrient-rich compost, which is reused in gardens and landscapes. Natural compost improves soil quality, supports plant growth, and reduces the need for synthetic fertilisers. By returning organic matter back to the land, we promote a circular approach to resource management while strengthening the long-term health of our green spaces.

Open green spaces, landscaped gardens, seasonal vegetation, and passive architectural elements not only improve the campus experience but also provide habitats that support local biodiversity.

### 4. Enhancing Campus Biodiversity through Sustainable Horticulture

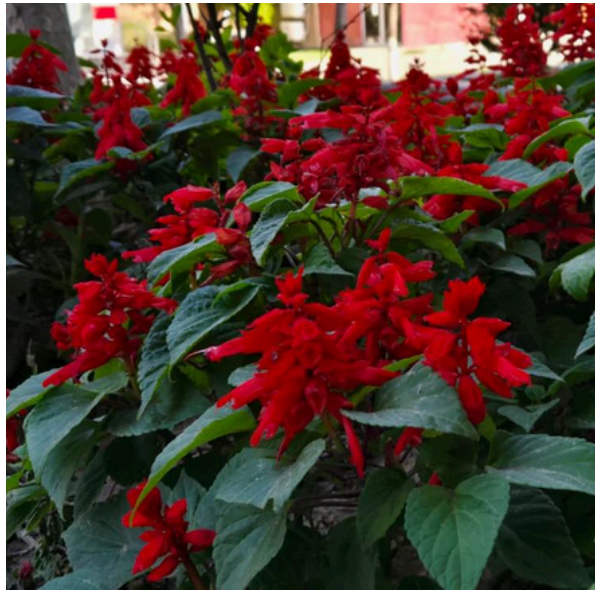
**Campus**

The Gardening and Horticulture Department plays an important role in maintaining the ecological health of the campus. Seasonal planting, soil care, regular landscape maintenance, and the cultivation of diverse plant species help strengthen the campus ecosystem throughout the year. During differing occasions (e.g. poor AQI, construction), additional measures are taken to protect nearby plants and wildlife, including water spraying and anti-smog guns for dust control, covered transportation of construction materials, speed restrictions for construction vehicles, and careful placement of DG set chimneys. These practices help maintain a cleaner, greener, and more biodiverse campus while reducing the impact of daily operations on the surrounding biodiversity.

Thanks to our horticulture department, we have planted a total of 1,918 trees on campus with 54 differing species throughout the available open green spaces and landscaped gardens. Further, we also have a stock of 6000 plants within our in-house nursery.

This not only improves the campus experience but also provide habitats that support local biodiversity.





## 5. Campus Flora and Biodiversity

### Campus

The campus landscape supports a diverse range of trees and plants that contribute to its ecological character and biodiversity. Our tree inventory has documented 54 different floral species, with 1,918 trees recorded during the year. The vegetation comprises a mix of native and introduced species across academic, residential and recreational spaces and provides important ecological functions, including shade, carbon sequestration, temperature regulation, soil protection and habitat creation. Flowering and fruit-bearing species also provide food and shelter for birds, insects and other organisms, contributing to the wider campus ecosystem.

Dedicated green spaces further strengthen this biodiversity. A 2.5-acre Miyawaki forest has been developed as an ecological area to support native vegetation and enhance biodiversity (as elaborated under SDG 11).

We also have an on-site nursery which cultivates plants for campus landscaping and green cover. The campus landscape also incorporates species selected for their suitability to the local environment, with future development plans placing greater emphasis on native planting.

**Trees and Species wise numbers in descending order**

| S.No. | Common Name | Botanical Name | Nos |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Ficus | Ficus benjamina | 341 |
| 2 | Orchid Tree (Kachnar) | Bauhinia blakeana | 294 |
| 3 | Champa (White Frangipani) | Plumeria alba | 180 |
| 4 | daab grass | Desmostachya bipinnata | 150 |
| 5 | Dhau | Anogeissus pendula | 135 |
| 6 | Chikrassy | Chukrasia tabularis | 120 |
| 7 | Coral Tree | Erithrina indica | 102 |
| 8 | African Wattle | Peltophorum afericanum | 71 |
| 9 | Pilkhan | Ficus virens | 62 |
| 10 | Bakain | Melia azedarach | 58 |
| 11 | Silver Oak | Grevellia robusta | 48 |
| 12 | Gulmohar | Delonix regia | 41 |
| 13 | Pomegranate | Punica granatum | 29 |
| 14 | Putranjiva | Drypetes roxburghii | 23 |
| 15 | kharo jaal | Salvadora persica | 20 |
| 16 | Bamboo | Bambusa vulgaris | 20 |
| 17 | Firangipani | Plumeria rubra | 18 |
| 18 | Peelu | Salvadora persica | 15 |
| 19 | Harshringar | Nyctanthus arbortristis | 15 |
| 20 | Neem | Azadirachta indica | 12 |
| 21 | Bistendu | Diospyros cordifolia | 12 |
| 22 | Sonjna | Moringa oleifera | 12 |
| 23 | Earpod Wattle | Acacia auriculiformis | 9 |
| 24 | Amla | phyllanthus emblica | 8 |
| 25 | Golden Shower (Amaltas) | Cassia fistula | 7 |
| 26 | Tabebuia | Tabebuia argentia | 7 |
| 27 | shami | Prosopis cinerarea | 7 |
| 28 | Desi Babool | Acacia nilotica | 6 |
| 29 | Ashoka | Saraca indica | 6 |
| 30 | Goondi | Cordia gharaf | 6 |
| 31 | peelvaan | Cocculus pendulus | 6 |
| 32 | roheda | Tecomella undulata | 6 |
| 33 | Tabebuia | Tabebuia rosea | 5 |
| 34 | Anjan | Hardwickia binata | 5 |
| 35 | sargooro | Moringa concanensis | 5 |
| 36 | anjan | Hardwickia binata | 5 |
| 37 | Thevetia | Thevetia peruviana | 5 |
| 38 | Siris | Albizia lebbeck | 4 |
| 39 | Kamrakh | Averrhoa carambola | 4 |
| 40 | Jamun | Syzygium cumini | 4 |
| 41 | Jhinjiri | Bauhinia racemosa | 4 |
| 42 | Mango | Mangifera indica | 4 |
| 43 | meettha jaal | Salvadora oleoides | 4 |
| 44 | indrokh | Anogeissus nummularia | 4 |
| 45 | Bel pathar | Aegel marmelos | 3 |
| 46 | Guava | Psidium guajava | 3 |
| 47 | Jarul | Lagerstroemia speciosa | 2 |
| 48 | Kaim | Mitragyna parviflora | 2 |
| 49 | Kaniar | Bauhinia purpurea | 2 |
| 50 | Jacaranda | Jacaranda mimosifolia | 2 |
| 51 | Milletia | Millettia sp. | 2 |
| 52 | Kusum | Schleichera oleosa | 1 |
| 53 | Ficus | Ficus krishnae | 1 |
| 54 | Shrish | Delbergia sisso | 1 |
| | Total | 1918 | |

### Sample images of floral species found in Campus











### Snow Leopard (Panthera uncia) Status in India

**Research**

Assistant Professor Manvi Sharma collaborated with Dr Ranjana Pal of the Wildlife Institute of India and Dr Yashveer Bhatnagar, Country Representative of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), to document the current conservation status of the snow leopard (Panthera uncia) in India. The research synthesises findings from the nationwide snow leopard population assessment and other published studies to describe the species' distribution across India's high Himalayan and trans-Himalayan landscapes and to inform the proposed national IUCN Red List range map. The authors identify major threats affecting snow leopard populations and their habitats, including livestock-related conflict, decline in prey populations, infrastructure expansion and climate change, while also reviewing ongoing conservation measures. The study highlights the importance of understanding species distribution alongside the ecological and human pressures affecting fragile mountain ecosystems. It also documents the role of India's protected-area network in conserving snow leopard habitats, while identifying the broader landscape beyond protected areas that requires attention for effective species conservation. The research contributes directly to SDG 15 by strengthening evidence for terrestrial biodiversity conservation, threatened-species protection, habitat management and the sustainable management of mountain ecosystems. Assistant Professor Manvi Sharma's research at Ashoka focuses extensively on snow leopard ecology, predator-prey relationships and human-nature interactions in the Trans-Himalaya.

### Examining the Role of Women Legislators in Forest Conservation

**Research**

Professor Bipasha Maity, Associate Professor of Economics, collaborated with Professor Sutirtha Bandyopadhyay, Assistant Professor of Economics, IIM Ahmedabad, Pranabes Probeshika Dutta, Research Scholar, and Naveen Hari, Research Associate, to investigate the relationship between women's political representation and environmental governance through the journal article 'Female Legislators and Forest Conservation in India'.

The study examines whether greater representation of women in legislative bodies influences forest conservation outcomes and sustainable natural resource management. By analysing environmental governance across different regions, the research highlights how inclusive political leadership can contribute to stronger conservation efforts and improved environmental outcomes. The findings provide important evidence on the intersection of gender, governance, and environmental sustainability, informing policies that promote both ecological conservation and inclusive decision-making.

### Restoration Goals: Insights from Antiquity and Dynamics of Forest–Savanna Mosaics in Central India during the Holocene

**Research**

Associate Professor Meghna Agarwala, Department of Environmental Studies, Ashoka University, collaborated with Krishna Pavan Komanduri, Mohammad Firoze Quamar, Jayashree Ratnam and Charuta Kulkarni to examine the historical dynamics of forest–savanna mosaics in Central India and their implications for ecological restoration. Using a meta-analysis of palaeo-ecological evidence, the research demonstrates that areas of low and high tree cover have existed naturally in the region since the early Holocene. The findings challenge restoration approaches that equate low tree cover with degradation and advocate for conservation strategies that recognise the ecological value of naturally occurring savanna systems.

### Are Galliformes of the High Himalayas Well Protected? Identifying Conservation Priority Areas Using an Assemblage-Level Approach

**Research**

Assistant Professor Manvi Sharma, Department of Environmental Studies, Ashoka University, collaborated with Adithi S. Rao, Jenis Patel, Munib Khanyari, Ajay Bijoor and Kulbhushansingh Suryawanshi to identify conservation priorities for Galliformes in the high-altitude Indian Himalayas. Using extensive camera-trapping surveys covering approximately 26,000 $km^2$, the researchers examined the environmental factors influencing species distributions, mapped areas of high species richness and endemism, and assessed their overlap with existing protected areas. The study found that vegetation cover and temperature seasonality were important predictors of Galliformes distributions, while areas with high species richness and endemism had limited overlap with the existing protected-area network — only 12.5 per cent and 8.8 per cent, respectively. The research also identifies the transition zone between the Greater and Trans-Himalaya as particularly important for conserving the Phasianidae assemblage occurring within landscapes traditionally prioritised for snow leopard conservation. By shifting conservation planning from a single charismatic 'umbrella species' towards assemblage-level biodiversity management, the research identifies gaps in existing protection and provides evidence for expanding conservation priorities to additional species and habitats. Published in Integrative Conservation in March 2026, the study contributes through its focus on biodiversity monitoring, protected-area planning, species conservation and the protection of fragile Himalayan ecosystems.

**Disentangling Multispecies Landscapes in Arunachal Pradesh: Religion, Ecology, Ethics**

**Research**

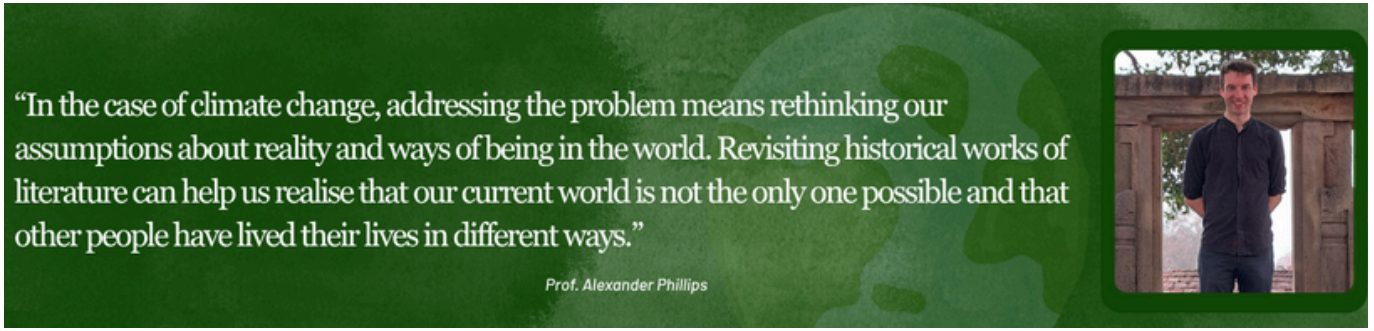
Swargajyoti Gohain, Associate Professor of Sociology and Anthropology, examines the relationships between humans, animals, religious traditions and ecological conservation in Arunachal Pradesh. Drawing on long-term anthropological engagement in the Buddhist Himalayas, the research explores the cultural and ecological relationships surrounding species including the yak and black-necked crane. Rather than treating conservation through a single religious or environmental framework, the study examines how livelihoods, tourism, development, food practices and changing landscapes shape relationships between human and non-human life. The research introduces the concept of 'plural habitations' to understand these overlapping ecological relationships and the ways in which different species and communities share landscapes. By examining how cultural practices and human activities influence relationships with other species, the study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of biodiversity and conservation. Its focus on multispecies relationships and ecological ethics provides a strong and direct contribution to the goal.

**Climate-Driven History of Last 2600 Years: Insights from Bandhavgarh National Park**

**Research**

Nayanjot Lahiri, Professor of History and Archaeology, Centre for Interdisciplinary Archaeological Research, contributed to this interdisciplinary reconstruction of environmental and climatic changes in and around Bandhavgarh National Park and Tiger Reserve over the past 2,600 years. The research uses multiple environmental proxies, including pollen, mineral magnetism and sediment characteristics, to reconstruct changes in climate conditions across the region. Understanding long-term climate variability provides important context for interpreting the relationship between environmental change, ecosystems and human activity in central India. The research is particularly relevant to understanding how climatic conditions have shaped landscapes over extended periods.

Professor Alexander Phillips, Assistant Professor of English, Director of the MA programme at Ashoka, talks about his recently published book: **Ecology and German Realism: Poetics, Politics, and the Conquest of Nature.** He reflects upon his journey of writing this book, his research quests along the way, the challenges he encountered, and how the University environment contributed towards bringing his vision into reality.




**The Importance of Quantifying Selection Climates: Predictable and Unpredictable Variation in Predation Risk**

**Research**

Professor Manvi Sharma, Assistant Professor, worked alongside Kavita Isvaran, Professor at the Centre for Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science, to investigate how predictable and unpredictable changes in predation risk influence prey behaviour. Using the rock-pool-breeding mosquito Aedes vexans as a model organism, the researchers combine observations of natural predator populations with controlled experiments to examine how female mosquitoes respond to varying levels of predation risk. The study demonstrates that ecological pressures can vary substantially across both space and time and that prey responses depend on the predictability and intensity of those pressures. Understanding these interactions provides insights into how organisms respond behaviourally to changing environmental conditions and how ecological pressures can shape adaptation. By examining predator–prey relationships and the dynamics that influence species behaviour within ecosystems, the research contributes to the scientific understanding of terrestrial ecological systems and biodiversity.

**Species Biology and Demographic History: Species Vulnerability to Climate Change in Tropical Island Birds**

**Research**

Ratnesh Karjee, Department of Biology; Vikram Iyer, Department of Biology; Durbadal Chatterjee, Department of Biology; Kritika M. Garg, Department of Biology and Centre for Interdisciplinary Archaeological Research; and Balaji Chattopadhyay, Trivedi School of Biosciences, investigate how species characteristics and demographic history influence the vulnerability of tropical island birds to climate change. Focusing on endemic island bird species, the study examines how biological characteristics and historical population processes can influence their ability to respond to changing climatic and environmental conditions. Understanding why some species are more vulnerable than others is important for anticipating biodiversity losses and informing conservation priorities in the face of climate change. The research therefore provides a particularly strong contribution to SDG 15 through its direct relevance to terrestrial biodiversity and the conservation of vulnerable species.

**Balancing Act: Persistence of the Red Fox in the Dog-Dominated Landscapes of the Trans-Himalaya**

**Research**

Sai Khurana and Deepraj Pandey, researchers at the Mphasis AI & Applied Tech Lab, Ashoka University, are among the authors examining how red foxes persist in landscapes increasingly dominated by free-ranging dogs in the Trans-Himalaya. The study investigates the ecological relationship between domestic dogs and red foxes, focusing on whether competition and predation pressures affect fox distribution and persistence. Field research in the Spiti region highlights how human-associated changes to high-altitude landscapes can alter interactions between domestic animals and native wildlife. The findings provide evidence for understanding how wildlife adapts to increasingly human-influenced environments and the pressures faced by carnivores outside protected areas. The research is particularly relevant to biodiversity conservation because it highlights the need to consider interactions between livestock, free-ranging domestic animals and wild species when designing conservation strategies. It contributes to understanding how human–wildlife interactions shape the resilience of mountain ecosystems.

**Forest Dilemmas in India: Sovereignty, Law and Forest Rights in a Warming World**

**Partnerships**

Dr Arpita Kodiveri, Assistant Professor from Vassar College, USA, held a colloquium where she examined the legal and political dimensions of forest governance and land conflicts in India's coal-bearing forest regions. Drawing on jurisprudence, legislation and interviews with forest-dwelling communities and legal practitioners, the session explored competing claims around sovereignty, property, conservation and the rights of communities. The discussion considered how emerging international climate law frameworks may shape future struggles over forest rights and influence decision-making around land and natural resources. By bringing together law, climate governance and community rights, the session highlighted the tensions between development, conservation and the interests of communities whose livelihoods depend on these landscapes.

**Birds in Biology: An Ornithologist's Trysts with Rare Bird Conservation in India**

**Partnerships**

As part of the Spring '26 Colloquium Series, Professor Ghazala Shahabuddin, Visiting Faculty of Environmental Studies, led a session examining the history and evolving practice of rare bird conservation in India. Drawing on archival material from the Ravi Sankaran Papers at the National Centre for Biological Sciences, the talk reflected on the work of renowned ecologist Ravi Sankaran and his efforts to reconcile bird conservation with human livelihoods. Examples involving the Lesser Florican, Edible-nest Swiftlet and Blyth's Tragopan demonstrated the complexities of conserving species within landscapes shared by people and wildlife. The session highlighted a shift from narrowly protectionist approaches towards conservation models that recognise human–bird coexistence and local livelihoods. Through these examples, participants engaged with the practical and ethical challenges of protecting threatened species while developing conservation approaches that are responsive to the social realities of surrounding communities.

**The Coup in Nature's Governance: Centralisation of Indian Wildlife Conservation in the 1970s**

**Partnerships**

Dr Biswajit Sarmah from IIT Palakkad held a colloquium examining the historical transformation of wildlife conservation governance in India during the 1970s, with particular attention to the increasing centralisation of conservation institutions and decision-making. The session encouraged participants to consider how political and institutional changes shaped the governance of wildlife and implementation of conservation policy. By situating contemporary conservation practices within their historical origins, the discussion highlighted the influence of state and institutional authority on decisions of biodiversity and protected areas. The session raised questions about who participates in environmental decision-making and how conservation priorities are implemented. This perspective provides a foundation for understanding the relationship between biodiversity conservation, governance and institutions, while encouraging reflection on the need for participatory approaches to environmental decision-making.

**Nature Positive Universities Initiative**

**Partnerships**

In 2024, we joined the Nature Positive Universities Initiative, becoming part of a global network of more than 500 higher education institutions committed to promoting nature-positive practices across campuses, supply chains and surrounding communities. The initiative brings together universities working towards a shared vision of strengthening the relationship between higher education and nature restoration. Our participation helps connect students, faculty and staff with a wider international community working to address biodiversity loss and environmental degradation through institutional action. The initiative is a partnership between the University of Oxford, UNEP Youth & Education and the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, providing a platform for knowledge exchange and collective action among participating institutions. Through this global engagement, we strengthened Ashoka's connection with international efforts to make higher education campuses and communities more supportive of nature and ecosystem restoration.



**Hybrid Genome Assembly of Bat Rhinolophus Lepidus and Susceptibility to SARS-CoV-2 Infection and Climate Change**

**Research**

Kritika M Garg, from the Centre for Interdisciplinary Archaeological Research and Department of Biology, and Balaji Chattopadhyay, Department of Biology, Trivedi School of Biosciences, examine the genome of Blyth's horseshoe bat (Rhinolophus lepidus), a species with relevance to both biodiversity and emerging infectious diseases. The study develops a high-quality hybrid genome assembly and examines genetic characteristics associated with susceptibility to SARS-CoV-2 infection. It also assesses how climate change may affect the species' future distribution and conservation status. By combining genomic analysis with ecological modelling, the research links wildlife conservation with the understanding of zoonotic disease risks and environmental change. The findings demonstrate the value of genomic information in assessing species vulnerability and anticipating how climate-driven shifts in habitat suitability may affect wildlife populations. The research therefore sits at the intersection of biodiversity conservation, climate change and preparedness for emerging infectious diseases.

**Imagined Ecological Histories Threaten India's Most Widespread Biome**

**Partnerships**

As part of the Spring '26 Colloquium Series, the Department of Environmental Studies hosted Dr Ashish Nerlekar for a session examining the ecological history and conservation of India's tropical savannas and grasslands. Drawing on literature, archival records, fossil evidence and field-based research, the talk challenged commonly held assumptions about these landscapes and highlighted their ecological significance. Dr Nerlekar discussed how misconceptions about the historical prevalence and nature of grasslands have influenced conservation practices and contributed to the mismanagement of these ecosystems. Particular attention was given to the resulting impacts on plant and bird communities and the implications for biodiversity conservation. The session encouraged students, faculty and researchers to critically examine how ecological knowledge, historical evidence and conservation narratives influence environmental policy and management.

**Ethnoprimatology and the Human-Primate Interface**

**Partnerships**

The Department of Environmental Studies hosted Dr Sindhu Radhakrishna for a colloquium exploring the increasingly complex relationship between humans and primates in shared landscapes. Using the framework of ethnoprimatology, the session examined humans and primates as co-inhabitants whose behaviour, ecological interactions and cultural relationships are deeply interconnected. Particular attention was given to the growing challenge of human–primate conflict in India and the implications this creates for both wildlife conservation and communities living alongside primate populations. Rather than treating conservation and human interests as separate concerns, the session encouraged participants to consider coexistence as a central component of conservation practice. The discussion offered insights into the causes and dynamics of human–wildlife conflict while highlighting the importance of understanding local ecological and cultural contexts when developing strategies for biodiversity conservation and sustainable coexistence.

**The Unreasonable Effectiveness of Citizen Science for Biodiversity**

**Partnerships**

Dr Suhel Quader, the Head of Education and Public Engagement from the Nature Conservation Foundation, held a colloquium which explored the potential of citizen science to expand public participation in biodiversity monitoring and environmental research. Drawing on examples involving trees and birds, the session demonstrated how partnerships between scientists and members of the public can generate valuable information about ecological change while strengthening environmental awareness. The discussion highlighted the urgency of tracking biodiversity amid rapid global environmental change and the opportunity to engage wider communities in understanding these transformations. The colloquium was complemented by a birding session around the Ashoka campus, where students, faculty and staff participated in identifying more than 27 bird species, including the rare Indian Thick-knee. This combination of scientific discussion and experiential learning demonstrated how citizen engagement can contribute to biodiversity knowledge while creating opportunities for the University community to actively participate in environmental observation and learning.



### Climate Change and Biotic Evolution

**Teaching**

Assistant Professor at the Trivedi School of Biosciences Balaji Chattopadhyay taught Climate Change and Biotic Evolution, examining the relationship between changing climatic conditions and biological systems. The course provides students with a scientific framework for understanding how climate change can influence organisms, ecological processes and evolutionary trajectories. It complements broader environmental teaching by connecting climate change with biodiversity and biological adaptation, enabling students to consider the consequences of climatic shifts beyond human systems. The course also aligns with ongoing research examining the effects of climate change on biodiversity and ecological communities, including long-term work tracking small mammal communities and pathogen dynamics under changing climatic conditions. By connecting climate science with evolutionary biology and ecological change, the course provides students with a scientific understanding of how biological systems respond to environmental pressures and why climate change has implications for biodiversity, ecosystem stability and the emergence of new ecological risks.

### Exploring Human–Nature Relationships for Sustainable Resource Management

**Teaching**

Guided by Dr Madhusudan Mysore Doreswamy, with support from Teaching Fellows Aritra Bose and Manasi Narula, this Environmental Studies course examines the dynamic relationship between human societies and the natural environment through interdisciplinary perspectives. Students explore biodiversity conservation, ecosystem services, sustainable agriculture, resource governance, urbanisation, climate change, and the interconnected challenges of balancing development with ecological sustainability. The curriculum encourages critical analysis of environmental trade-offs across local and global scales while highlighting the social, political, and economic dimensions of environmental decision-making. By fostering systems thinking and an integrated understanding of human–nature interactions, the course equips students to contribute towards biodiversity conservation and resilient landscapes.

### Conservation Policy in the Developing World

**Teaching**

Taught by Professor Ghazala Shahabuddin, Visiting Faculty of Environmental Studies, Conservation Policy in the Developing World examines biodiversity conservation within its ecological, historical, political and socio-economic contexts. The course introduces students to the ecological processes underlying extinction and ecosystem degradation, while exploring their wider consequences for society. Students critically examine major conservation approaches, including protected areas, Integrated Conservation and Development Programmes, community-based conservation, Payment for Ecosystem Services, crop certification and ecotourism. Indian wildlife laws and policies are considered alongside international case studies, enabling students to assess how conservation strategies operate across different contexts. An interdisciplinary approach brings together ecology, history, political science, economics and sociology to develop a holistic understanding of biodiversity challenges and potential solutions. Learning is further connected to practice through a field visit to Mandothi Wetlands in Haryana, where students apply conservation concepts to a real-world production landscape.



**Gautam Menon,**
**Professor of Physics and Biology, Ashoka University**

*'The water we drink, the air we breathe, and the health of animals and ecosystems all contribute to our well-being. A unified approach is essential to understanding and addressing these links.'*

### Understanding Environmental Justice and Equitable Resource Governance

**Teaching**

Taught by Professor Manvi Sharma, with support from Teaching Fellows Bhavya Gupta and Nandan Sankriti Kaushik, the Environmental Studies course explores the evolving relationship between society and the natural environment, encouraging students to critically examine contemporary approaches to biodiversity conservation and ecosystem management. Through discussions on ecological theory, conservation philosophies, environmental ethics, and case studies, students develop a nuanced understanding of how nature is valued, protected, and governed. The course also examines methods for measuring biodiversity, prioritising conservation efforts, and addressing the social, political, and economic dimensions of environmental stewardship. By cultivating ecological literacy and systems thinking, the course prepares students to contribute towards biodiversity conservation and sustainable resource management.

### Indian Environmental Politics

**Teaching**

Professor Mukul Sharma's Indian Environmental Politics examines how environmental concerns in India are shaped by politics, caste, religion, livelihoods, identity and development. The course explores environmental movements and struggles around forests, rivers, cities and climate, while examining how ecological concerns are understood and mobilised across different social and political contexts. Through historical perspectives, contemporary campaigns and case studies, students engage with questions of environmental rights, democracy, citizenship, dignity and recognition. The course also considers how caste, indigeneity, religion, region and community influence environmental thought and competing understandings of sustainability. By connecting environmental challenges with broader questions of inequality, power and justice, the course develops an interdisciplinary understanding of environmental politics in India. Students further deepen their engagement through independent research and analytical writing on selected environmental issues.

**Fantastic Plants and Where We Find Them (and Why)**

**Teaching**

Professor Akshay Surendra, Visiting Faculty, taught Fantastic Plants and Where We Find Them (and Why) develops students' understanding of plant diversity, evolution, ecological interactions and the role of plants in sustaining life. Through classroom activities and field-based observation around the Ashoka campus, students examine plant traits, ecological niches, competition, facilitation and interactions between plants and other organisms. The course explores ecological processes including plant-pollinator relationships, seed dispersal, plant-soil interactions and trophic relationships, before introducing students to major Indian biomes such as tropical forests, grasslands, deserts, temperate forests and aquatic ecosystems. By connecting plant characteristics and evolutionary relationships with broader ecosystem functioning, the course encourages students to recognise the visible and less visible ways plants support ecological systems and human life. The field-based component further strengthens engagement with biodiversity through direct observation of the natural environment.

**Understanding Human–Elephant Conflict in Odisha's Shared Landscapes**

**Ongoing Research**

Shikhar Srivastava, a PhD student working with Professor Meghna Agarwala from the Department of Environmental Studies, is researching human–elephant conflict in the Angul Forest Circle of Odisha. His work examines how habitat loss, degradation and fragmentation, driven by mining, agriculture and other development activities, are intensifying interactions between local communities and elephants.

It combines remotely sensed data with field-based methods, including vegetation plots to assess habitat quality, elephant sign surveys and dung collection to understand occupancy, diet, crop-raiding patterns, stress and social surveys to examine community perceptions and tolerance towards elephants. Shikhar is also collaborating with the Forest Department and students from the Department of Computer Science to detect elephant vocalisations, with the aim of developing early-warning signals that can support conflict mitigation.

The research recognises Asian elephants as critical to healthy forest ecosystems, acting as 'ecosystem engineers' through seed dispersal, the creation of forest clearings and the maintenance of plant diversity. With Asian elephants classified as endangered on the IUCN Red List, protecting the species is vital not only for biodiversity and ecosystem functioning but also for the cultural heritage associated with elephants. Shikhar's findings aim to inform conservation policies, habitat management and landscape-level interventions that can reduce human–elephant conflict while supporting the long-term survival of elephants in increasingly human-dominated landscapes.



**Beyond Forested Landscapes: The Story of Grasses and Humans**

**Ongoing Research**

Jishnu Borgohain, a third-year Ph.D. student at Ashoka University working with Professor Meghna Agarwala, Associate Professor, Department of Environmental Studies, is investigating the long-term history of grass–tree ecosystems in Central India and how they have been shaped by both climate and human activity. His research focuses on southern Madhya Pradesh, particularly the Narmadapuram district, and combines palaeoecology with cultural anthropology to understand how these landscapes have evolved over thousands of years. As part of the study, Jishnu analyses sediment cores collected from lakes and swamps for indicators such as fossil pollen, micro-charcoal, and carbon and nitrogen isotopes. These records provide insights into historical vegetation, fire patterns and environmental conditions. Preliminary findings indicate that southern Madhya Pradesh has supported a heterogeneous landscape of grasses and trees for at least 10,000 years, challenging the perception of dense, tree-dominated forests as the region's original state.

The research also examines how colonial ideas of 'wasteland' influenced the conversion of mixed tree–grass landscapes into plantations for timber production. These historical assumptions remain relevant today, as large-scale tree-planting initiatives can threaten naturally occurring grassland and forest–savanna mosaics.

The research is funded by the Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB), India.



**Where Do the Animals Go? How Climate and Humans Shape Carnivore Habitats in the Himalayas**

**Ongoing Research**

Pooja Chand, a PhD scholar at Ashoka University, is investigating how climate change, human activity and interactions between species shape the habitats and behaviour of mammalian carnivores in the Himalayas. Her research focuses on species such as leopards, bears, foxes, martens and weasels, examining how changes in temperature and increasing anthropogenic disturbances influence where these animals can survive and reproduce.

Her fieldwork is based in the Great Himalayan National Park in Himachal Pradesh, a biodiversity-rich landscape spanning a wide elevation gradient. Pooja uses camera traps to monitor carnivore activity across elevations ranging from 1,500 to 4,000 metres, strategically placing cameras based on animal signs such as scat, tracks, pugmarks and feeding remains. She complements these observations with behavioural experiments using playback of human voices, dog barks and other animal calls to understand how carnivores perceive and respond to human presence and disturbance.

By examining the combined effects of climate, species interactions and human activity, Pooja's research seeks to understand the factors determining the range limits of carnivores and their ability to adapt to changing environments. As top predators, carnivores play an important role in maintaining ecosystem balance, and changes in their distribution can have wider consequences for biodiversity, human–wildlife interactions, disease risks and livelihood security in fragile Himalayan landscapes.



**A picturesque view of the study area (Great Himalayan National Park, Kullu)**



**Sign survey/indirect observations such as scat, droppings as indicators of animal activity**



**Camera trap and playback experiment set up in the field**




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

**1. Committees and Oversight Mechanisms**

**Campus**

Ashoka has a strong governance framework reinforced by committees that provide specialised oversight and avenues for participation and redressal. Ashoka's public resources currently identify the Committee Against Disciplinary Infractions (CADI), Committee Against Sexual Harassment (CASH), Anti-Ragging Committee (ARC), Workers' Welfare Committee (WWC), University Diversity and Inclusion Committee, Academic Integrity Committee (AIC) and Equal Opportunity Cell, among others.

Details of members of these committees are available in various commonly accessible regions throughout campus as well as online on the Ashoka University website for the reference of the student body, academics and staff in case of potential requirements where these committees need to be easily approached.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Committee Against Sexual Harassment (CASH)** | Functions as the Internal Complaints Committee under the Policy Against Sexual Harassment. It prevents, prohibits and redresses sexual harassment. The committee includes faculty, staff and an external member, with additional support from members of the University community. |
| **Committee Against Disciplinary Infractions (CADI)** | Deals with breaches of University rules and regulations. Its membership includes faculty, staff and student representatives, ensuring a fair process with multiple perspectives. |
| **Academic Integrity Committee (AIC)** | Oversees cases of alleged academic integrity violations, including disputed or repeated cases, and advises on appropriate sanctions. It comprises faculty from various disciplines, the Office of Academic Affairs and student representatives. |
| **Anti-Ragging Committee (ARC)** | Implements anti-ragging measures as per UGC regulations. It includes University leadership, faculty, staff, students and representatives from civil and police administration to ensure a safe and respectful campus. |
| **University Diversity and Inclusion Committee** | Provides oversight on diversity and inclusion initiatives across the University. Chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor and includes faculty and non-teaching staff representation. |
| **Equal Opportunity Cell (EOC)** | Addresses complaints related to discrimination, harassment and victimisation. It works to promote equitable access and create an inclusive and supportive environment for all. |
| **Workers' Welfare Committee (WWC)** | Provides a platform for addressing welfare issues of non-teaching staff and workers and works towards their well-being and improved working conditions. |

## 2. Governance, Accountability and Institutional Integrity

### Campus

A strong university is built not only through teaching and research, but also through the systems that guide decision-making, protect rights, resolve grievances and uphold accountability. At Ashoka, we uphold institutional governance by a network of policies, committees and oversight mechanisms covering academic integrity, disciplinary processes, inclusion, sexual-harassment prevention, anti-ragging, freedom of expression, accessibility, worker welfare, research ethics and environmental responsibility, several of which can be accessed online via our website. These mechanisms provide defined processes through which members of the University community can raise concerns, seek redressal and participate in institutional life.

At the institutional level, our Governing Body provides overarching governance, with representation from the Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor, Haryana Education Department, independent members and the Board of Trustees. The University also maintains published minutes of Governing Body meetings, providing a formal record of institutional decision-making.

Governance extends beyond senior leadership. The Ashoka University Student Government (AUSG) is the representative body elected by and for students. It serves as the primary channel of communication between the student body and the University administration, ensuring that student concerns, initiatives, and perspectives are heard and acted upon. The AUSG functions under the Ashoka student government constitution and operates through three principal bodies: the Councils, the House of Representatives, and the Executive Cabinet.

Its structure includes elected cohort councils, a House of Representatives and an Executive Cabinet, with responsibilities including representing students in University governance, advocating for student rights, supporting environmental and community initiatives, and promoting transparency and accountability.



### Chronicles – Penguin Random House India Partnerships

The Ashoka Centre for Translation's Chronicles series, developed in partnership with Penguin Random House India, expands access to important non-fiction writings originally produced in Indian languages. During the reporting period, two titles were highlighted within the series: *Being Modern: A Biography of Ananda Ram Dhekial Phookan and For the Love of Art: The Lost History of Women in Kerala Theatre*. The broader series brings biographies, memoirs, histories and critical writings into English, creating an accessible archive of ideas and experiences from across India's linguistic and social landscapes. The project is particularly significant for preserving narratives that may otherwise remain confined to regional-language readerships. Its focus on social history, cultural change and women's participation in public and artistic life also enables wider engagement with diverse perspectives on India's past. Through translation and publication, Chronicles connects linguistic communities while making historically significant knowledge available to a broader readership.

### Strengthening Ethical Governance in Corporate Tax Compliance

**Research**

Professor Bhanu Gupta, from the Department of Economics, collaborated with Keshav Choudhary to examine the role of independent auditors in promoting corporate tax compliance through the working paper 'Watchdogs or Accomplices? The Role of Third-Party Auditors in Corporate Tax Compliance'. The study explores how third-party auditors influence corporate tax reporting and the extent to which effective oversight can strengthen transparency, accountability, and regulatory compliance.

By analysing the incentives and responsibilities of auditors, the research provides insights into improving institutional governance and reducing tax-related misconduct.

Its findings contribute to broader discussions on building accountable economic institutions and strengthening trust in financial systems through more robust compliance and oversight mechanisms.

### Regionalism and Border Management: The Case of the India–Myanmar Free Movement Regime

**Research**

Palak Maheshwari of Ashoka University examines regionalism, border governance and community connections in the India–Myanmar borderlands through Regionalism and Border Management: The Case of the India–Myanmar Free Movement Regime, published in Essays on Global Regionalism II, part of the United Nations University Series on Regionalism. The chapter uses the Free Movement Regime between India and Myanmar and examines how border-management systems can respond to cultural, ethnic and social realities of communities divided by postcolonial borders. The research considers the tension between national security and immigration controls on one hand, and humanitarian considerations, historical community ties and cross-border mobility on the other. It highlights the importance of creative border management, consensus-building, negotiation and cooperation between national and regional actors in maintaining stability in borderlands. The chapter was published in March 2026 by Springer as part of the United Nations University Series on Regionalism.

### Understanding Bias in Democratic Decision-Making

**Research**

Research Assistant Prashant Agrawal, Centre for Digitalisation, AI and Society, contributed to the development of 'YouChoose', a lightweight system that allows individuals to prove ownership of an online account without revealing their identity. The research addresses an important challenge in digital systems: enabling a user to demonstrate control over a legitimate account while preserving anonymity and requiring no changes to the underlying server infrastructure. The researchers establish a formal security definition for anonymous proofs of account ownership and develop a prototype evaluated across email and social-media accounts. The results indicate improved performance and adaptability while maintaining minimal latency overhead. The technology has potential applications in sensitive settings, including whistleblowing, where individuals may need to establish account ownership without exposing their identity.

### Shared Reverence Post-1947: Observations on the Sikh Case

**Research**

Kanika Singh, Director of the Centre for Writing and Communication (CWC) at Ashoka University, examines contemporary expressions of shared religious reverence in the aftermath of Partition through three cases involving the Sikh community: the Kartarpur Sahib Corridor, Haroon Khalid's Walking With Nanak, and a dispute concerning Sindhi religious practices in Indore. The research explores how religious traditions, sacred spaces and community practices continue to shape relationships across social and national boundaries more than seven decades after Partition. By considering the Kartarpur Corridor in particular, the study highlights how shared religious heritage can create opportunities for cross-border engagement, cultural connection and the re-examination of divisive historical boundaries. At the same time, Singh takes a critical approach to the idea of shared reverence, examining the internal boundaries and competing understandings of religious identity that accompany such practices. The research therefore contributes to understanding how communities negotiate religious identity, memory and relationships in a post-Partition context. Its central relevance to SDG 16 lies in its examination of social cohesion, inclusive community relations, peaceful engagement across boundaries and the role of cultural and religious practices in strengthening dialogue. The article was published as a research article in Critical Pakistan Studies in 2026.

**Navigating Editorial Decision-Making in Modern Newsrooms**

**Research**

Professor Ayush Pant, from the Department of Economics, collaborated with Federico Trombetta to explore the complex dynamics of editorial decision-making through the journal publication The Newsroom Dilemma. The research examines the competing pressures that influence how news organisations select, prioritise, and communicate information in an increasingly complex media environment. By analysing the institutional and economic factors shaping newsroom decisions, the study contributes to a better understanding of media independence, responsible journalism, and the role of credible information in strengthening democratic societies. Its findings offer valuable insights into fostering transparent media ecosystems that support informed public discourse and reinforce trust in institutions.

**'Piercing the Fog': Using the RTI Act for Investigative journalism**

**Partnership**

On 27 March 2026, the Department of Media Studies hosted a guest lecture by independent journalist Shreegireesh Jalihal, titled 'Piercing the Fog: Navigating the RTI Act in the New India'. The session introduced students to the Right to Information Act as a practical investigative tool, demonstrating how journalists can use publicly accessible information and institutional records to investigate issues and develop evidence-based stories. The discussion provided insight into the relationship between journalism, transparency and public accountability, while encouraging students to understand how access to information can strengthen scrutiny of institutions and decision-making processes. By connecting legal and institutional mechanisms with practical journalistic investigation, the lecture helped students develop a stronger understanding of responsible journalism and participatory public life. It also provided an applied perspective on how information-access mechanisms can contribute to transparency and accountability within democratic institutions.

**Borderlands and their Mediations: Examinations / Anticipations**

**Partnerships**

The two-day international seminar Borderlands and their Mediations: Examinations / Anticipations, organised by the Department of Media Studies on 26–27 March 2026, brought together scholars, researchers, students and practitioners from India and abroad to examine how borders are experienced and represented through media. The seminar received more than 75 abstracts, selected 21 papers and brought together 51 participants, including scholars. Discussions examined borders as lived and mediated spaces shaped by identity, belonging, mobility, power, representation, while drawing on media studies, cultural and gender studies and visual cultures. Participants came from institutions including New York University, University of Pennsylvania, Jawaharlal Nehru University, and University of Nottingham Malaysia. The seminar also featured student research emerging from the Media Studies Summer Fellowship and initiated further scholarly collaboration through an edited volume and planned follow-up workshop.

**Cryptography**

**Teaching**

Associate Professor Mahavir Jhawar, Department of Computer Science, Ashoka University, teaches Cryptography, which provides students with a rigorous foundation in the principles and applications of secure digital communication. The course covers symmetric-key and public-key encryption, message integrity, authentication, hash functions, digital signatures, key exchange, public-key infrastructure and Transport Layer Security (TLS), alongside advanced concepts such as secret sharing, zero-knowledge proofs and secure multiparty computation. Students therefore develop an understanding of how confidentiality, privacy, authenticity and integrity can be protected in digital systems.

**Information Security**

**Teaching**

Professor Subhashis Banerjee, Head of the Department of Computer Science, Ashoka University, teaches Information Security, a course focused on understanding and modelling security challenges in modern digital environments. The curriculum covers threat modelling, adversarial actors, trust and verifiability, privacy, secrecy, cryptography, authentication and authorisation, identity, hardware and software integrity, formal verification, trusted computing and network and operating-system security. Through case studies and practical engagement with commonly used security tools and measures, students develop the ability to reason about real-world information-security challenges and assess potential vulnerabilities. The course contributes to building capabilities for secure, trusted and privacy-conscious digital systems, particularly supporting in the context of secure digital infrastructure and protection of information.

**Anthropology of Violence**

**Teaching**

Assistant Professor Nishita Trisal, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, teaches Anthropology of Violence, examining violence as a social and political phenomenon rather than simply an isolated act of physical harm. The course uses anthropological approaches to explore how violence is produced, experienced and understood within particular social and institutional contexts. It enables students to examine the relationships between violence, power, political authority, social structures and lived experience, while developing a critical understanding of the consequences of violence for individuals and communities. The course is particularly relevant to understanding how violence intersects with institutions and social relations, including the ways in which marginalised populations may experience insecurity or exclusion. Professor Trisal's research also focuses on political anthropology, surveillance and institutions.

**Satyarthi Movement for Global Compassion: Building a Compassionate Society**

**Partnerships**

During the reporting period, the Centre for Social and Behaviour Change (CSBC) partnered with the Satyarthi Movement for Global Compassion (SMGC) and the Satyarthi Foundation to document and strengthen efforts towards building more compassionate and equitable communities. CSBC produced the Seeds of Compassion report, which documented the impact of SMGC's work across communities in six states. The report was launched on 18 February 2026 at SMGC's Building a Compassionate India programme in New Delhi, led by Nobel Laureate Kailash Satyarthi, with Narayana Murthy, Founder of Infosys, serving as Chief Guest. The partnership subsequently expanded into knowledge exchange and institutional engagement. Dr Pavan Mamidi, Director of CSBC, was appointed to the Satyarthi Fellowship Advisory Council later in June 2026, where he will advise the inaugural Fellowship cohort.

**Why States Succeed or Fail: Politics, Institutions, and Development**

**Teaching**

Professor Bhanu Joshi and Avisikta Sinha, Department of Political Science, teach 'Why States Succeed or Fail: Politics, Institutions, and Development', which examines how political institutions, governance structures and state influence development outcomes. The course considers why some states are more capable of implementing policies, delivering public goods and responding effectively to societal needs, while others experience persistent institutional weaknesses. Students explore the relationship between political incentives, institutional arrangements and economic and social development, developing a framework for understanding the foundations of effective governance. The course is particularly valuable because it connects abstract questions of political institutions with practical development outcomes, encouraging students to consider how institutional capacity affects the ability of governments to deliver services and pursue inclusive development. This provides substantive curriculum evidence around the functioning, effectiveness and capacity of public institutions.

**International Cybersecurity, Artificial Intelligence and National Security**

**Teaching**

Assistant Professor Arun Sukumar, Department of International Relations, teaches International Cybersecurity, an advanced course examining the major actors, governance frameworks and policy challenges shaping the international cybersecurity landscape. Students explore contemporary cybersecurity incidents alongside the underlying infrastructure that enables global connectivity, including the Internet and subsea cables, while considering emerging challenges such as cybercrime, spyware, information security and the implications of artificial intelligence. The course places cybersecurity within an international governance framework, enabling students to understand how states, institutions and other actors respond to threats that cross national borders. Its focus extends beyond technical aspects of cybersecurity to consider the governance, policy and international dimensions of digital security, making it particularly relevant to understanding the resilience of digital infrastructure and institutions in an increasingly interconnected world.

Professor Arun Sukumar also teaches Artificial Intelligence and National Security, examining the rapidly evolving relationship between artificial intelligence, technology and international security. The course enables students to consider how AI is changing the strategic environment, including its implications for national security, military decision-making, technological competition, governance and international stability. It also provides a framework for thinking critically about the risks associated with increasingly autonomous and AI-enabled systems, including questions surrounding accountability, human control and the regulation of emerging technologies. By bringing technological innovation into conversation with international security and governance, the course helps students understand how emerging technologies can reshape relations between states and alter existing security arrangements.



# Ashoka University hosts meet on Coal phase-down by 2047



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

The Ashoka Centre for a People-Centric Energy Transition (ACPET) , Ashoka University, held a high-level consultation workshop titled "Viksit Bharat @2047 and Net Zero @2070 Trajectory — Delayed Thermal Coal Phase-Down in India" to estimate thermal coal demand in India up to 2047 while sustaining rapid economic growth, ensuring energy security, and accelerating the shift towards renewable energy sources.

The workshop opened with a special address from

and Net Zero 2070.

Using a regression-based approach, ACPET examined installed capacity of coal and renewables required to meet these goals through a sectoral assessment of electricity demand.

The analysis views how growth of clean energy sources in electricity generation mix will impact demand for thermal coal in its Viksit Bharat growth path.

The findings challenge the perception that an increase in RE supply will lead to a decline in coal use.

The findings show that thermal coal demand will

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

**1. Nurturing Sustainable Futures: SDGs, COP29 and Design Thinking**

**Campus**

At Ashoka, we conducted the workshop 'Nurturing Sustainable Futures: SDGs, COP29, and Design Thinking' for students participating in the Lodha Genius-Ashoka University Programme (LG-AUP). The workshop introduced participants to the principles of sustainability and the Sustainable Development Goals through interactive and participatory learning methods. By combining discussions around the SDGs and global climate conversations with design thinking, we encouraged participants to approach sustainability not only as a subject of study but also as an area where creative problem-solving can contribute to meaningful change. The workshop provided an accessible introduction to sustainability while encouraging young learners to connect global challenges with practical approaches to developing solutions. Through such engagements, we sought to build sustainability awareness and equip young people with the knowledge and perspectives needed to participate in shaping more sustainable futures.



## 2. Global Learning, International Mobility and Academic Exchange

### Campus

At Ashoka University, our global learning and international mobility initiatives provide students with opportunities to engage with diverse academic, cultural and research communities across the world. During the reporting period, more than 150 students participated in semester exchanges, summer programmes, research internships and other global learning opportunities across Europe, North America and beyond. During the Monsoon and Spring semesters, 45 students studied at partner institutions including King's College London, University of Copenhagen, Cornell University and Sciences Po, while 97 students participated in summer programmes at institutions including LSE, Oxford, Harvard, Stanford, HEC Paris, ESSEC Business School, Sciences Po and the University of Zurich. Financial support further enabled 85 students to receive scholarships, tuition waivers or institutional support, including 20 full or partial scholarships and 13 students receiving full tuition support.

Beyond mobility, the University strengthened international academic engagement through the Visiting Student Programmes (VSP), short-term academic experiences, research opportunities and collaborations with institutions including Sciences Po, ESSEC Business School, Maastricht University, University of Zurich, University of Pennsylvania, New York University, Cornell University, Durham University and National University of Singapore. International and visiting students engaged with interdisciplinary offerings spanning Indian Civilisations, Psychology of Health and Illness, Artificial Intelligence and Technology for Entrepreneurs, and Business Applications of Data Science. Research-oriented opportunities, including the Summer Research Programme, supported work in areas such as sustainability, artificial intelligence and semantic modelling. Together, these initiatives expand access to international education, strengthen cross-cultural and interdisciplinary learning, facilitate academic and research exchange, and prepare students to participate meaningfully in an increasingly interconnected world.



**Gitanjali Rana**
**Director**
**Office of Global Education**

*'Developing and sustaining partnerships with higher education institutions across the world is central to Ashoka's vision of preparing students to engage thoughtfully with an increasingly interconnected world. These collaborations enrich the student experience by opening pathways to diverse academic perspectives, cultural exchange, and meaningful learning beyond the classroom. They strengthen opportunities for students and faculty to learn from and with peers across borders, while fostering a deeper appreciation of different contexts and ways of thinking. More broadly, our global partnerships help Ashoka build enduring bridges between communities and institutions, translating international experiences into transformative opportunities for learning, dialogue, and growth.'*




**Global Learning and Academic Exchange Highlights**

- **150+** Students participated in global learning opportunities
- **45** Students undertook semester exchanges
- **97** Students participated in summer programmes
- **85** Students received scholarships, tuition waivers or institutional support
- **13** Students received full tuition support
- Financial aid worth **INR 20 lakh** provided to **28** students



### From Field to Classroom: Dialogues on Climate Change and Sustainability

**Research**

The Office of Sustainability, in collaboration with the Centre for Climate Change and Sustainability (3CS), launched the dialogue series 'From Field to Classroom: Dialogues on Climate Change and Sustainability'. The series was designed to bridge the gap between ground realities and academic spaces by bringing field experiences from researchers involved in 3CS-funded projects into wider University conversations. Through these dialogues, we explored methodological challenges, ethical questions, community engagement during fieldwork and possible solutions emerging from research experiences. The series also created space to reflect on how universities and academic institutions can contribute to a sustainable future. By bringing research and field realities together, we sought to encourage more grounded conversations around climate and sustainability and strengthen connections between research, community engagement and institutional action. The series brought together the Office of Sustainability's Project Pulse: Sustain a Chai initiative and 3CS's research-driven sustainability conversations.

### Translators' Factory 2026 – French Institute in India

**Partnerships**

In May 2026, the Ashoka Centre for Translation partnered with the French Institute in India to organise Translators' Factory 2026, a five-day workshop focused on collaborative translation from French into Indian languages. Held on campus, the programme brought together 10 selected participants working across five translation projects and was led by French translator Myriam Bellehigue. The workshop provided an intensive setting for participants to develop translation skills while engaging with collaborative approaches to multilingual literary exchange. The programme also extended beyond the workshop itself, with participants being felicitated by the French Ambassador at the French Embassy in New Delhi on 29 May 2026. By connecting French literary traditions with Indian languages, the initiative strengthened cross-cultural exchange and created opportunities for translators working across linguistic boundaries. It demonstrates how international partnerships can support language learning, translation practice and wider circulation of literature across cultural contexts.

### Regulation in India: Theory, Practice and Reform

**Research**

Members of the Isaac Centre for Public Policy (ICPP) faculty contributed to Regulation in India: Theory, Practice and Reform, a 22-chapter scholarly volume developed through collaboration with TrustBridge, Delhi, and XKDR Forum, Mumbai. The project brought together chapter contributors, legal scholars, economists and regulatory practitioners to examine India's regulatory architecture across theory, sectoral practice and reform. Faculty contributed research on systemic risk, while the broader collaboration brought together academic and practitioner perspectives on the functioning and evolution of regulation. The project provides a platform for examining how regulatory institutions can respond to complex economic and policy challenges and how regulatory frameworks can be strengthened through evidence-based reform. Its collaborative structure also demonstrates engagement across academic, policy and practitioner communities rather than limiting research to disciplinary or institutional boundaries. The resulting volume is positioned as a comprehensive reference for policymakers and academics working on India's regulatory framework, demonstrating how research can contribute to institutional strengthening and improved public-policy design.




**Ashoka University wins 'University of the Year (Emerging)' at the 20th FICCI**

### Strengthening India's Digital Health Ecosystem through Strategic Academic Partnerships

**Partnerships**

Koita Centre for Digital Health at Ashoka University (KCDH-A) is building strategic partnerships that translate digital health research into policy, practice and national capacity. Its collaboration with WHO SEARO has enabled KCDH-A to contribute to generating evidence and adding expertise to regional discussions on responsible AI and support the development of national strategy for AI in healthcare and global digital health strategy, thereby strengthening the evidence base for responsible and equitable AI adoption in healthcare.

The partnership with ICMR-NIRDH creates a direct link between research and national health priorities, supporting joint evidence generation, knowledge exchange and capacity building. KCDH-A's Winter Dialogue provides a regular national platform bringing together policymakers, clinicians, researchers and industry to identify emerging priorities, share evidence and shape the digital health agenda. Together, these partnerships help strengthen institutional capacity, connect research with implementation.

### Strengthening International Collaboration for Sustainable Chemistry

**Partnerships**

Professor Sourav Pal, from the Department of Chemistry, served as the Chair of the Commonwealth Chemistry Finance Committee, contributing to the strategic governance of the international federation representing chemical science communities across Commonwealth nations. The committee worked to strengthen the organisation's long-term financial sustainability, enabling continued investment in scientific collaboration, capacity building, early-career researcher development, and international programmes aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Through its advisory role, the committee supported equitable participation of member countries, promoted inclusive scientific partnerships, and helped ensure that chemistry continues to address global challenges through collaborative research, education, and innovation.

**Developing AI-enabled Remote Healthcare Solutions through Interdisciplinary Research**

**Partnerships**

KCDH-A also established a strategic research partnership with Shiv Nadar Institution of Eminence (SNIoE) to accelerate innovation in AI-enabled remote healthcare monitoring. Through a Memorandum of Understanding, the collaboration brings together expertise in engineering, artificial intelligence, sensor technologies, and digital health to develop advanced remote patient monitoring systems capable of supporting more efficient, accessible, and technology-driven healthcare. By integrating sensor technologies with data analytics and AI/ML methodologies, the partnership seeks to design practical healthcare solutions that enhance monitoring.

Further, it would enable earlier clinical interventions, and improve the delivery of healthcare services beyond traditional clinical settings. The collaboration also promotes interdisciplinary research and knowledge exchange, thereby contributing to the development of next-generation digital health technologies that address evolving healthcare needs while strengthening India's capacity for healthcare innovation.

**ESG and All That**

**Partnerships**

At Ashoka, we partnered with The Future Founders Co. to organise the two-day interactive workshop 'ESG and All That' on 6–7 March, 2025. The workshop introduced students to the fundamentals of Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG), emerging career pathways in sustainability and the role of personal values in shaping responsible action. Through the programme, we highlighted the multidisciplinary nature of sustainability and encouraged students from diverse academic backgrounds to see ESG as an area where their individual interests and skills could contribute. The collaboration also provided students with exposure to perspectives beyond the traditional classroom, helping them understand how sustainability is increasingly influencing organisations, careers and decision-making. Through such external collaborations, we continued to create opportunities for students to engage with evolving sustainability practices and develop a broader understanding of responsible business and development.

**Advancing Digital Health Research and Evidence-based Public Health Systems**

**Partnerships**

Also highlighted under SDG 9, KCDH-A developed a partnership with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and the ICMR–National Institute for Research in Digital Health and Data Science to advance existing research and innovation in digital health and health systems. The collaboration focuses on progressing digital health applications, including electronic patient records, medical imaging, healthcare data analytics, and the development and evaluation of digital health technologies. It also supports the generation of robust scientific evidence to inform public health policy, strengthen disease surveillance, and improve healthcare decision-making. By connecting academic research with national public health priorities, the partnership promotes evidence-informed policymaking and contributes to the development of resilient, technology-enabled healthcare systems. Through collaborative research and innovation, the initiative strengthens India's capacity to harness digital technologies for improved health outcomes and more effective public health governance.

**CSGS X Antipode Foundation: TAARIF Trans* Research Fellowship**

**Partnerships**

The Centre for Studies in Gender and Sexuality (CSGS) also secured the prestigious 'Rights to the Discipline' Grant from the Antipode Foundation, UK, supporting the Centre's TAARIF fellowship, described as India's first trans* fellowship. Through the grant, three fellows - Arushi Rana, Ansh Qabeer Sharma and Udhriti Sarkar undertook research addressing trans* pregnancies, surveillance and cruising in public urinals in Delhi, and queer re-uses of Instagram. Their work brought together innovative research approaches that examine gender and sexuality through Indian social and cultural contexts, while challenging dominant Anglophone frameworks within trans* scholarship. The research was presented at the Trans*Abundance Conference in October 2025, organised in collaboration with the University of Melbourne, and is planned for publication.

**Strengthening Academic Partnerships and Global Knowledge Exchange**

**Partnerships**

The Ashoka Centre for China Studies (ACCS) works with universities and organisations in India and abroad to create opportunities for students, teachers and researchers to learn from each other, conduct research together and build international connections. During the academic year, ACCS strengthened these efforts through partnerships with the Taipei Economic and Cultural Centre (TECC) and the University of Hyderabad (UoH).

ACCS renewed its partnership with the Taipei Economic and Cultural Centre (TECC) for another five years. Through this partnership, TECC will continue to support the Mandarin Language Programme and provide opportunities for students to undertake internships in Taiwan. This gives students the opportunity to develop language skills while gaining first-hand experience of another country and its culture.

ACCS also entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the University of Hyderabad to host Harvard-Yenching Postdoctoral Fellows. The Fellows will carry out research while also contributing to teaching through a course each year. This allows researchers from different institutions to work together, share knowledge and bring new ideas and perspectives into the academic community.



**India and Sustainability Standards 2025**

**Partnerships**

The Office of Sustainability served as the Academic Partner for the India and Sustainability Standards (ISS) 2025: International Dialogues & Conference, organised by the Centre for Responsible Business (CRB) from 12–14 November 2025, at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi. The international conference brought together institutions and experts working towards sustainable and responsible business practices and provided a platform for dialogue around sustainability standards and responsible business. Through our participation as an academic partner, we strengthened Ashoka's engagement with external institutions working on sustainability and contributed to a wider ecosystem of research, dialogue and capacity-building. We joined academic partners including Aston University, Birmingham, Nalanda University and the Goa Institute of Management, creating opportunities for collaborative engagement on sustainability-focused issues beyond the University campus.

**Documentary and Ethnography: Visual Storytelling, Social Justice and Human Rights**

**Partnerships**

On 7 April 2026, the Department of Media Studies hosted a discussion on Documentary and Ethnography with award-winning documentary filmmaker Nakul Singh Sawhney. Drawing on his work on social justice and human rights issues across South Asia, the session examined the relationship between documentary filmmaking and ethnographic practice, with particular attention to the ethical and political dimensions of representing communities on screen. Students engaged with questions surrounding visual representation, fieldwork, subjectivity and grassroots media production, gaining insight into how documentary practices can shape public understanding of communities and social issues. The session strengthened experiential learning by connecting classroom discussions around media and representation with the professional experience of an established filmmaker. It also encouraged students to critically consider questions of power, ethics and responsibility when documenting marginalised communities and communicating their experiences to wider audiences.

**Key Recognitions and Partnerships by Centre for Climate Change and Sustainability (3CS)**

1. Field Station Partnership with Nature Mates: 3CS is finalising a Memorandum of Understanding with Nature Mates, a Kolkata-based conservation NGO, to establish the Centre's first field station in the Himalayan Montane region to study climate-driven habitat resilience and to train Ashoka students.

2. Proposed Centre for Carbon Removal: In collaboration with the Indian Institute of Science and Alt Carbon, 3CS has proposed setting up a Centre for Carbon Removal, backed by a INR 33 crore ANRF Translational and Innovation Initiative application currently under review.

3. ECHO-Network Collaboration: 3CS is piloting the Sustainability Ambassadors Global Engagement (SAGE) programme with ECHO-Network for community-engaged climate research and student experiential learning, and is exploring a pathway to establish Ashoka as a Knowledge Embassy.

4. Bengaluru Sustainability Forum: Preliminary discussions are underway on community engagement and sustainability collaborations in the Delhi–NCR region.

**Workshop with the Rajasthani Bhasha Academy**

**Partnerships**

Ashoka Centre for Translation (ACT) organised a workshop with the Rajasthani Bhasha Academy on 15 April 2026, bringing together literary and visual approaches to translation. The session, Like Image, Like Text? Translating the Chhatris of Shekhawati, was led by Saumya Agarwal, art historian and Assistant Professor at O.P. Jindal Global University. The workshop invited students to examine the relationship between textual and visual materials while considering how cultural meaning is carried across different forms of representation. Using the chhatris of Shekhawati as its focus, the session expanded the idea of translation beyond written language to include architecture, visual culture and historical interpretation. Such interdisciplinary engagement provides students with opportunities to explore how cultural heritage can be interpreted and communicated across contexts. The collaboration also brought an external academic practitioner into dialogue with students, strengthening experiential learning around translation, art history and cultural heritage.

**Knowledge Partnerships with Literary Festivals**

**Partnerships**

ACT also expanded its public engagement through partnerships with major literary platforms during the reporting period. At the 9th Kerala Literature Festival in January 2026, ACT served as a Knowledge Partner and co-organised sessions on Women Translating Women and Translation and the Making of Archives. ACT authors Sara Rai and Sajitha Madathil, translators Kamalakar Bhat and Krupa Ge, and team members Neeta Gupta and Sanchit Toor participated in the festival. ACT also supported the Ashoka Literature Festival 2026 as Knowledge Partner, held on 13–14 February. These engagements brought translation scholarship, literary practice and multilingual cultural knowledge into public forums beyond the classroom. By connecting researchers, writers, translators and wider audiences, the partnerships broaden access to diverse literary traditions and strengthen public dialogue around India's multilingual heritage and the preservation and circulation of knowledge.

| SDG | THE value driver / key aspect covered | Key data & impact demonstrated in the report | Research count | Partnership count | Teaching count |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SDG 1 – No Poverty | **Financial inclusion, livelihood creation & community economic resilience** | 400–450+ students receive financial assistance annually; 416 students (43.65%) received scholarships in AY 2025–26, including 220 (23.08%) on full tuition scholarships; 4 local youth enrolled in ITI training with assured employment planned; Project Asha reached ~30 families per visit across 7 visits, distributing 350+ kg of ration and 50 blankets to 45 families; local entrepreneurship generated INR 6,155 through jewellery sales. | **3** | **0** | **4** |
| SDG 2 – Zero Hunger | **Food security, nutrition outcomes, sustainable agriculture & food-system research** | 350+ kg of food supplies distributed to 200+ beneficiaries; food-support interventions include 100+ snack packets, 40 fruit beverages, 70 biscuit packets and 60 kg wheat flour; Bihar nutrition intervention recorded a 26-percentage-point increase in minimum dietary diversity; Aanganvaani trial involved 209 Anganwadi Workers with potential state-wide reach of ~1.9 lakh workers; BLOOM Phase II expanded across 82 clusters in 4 districts. Campus dining provides calorie and allergen information and personalised nutrition consultations. | **8** | **3** | **5** |
| SDG 3 – Good Health and Well-being | **Healthcare access, mental health, preventive care, health partnerships & safety** | Infirmary recorded 16,168 consultations, 70 medical emergencies, 4 health/screening/vaccination drives, 979 community beneficiaries, 7 external healthcare collaborations and 92 one-to-one counselling sessions outside ACWB. Asawarpur healthcare initiatives delivered 1,020 medical check-ups, 24 health camps, 750 blood tests and 235 referrals; community outreach included 110+ free screenings, 234 blood units donated and 155 thalassaemia screenings. Ashoka achieved 50/50 in its 2026 safety assessment. | **16** | **5** | **6** |
| SDG 4 – Quality Education | **Access, affordability, lifelong learning, inclusive education & community education** | 953 students in the 2025–26 data set; 416 scholarship recipients (43.65%) and 220 full-tuition recipients (23.08%); economically disadvantaged student representation increased from 6% to 10%; 110–115 students with disabilities supported; 141+ executive-function coaching sessions; 17 faculty members trained in inclusive practices; 2 computer labs and 11 laptops established at Asawarpur; NEEV reached 50+ Grades 1–8 students and 20+ Grades 9–12 students, with 35+ classroom and 90+ mentorship sessions. | **3** | **5** | **5** |
| SDG 5 – Gender Equality | **Women's access, economic empowerment, gender-responsive research & inclusion** | 65% of incoming students were women; 43% of incoming women students received scholarships; 48.12% of female scholarship recipients received 100% tuition scholarships; gender programmes included 12 menstrual/sexual-health sessions, 6 financial/legal-literacy sessions reaching 20+ beneficiaries per session; AI Sakhi worked through 875 Samuh Sakhis with potential reach of ~1.75 lakh women; national health partnership operates across 1.6 lakh+ ASHAs. | **11** | **5** | **6** |
| SDG 6 – Clean Water & Sanitation | **Water efficiency, reuse, groundwater recharge, water stewardship & community water security** | 15 rainwater-harvesting pits; 100 KLD + 300 KLD STPs; 2 × 5 KLD ETPs; 1,50,488 KL total water consumption, with a 10.02% year-on-year reduction; treated wastewater reused for irrigation, gardening, solar-panel cleaning and dust suppression; Asawarpur pond restoration from 5.38 acres of currently available area; pond assigned a government UIN and supported technically by HPWWMA. | **0** | **1** | **2** |
| SDG 7 – Affordable & Clean Energy | **Renewable energy, energy efficiency, low-carbon infrastructure & clean-energy transition** | 893 kWp solar capacity under PPAs; approximately 924,000 kWh solar generation, contributing 6.9% of electricity consumption; 10 solar streetlights set up in Asawarpur; 4 MW sanctioned load and 0.99 power factor; 5 DG sets (4 × 750 kVA + 1 × 500 kVA); 6 CNG shuttles + 2 buses; cooling maintained at 26±1°C summer / 18±1°C winter; renewable-energy research includes hydrogen, carbon capture and clean-energy transition. | **8** | **7** | **1** |
| SDG 8 – Decent Work & Economic Growth | **Employability, workforce development, entrepreneurship, local livelihoods & labour-market research** | 4 local youth in ITI training with assured employment; 225+ beneficiaries through Project Adhikaar; 20 volunteers / 40 volunteer hours; local entrepreneurship generated INR 6,155 + INR 5,750 through jewellery and pottery; 36 participants in pottery workshops; Vendor Week created a direct market for local entrepreneurs; OLS provided 141+ coaching sessions, support to 30–50 students, 110+ students receiving individualised support and 85+ users through college-readiness programmes. | **6** | **4** | **5** |
| SDG 9 – Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure | **Resilient infrastructure, technology, innovation, digital access & industry–academia linkages** | 15 rainwater-harvesting pits; 100 + 300 KLD STPs and 2 × 5 KLD ETPs; 100 kg organic-waste composting capacity; accessible digital navigation and assistive technologies; AI-enabled healthcare research achieved 98.12% diagnostic accuracy; Bihar economic roadmap targets growth from ~8% to 12% over a 20-year horizon; Logistics Cost Index developed with a public-sector infrastructure authority. | **8** | **3** | **5** |
| SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities | **Financial inclusion, disability inclusion, digital inclusion, anti-discrimination & equitable access** | 44–55% of newly admitted students receive scholarships and 18–24% receive 100% scholarships; research examined ~2.2 million rural children; OLS engaged 21 disability-focused organisations nationally; disability-inclusive corporate roundtable involved 48 representatives from 25 businesses; accessible infrastructure, assistive technologies and inclusive teaching strengthened institutional inclusion. | **7** | **8** | **9** |
| SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities & Communities | **Community infrastructure, sustainable mobility, green infrastructure, arts, culture & heritage** | 1.5 million sq ft built-up area; approximately 13 acres of green area; 1,918 trees / 54 floral species; 654 m² shrub cover; 6 CNG shuttles + 2 buses; 2.5-acre Miyawaki forest; 20+ creative courses at the Co-Curricular Mela; 100+ guests at the Literature Festival; 50+ student clubs/societies engaged through Jazbaa; 33 students participated in the Nizamuddin Basti field visit. | **4** | **8** | **5** |

| SDG | THE value driver / key aspect covered | Key data & impact demonstrated in the report | Research count | Partnership count | Teaching count |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **SDG 12 – Responsible Consumption & Production** | **Waste circularity, resource efficiency, recycling, responsible consumption & sustainable procurement** | 1,307+ kg sanitary waste processed through circular recovery; 500 kg organic composting capacity in 21 days; campus-wide multi-stream segregation; biomedical and e-waste handled through authorised systems; 4-part waste-management training for housekeeping; research on circular business models and refurbished smartphones; critical-minerals consortium connects resource efficiency with clean-energy supply chains. | **2** | **5** | **6** |
| **SDG 13 – Climate Action** | **Climate research, low-carbon energy, climate education, carbon neutrality, and climate adaptation and resilience** | 9,342 $tCO_2e$ Scope 1–3 emissions; 1.94 $tCO_2e$/person carbon footprint; 18.5% reduction in carbon footprint/person since 2019; 893 kW rooftop solar; 924,751 kWh solar generation; solar supplied 6.9% of electricity consumption; DGs supplied 4.7%, down from 13% in 2018; 6 CNG shuttles + 2 buses. | **10** | **3** | **10** |
| **SDG 14-Life Below Water** | **Water conservation & aquatic ecosystem restoration** | Pond reduced from 7.3 acres to 5.38 acres due to encroachment; proposed desilting, waste removal, native aquatic vegetation, groundwater recharge zones and RZT system; pond assigned government UIN; Cool Equity recognised as a winning Ocean Protection Challenge idea; shark research assessed 125 Important Shark and Ray Areas covering >2.8 million $km^2$, finding only 1% fully protected. | **3** | **0** | **3** |
| **SDG 15- Life on Land** | **Biodiversity conservation, ecosystem protection & sustainable campus landscaping** | 1,918 trees across 54 floral species; 6,000 plants in in-house nursery; 2.5-acre Miyawaki forest; biodiversity field engagement included 27+ bird species; Galliformes research covered ~26,000 $km^2$ and identified gaps in protected-area coverage. | **10** | **7** | **6** |
| **SDG 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions** | **Governance, institutional accountability & government engagement** | 7+ named governance/oversight mechanisms identified in the report, including CADI, CASH, ARC, Workers' Welfare Committee, Diversity & Inclusion Committee, Academic Integrity Committee and Equal Opportunity Cell; Governing Body includes institutional and government representation; 3 AUSG bodies — Councils, House of Representatives and Executive Cabinet; Borderlands seminar: 75+ abstracts, 21 papers, 51 participants. | **5** | **4** | **5** |
| **SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals** | **Global partnerships, SDG reporting & collaboration** | 150+ students in global learning; 45 semester-exchange students; 97 summer-programme participants; 85 students received scholarships/tuition/institutional support; 13 received full tuition support; INR 20 lakh financial aid to 28 students; Translators' Factory: 10 participants, 5 translation projects; 3CS proposed ₹33-crore ANRF Carbon Removal initiative; Nature Positive Universities network has 500+ institutions. | **2** | **16** | **-** |

# A MESSAGE FROM THE OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability at Ashoka is shaped not only by the choices made on campus, but also by the questions explored in classrooms, the research undertaken by faculty, the partnerships built with communities and institutions, and the participation of students in creating change. The 2025–26 academic year brought these different dimensions together, strengthening sustainability as an integral part of the University's academic and institutional life.

This report covers the academic year from June 2025 to May 2026 and presents the research, teaching, partnerships, initiatives, operational measures and performance KPIs monitored during the year. Across the campus, efforts continued to focus on renewable energy, water conservation, waste management, biodiversity, resource efficiency, sustainable infrastructure, and responsible consumption. Alongside these operational measures, academic and research activities addressed wider challenges including climate change, public health, food systems, inequality, livelihoods, education, and social inclusion.

At the Office of Sustainability, we work across the University to bring these strands together through evidence-based planning, cross-functional collaboration, the adoption of sustainable technologies and implementation of sustainable practices.

Campus initiatives provide opportunities for students and staff to participate directly in sustainability action, while academic research and teaching create spaces to examine the complex social, economic, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. Together, these efforts contribute to a campus that serves not only as a place of learning, but also as a space for experimentation, engagement, and collective action.

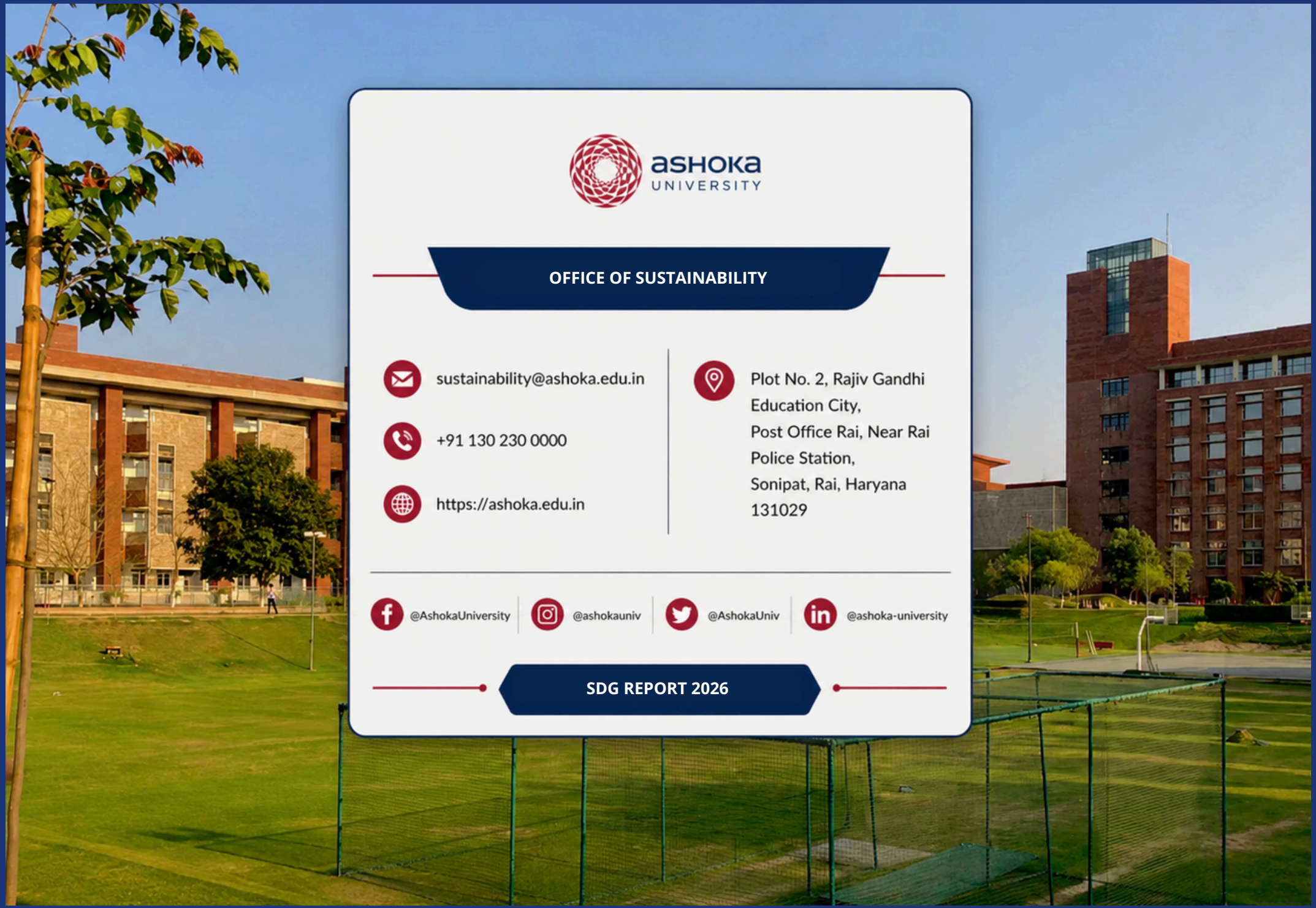
Ashoka's progress was recognised in the Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings 2026, which assess universities on their contribution to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through indicators covering research, teaching, stewardship, and outreach. In 2026, Ashoka achieved an overall rank of 601–800, improving from its 801–1000 overall rank in 2025.

These results provide an important benchmark for the University's sustainability journey. They recognise progress while also identifying areas where further work can strengthen institutional outcomes, measurement, and evidence. In particular, the rankings reinforce the importance of connecting campus-level action with academic research, teaching, community engagement, and partnerships, allowing sustainability to be addressed as a multidimensional institutional priority rather than through isolated initiatives.

The 2025-2026 academic year has therefore been a period of both consolidation and expansion. The work has been documented in this report in a way to reflect how we as an institution increasingly connect our academic strengths with the environmental and social responsibilities of campus and the wider Ashokan community. From improving resource management and environmental performance to expanding research, learning opportunities, and external collaborations, these efforts demonstrate the many ways in which sustainability is embedded across the University.

As we look towards 2030 and the future contributions towards the SDGs, the focus will remain on strengthening measurable outcomes, improving institutional systems, deepening interdisciplinary engagement, and building partnerships that extend beyond the campus. The progress reflected in the THE Impact Rankings in previous years provides us with an important benchmark, but the larger objective at Ashoka remains to translate knowledge into meaningful action and create lasting environmental and social value.

This report brings together the work and showcases the collective effort of the Ashokan community, including students, faculty, researchers, staff, operational teams, academic centres, and external partners whose contributions continue to shape our sustainability journey. We thank you for your continuous support and consistent participation in enabling our impact within and beyond our walls.



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## SDG REPORT 2026

