aSHOKa UNIVERSITY

2021

ANNUAL SDG REPORT

A REVIEW OF THE UNIVERSITY'S INITIATIVES
TO FOSTER SUSTAINABILITY

About this Report: A Note from the Vice-Chancellor

The United Nations General Assembly's 17 Goals for Sustainable Development provide focused priorities that we need to work towards for the well-being of the planet and its people. The policy sets out the different pathways in terms of climate, gender, food and water, quality education and many other imperatives that require urgent attention. It alerts us to the fact that there is a need to act now, that timelines have to be set and met.

The awareness that in this one planet that we inhabit each individual, organization and community – including universities – has a responsibility to contribute to sustainability goals has been steadily growing. Universities, as spaces for research, for nurturing and for community engagement, need to be committed to these goals.

Ashoka University is conscious of the importance and urgency of these priorities. The University recognizes the fact that faculty, students, researchers and the administration need to work together to identify needs and possibilities, to provide creative solutions and to take action. Ashoka University's commitment towards sustainability goals is reflected through the work done within academic departments, centres, student clubs and societies as well as by key sectors of the administration. This orchestrated response has created a culture of commitment in working towards the goals of sustainable development.

I am happy to present Ashoka University's first Sustainability Report. The University has prioritized certain areas for attention in the first phase. This identification has been driven by the recognition of goals that need immediate attention. At the same time, particular areas of research strength at this University led to swifter action in some directions. Over time more priority areas will emerge.

We hope that Ashoka University's annual Sustainability Report will not only provide transparency and proof of our commitment but will also motivate schools, colleges and universities in India to take similar initiatives.
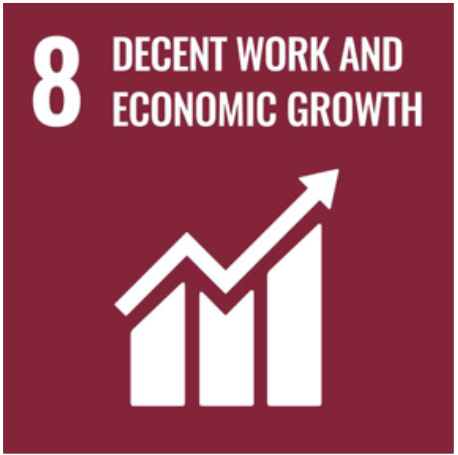
Prof. Malabika Sarkar

**Vice-Chancellor and Professor of English,
Ashoka University**

CONTENTS

END POVERTY IN ALL ITS FORMS EVERYWHERE

Graduate Course: Economics of Agricultural Transformation

A course on "Economics of Agricultural Transformation" looks at economic development through the lens of food and agriculture. It offers a powerful framework for understanding economic development outcomes.

Impact of NREGA on Expenditure Patterns

In her article, "Consumption and Time-Use Effects of India's Employment Guarantee and Women's Participation", Bipasha Maity, Assistant Professor of Economics, examines the effect of the number of working days per household under India's National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) on expenditure patterns, food security, and individual time use. The paper finds that a greater number of working days for households translate into higher food expenditure, especially on items such as dairy, proteins, and vegetables that are likely to improve children's nutritional status. This is probably facilitated by the greater participation of women relative to men in the programme. Moreover, greater adult participation in NREGA raises the time spent by younger girls in school; importantly, there is a fall in domestic chores as women's major engagement. However, older boys are found to substitute for adults in agricultural work. The increased engagement of boys in agricultural work is a plausible unintended consequence of the programme.

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2 ZERO HUNGER

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

Behavioural Change for Complementary Feeding of Infants

With the aim of improving compliance with complementary feeding practices, it was established that complementary feeding for 6-23-month-old children is crucial for improving their nutritional and growth outcomes. Only 9.09% of children across 27 Aspirational Districts are reported to receive an adequate diet, contributing to the severity of malnutrition levels in children (under 5 years). CSBC intends to evaluate interventions that can potentially improve the adoption of complementary feeding practices.

Click to Visit Project Website ⟶

Impact of Climate Change on Food Prices

In his paper, "The Distributional Impact of Climate Change: Why Food Prices Matter", Bharat Ramaswami, Professor of Economics, analyzed the impact of agricultural productivity losses stemming from climate change in an economy without frictions. The question that is addressed is as follows: the first-order GDP impacts are expected to be small but the poor have higher food budget shares and food prices will rise. So how do distributional impacts diverge from the GDP impact? The paper considers two major sets of comparative statics: the effect of trade and the effect of economic growth. It shows that the percentage loss of income for the landless is six times the GDP impact in a closed economy. Trade halves this effect and economic growth moderates it substantially. Despite the rise in food prices, nearly all farmers lose from climate change.

Click to Read Paper ⟶

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

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

Ashoka Centre for Well-Being

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

Click to Visit ACWB's Website ⟶

Symposium on Evidence, Decision-making and Policy for COVID-19

In partnership with The George Institute for Global Health, Ashoka Science Policy Initiative (SPI) organised a symposium on 'Evidence, Decision-making and Policy for COVID-19 in India'. Attended by over 160 participants globally, the two-hour-long symposium engaged researchers, clinicians and policymakers in discussions around lessons learned from the ongoing pandemic. Eminent policy experts and academics were invited to discuss the role of research-based evidence in public health and the use of such evidence in driving policy.

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Is India Going Through an Opioid Epidemic?

In one of his articles, Bhrigupati Singh, Associate Professor of Anthropology and Sociology, asks: Is India going through an opioid epidemic? High opioid-related mortality rates are reported in many parts of the world including Canada, the UK, Australia and Mexico. Does this epidemic extend beyond American shores? This article has attempted to outline both macro and micro perspectives through an overview drawn from quantitative and qualitative work undertaken on how the opioid epidemic in India is unfolding across regions, genders, and within particular low-income urban neighbourhoods in Delhi. It also highlights the need for appropriate and accessible care including outpatient treatment facilities that need to be urgently expanded.

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Pilot Project on Health Analytics

Ashoka Science Policy Initiative has started a multi-disciplinary pilot project on 'Health Analytics, Research and Trends'. The aim of the project is to collect, collate, curate, and analyze health data and develop India-specific metrics and visualization tools that would enable policymakers to identify appropriate strategies and schemes in the field of healthcare and public health. This will be achieved by pooling publicly available health and related data and data procured through collaborations with other organizations. SPI also plans to organize courses and training workshops for capacity building and initiate long-term collaborations with other organizations and experts to conduct advanced research on health data.

Prof. Pulapre Balakrishnan

Research on Impact of Public Health Policy on COVID-19 Mortality

Pulapre Balakrishnan, Professor of Economics, co-authored an article "The Importance of Investing in a Public Health System: Evidence from COVID-19 Mortality". While the response to COVID-19 by the Government of India has been more or less uniform across the country, the death rate has varied across the states. The article investigates the possible role of health policy in the determination of this rate. Using three different measures of the death rate, they found that measures of death rate were strongly related to health expenditure as a share of the gross domestic product but hardly at all to public health infrastructure. This can be interpreted as a sign of the role of the public health system— comprising medical personnel, infrastructure and protocols—in the prevention of death, with health expenditure as a key determinant of its effectiveness. This implies that some of the mortality from COVID-19 was policy-induced, and therefore was avoidable. Second, assuring health security to the Indian population would require a radical restructuring of the spending priorities of the states.

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COVID-19 Appropriate Behaviour in Bihar

The objective of the Bihar JEEViKA COVID-19 Scale-Up Project was to ensure that COVID-19 appropriate behaviour was followed and that vaccination uptake increased among the SHG members using behaviour change interventions to achieve the state-level targets.

Click to Visit Website ⟶

Behavioural Barriers to COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitancy

CSBC conducted an evidence review exercise to bring together various data points across the country to enhance the understanding around the challenge of vaccine-hesitancy influenced by behavioural barriers and inform empirical and policy efforts to address COVID-19 vaccine-hesitancy.
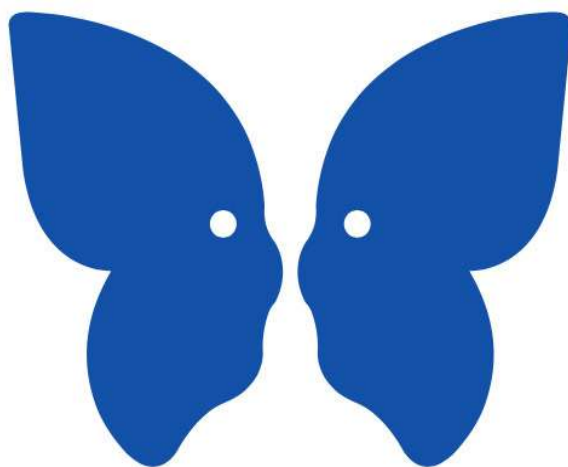
Click to Read Report ⟶

COVID-19 Wear the Mask Campaign

CSBC worked on many projects that targeted mask-wearing and related behaviours. These were based on their 4R model of enforcement-led behavioural change.

Improving First-Year Immunisation Rates and Utilisation of Ante-Natal Care Services

To identify system-level and user-level challenges to first-year immunisation and ante-natal care, CSBC undertook a diagnosis and outlined the specific behavioural focus areas to improve the uptake of these health services.

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Centre for Social and Behaviour Change

Reducing Physician Hesitancy Around HPV Vaccine

CSBC, in collaboration with the Cancer Foundation of India (CFI) and support from the American Cancer Society's (ACS) Global HPV Cancer Free Initiative, conducted a diagnostic research study with physicians, vaccine beneficiaries and community influencers, to understand the sources for hesitancy related to the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine.

Click to Read Report ⟶

Building COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitancy Personas

Using the Global COVID-19 Trends and Impact Survey (CTIS) by the University of Maryland on Facebook, CSBC identified seven classes of vaccine-hesitancy personas of Facebook users in India and assessed the impact of demographic covariates on hesitancy. They then used the main behavioural and attitudinal determinants of each persona to recommend appropriate behavioural interventions to reduce hesitancy.

Click to Read More ⟶

IFA Consumption Among Pregnant Women

As a partner in the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare's programme of "Anemia Mukt Bharat" (Anemia Free India), CSBC is designing a comprehensive behaviour change programme comprising mass media and other interventions to increase motivation to adhere to an IFA supplementation regimen. The work also focuses on dealing with the ability to cope with side-effects and the opportunity to convert intent to action and form habits through reminders and goal progress charts.

Dr. Bipasha Maity

Research on Relation of Menstrual Restrictions and Maternal Healthcare in Nepal

Bipasha Maity, Assistant Professor of Economics, co-studied the association between the ritual of menstrual restrictions in Nepal and maternal healthcare access as well as women's subjective well-being. In her discussion paper, "Cultural Norms and Women's Health: Implications of the Practice of Menstrual Restrictions in Nepal", she uses micro-data from Nepal where these rituals are widely prevalent. Similar restrictions, also practised around the time of childbirth, are based on the assumption that women are ritually impure during these phases of their lives. They find that women who face any menstrual restriction are also more likely to give birth at home and receive assistance only from untrained individuals during childbirth, which increases the risk of maternal mortality. They also find that only the strictest menstrual restrictions are associated with a decline in subjective well-being. These findings indicate that menstrual restriction related rituals can have persistent negative implications on women's physical and mental health that is not just limited to the time of menstruation.

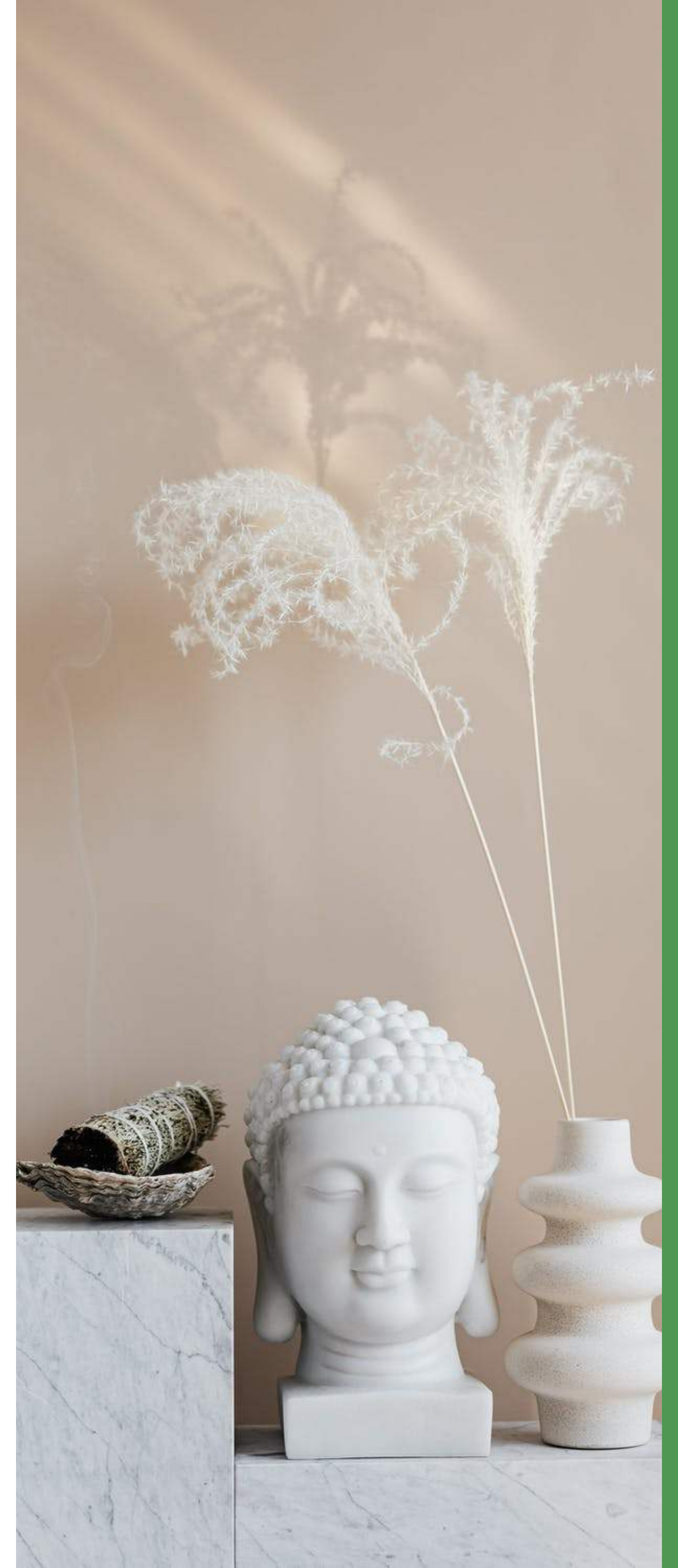**Click to Read Discussion Paper** $\longrightarrow$

Dr. Bhrigupati Singh
Associate Professor & Seminar Coordinator, Sociology and Anthropology

"Student mental health is one of the most urgent questions in India. Medicalisation is not the only solution, and the answers are not simple. In my class on the Anthropology of Mental Health, we explore ideas of mental health and illness in different parts of the world."

Graduate Course: Anthropology of Mental Health

A course on 'Anthropology of Mental Health' was taught by Bhrigupati Singh, Associate Professor of Anthropology and Sociology. The course familiarised students with current debates and older and newer literature in the anthropology of mental health, through which one learns ways of thinking about subjectivity, selfhood, the history and emergence of particular diagnostic categories, the cultural valences of scientific categories and their modes of translation into new contexts. Students also engaged in other ways of understanding such experiences, for instance through forms of religion, from the vantage point of families and institutions, and the varied ways in which suffering and healing are experienced in the contemporary world.

Anemia Mukt Haryana

In an attempt to reduce the incidence of anemia by three percentage points, CMGGA Associates ensured 100% procurement of Mid-Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) tapes (2.5 lakh tapes in 3 weeks) in 22 districts of Haryana to help with the early identification of malnourishment in children. They also facilitated a 100% audit of Growth Monitoring Devices (GMDs) to help in the efficient procurement of GMDs for all Anganwadi centres. A baseline survey was conducted by PGIMS-Rohtak in 22 blocks covering 200+ Anganwadi centres in Haryana. Findings from the survey provide a true picture of malnutrition in Haryana and will help in designing targeted solutions. Furthermore, all children aged 0-6 years will be screened monthly to identify and treat severe acute malnutrition and moderate acute malnutrition.

Organ Donation and Transplant

An MoU has been signed between CMGGA and Mohan Foundation (with financial support from SD Biotech) to provide cost-free access to nephrologists and equipment to PGIMS Rohtak for Haryana Government's first institutional kidney transplant service. Associates have conducted extensive IEC activities for citizen awareness through social media, radio, hoardings at public places, events etc. Capacity building workshops have also been conducted for training doctors in Panchkula, Rohtak, Gurugram and Haryana.

Twinkle Malhan, YIF'18 & Associate (Panchkula) CMGGA Programme, 2020-21

"The CMGGA Programme is a strategic collaboration between the Government of Haryana and Ashoka University to improve governance in the state and drive mass impact on ground. Running since 2016, the programme provides a platform to 25 young individuals from across the country each year, to work closely with the Chief Minister's Office for bringing transparency, accountability and efficiency in public service delivery in the state. The CMGGA Associates have been instrumental in driving stories of change in Haryana, resulting in palpable and visible impact on ground."

Click to Visit CMGGA's Website ⟶

COVID-19 Management & Relief Support to Haryana District Administration

CMGGA Associates supported the district administration of Haryana by streamlining COVID-19 management and relief measures through a breadth of activities, such as health initiatives (telemedicine and mental health support), facilitating operations (streamlining movement passes and establishing a district control room), distribution of essentials (PDS home delivery and online grocery distribution), liasoning with grocery apps and medical safety equipment suppliers, and enabling documentation of district containment plans and best practices. The Associates also undertook IEC activities, such as social media management and creation of drone videos for mass awareness.

They also worked on refining the forecasting techniques by using data from HR Heal-HARSAC and Aarogya Setu app to corroborate and target COVID testing. A dedicated call centre was set up in Ambala and Kurukshetra, and a home isolation app from Ambala is being scaled to the entire state for efficient management. The Associates helped in acquiring 300 flowmeters and oxygen masks from AIF (American India Foundation) for Palwal. They also coordinated with hospitals to estimate oxygen demand on a daily basis by tracking the number of beds occupied and vacated.

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

Delhi Effective Education and Pedagogy Cluster

The Delhi Effective Education and Pedagogy Cluster is one of the verticals of Delhi Research Implementation and Innovation, which is one of the several Science & Technology City Clusters established by the office of the Principal Scientific Advisor to Govt. of India. Ashoka University is the team leader of DEEP-C.

The major aim of DRIIV is to pool vast expertise and resources available in Delhi-NCR by bringing together academic, industry, policy, and implementation agencies to develop innovative solutions to the pressing social and environmental problems of the region. The core themes/verticals for addressing such questions under the DRIIV initiative are Air Pollution, Water Scarcity and Conservation, Solid Waste Management, Sustainable Mobility, Artificial Intelligence (AI)/ Machine Learning (ML) in healthcare, and Effective Education as an encompassing theme across all areas.

The DEEP-C's main objective is to improve learners' competencies in analytical, critical thinking, problem-solving, and inquiry skills and introduce them to the current fields of research and innovation to enhance their employability skills in the long run. While undertaking the programme, the aim would be to ensure that DEEP-C's proposed academic activities and outcomes are interconnected and integral to other verticals of DRIIV to kindle holistic transformation.

Programme Website $\longrightarrow$

Online Capacity Building Programmes for Non-Profit Organizations

Centre for Social Impact and Philanthropy organised a couple of online capability building programmes for 360 nonprofit organizations to help build their skills in strategy, fundraising, adoption of technology, and well-being of their leaders. The two cohorts included NGOs working across the entire range of SDGs. Faculty for the programme included, besides CSIP personnel, professors from the Harvard Business School, sector experts and a philanthropist.

Watch the Recorded Sessions ⟶

Academic Integrity Workshop

Writing tutors Uday Kanungo and Aakshi Magazine conducted a remedial workshop intended for students who had been listed for violation of Academic Integrity by the OAA. Employing an interactive format, the workshop discussed the concerns of students regarding plagiarism and violation of academic integrity. The workshop also used a group activity to help students understand the importance of collaborative work without necessarily resorting to copying each others' ideas. The workshop meant for the Monsoon semester was attended by 28 students, while in July, 31 students listed for the Spring semester attended the workshop. The students included UG, PG, and PhD students from a range of courses.

Prof. L S Shashidhara
Dean (Research) and Professor of Biology

"Ashoka University is known for its strong commitment to quality education. Its innovative curricula and research-integrated pedagogy are specifically designed to train next generation change leaders, who are expected to contribute towards achieving sustainability and equity in our societies.

The Delhi Effective Education and Pedagogy Cluster is a unique vertical of the Delhi S&T Cluster accelerating the implementation of NEP2020 across the NCR through teachers' training and mentorship."

College Readiness Programme

OLS launched its flagship College Readiness Programme that aimed to inculcate the importance of readiness, self-advocacy and self-awareness in school students with disabilities who aspire for higher education in their preferred areas of study. This has initiated a nationwide movement calling for the acceptance of neurodiversity and disability across all educational institutions.

Conference on Teaching English in Higher Education in India

'Challenges/Strategies in Teaching English for Academic Purposes (EAP) in Higher Education in India'. This online event brought together scholars working in the fields of ELT and English Studies on a range of topics, including multilingualism, language hierarchy, generalist and subject-specific tutoring, among others. Panels 'Teaching Methods and Curriculum Building' and 'The Heterogeneous Classroom: Strategies for Inclusion' deserve special mention for initiating the task of data collection in the field of teaching writing in India.

Making Course Texts Accessible to Students with Diverse Needs

Raja Rosenhagen, Assistant Professor of Philosophy, has been reading out the texts his students were expected to read in all his classes, adding comments and explanations where these seemed useful. He recorded himself with both video and audio and made those recordings available to all students beforehand so that they could either read along or focus on the recording. This initiative has made a big difference to students with ADHD and to students for whom just listening to the texts meant a time-out from all the screen time or visual exertion. Many reported independently of one another that they were able to do all the readings (or, if not that, significantly more than usual) because of the video/audio format.

Influencing Policies on Inclusion in Higher Education

Reena Gupta, Director of OLS, was appointed as a national committee member by AICTE to prepare and present policy recommendations on extending support to students with specific learning disabilities in higher education institutions in India. These engagements have increased the momentum for creating comprehensive support systems for students with disabilities and for ensuring their inclusion in higher education institutes in India.

Being one of the pioneers in the field of inclusion in higher education, the office signed an MoU with various leading universities across the country and became a founding member of the Inclusive University Alliance (IUA). It aims to enhance the ecosystem for improving inclusion at higher education institutes in India.

Inclusive University Alliance's Website ⟶

**Reena Gupta
Director, Office of Learning Support**

"The OLS started its journey six years back with a dream of a well-resourced world-class support system for students with invisible disabilities at Ashoka. Today, we see students with all kinds of disabilities applying, the qualifying ones getting their acceptance letters, becoming an integral part of the diversity at Ashoka, and contributing towards building a truly global university with its heart at the right place. This has turned out to be an extremely rewarding journey that's worth every effort for any institution that believes in equity and inclusivity."

Students with Dyslexia in Higher Education

One of the greatest milestones for the office has been the hosting of the first-ever conference on the inclusion of students with dyslexia in higher education institutions in India. The virtual conference aimed to spotlight dyslexia through lived experiences, explore its acceptance in HEIs in India and look at its future in the realm of employment. This conference highlighted Ashoka University as an educational institution that holds inclusion of all students as one of its core values.

Watch the Webinar ⟶

Making Digital & Physical Infrastructure at Ashoka Accessible

From an accessible new website to blind-friendly UG and YIF application forms and academic content, the Office of Learning Support has provided guidance and collaborative support to the various offices of the University. To instil the values of inclusion and support amongst the larger student community at Ashoka, the office introduced two new projects: Peer Learning Support Programme (PLSP) and Neurodiversity Initiative. Other activities that further the agenda of spreading awareness about specific disabilities included workshops on sign language, neurodiversity and ableism.

With a commitment to making the campus home for all, the office works closely with the infrastructure team to make all possible amendments to the existing rooms, residence halls, current campus spaces, transport vehicles for students with physical disabilities, more specifically for students with visual impairment and those who use a wheelchair. The office has initiated a dialogue with the architects of the new campus to incorporate similar principles related to infrastructural accessibility at the design stage.

Inclusive and Equitable English Language Teaching

Inclusive and equitable quality education is at the core of the English Language Teaching programme at the CWC. At the beginning of each academic year, the ELT programme conducts the Academic Bridge Programme for those incoming students who may need additional support before they are ready to attend regular courses at the University. The three-week programme tries to ensure that students do not suffer owing to a lack of proficiency in English. They are also introduced to new ways of thinking that guide them not only in understanding texts and contexts in class but also in their everyday lives.

The English communication courses further the goal of making the students confident users of the language and ones who can think and express themselves critically in all situations. The ELT tutors meet students regularly through one-on-one appointments and work to ensure that students from all social strata have equal opportunities and skills to participate in class.

Building a Centre for Writing and Communication

Set up in the year 2014, CWC's work is integral to the pedagogical vision of Ashoka which emphasizes critical thinking and participatory and democratic teaching-learning practices. Kanika Singh, Director of CWC, shares the experiments about writing, pedagogy, inclusion and diversity through the work of the centre in her chapter "Building a Center for Writing and Communication: Inclusion, Diversity and Writing in the Indian Context".

Is There a Dalit English Writing?

Writing Instructor Ajmal Khan opened the conversation with Chandramohan S, an Indian Dalit poet and literary critic who writes in English, by starting with the basics, and shedding light on questions like what Dalit writing means and how it is different from other writings. English language in India and Indian English writing have always had caste and privilege attached to them. Until very recently Indian English writers were almost always from the metros and were associated with certain caste groups. However, we now witness "Dalit" and "Adivasi" writers who write directly in English and their works are being celebrated. These range from poetry, novels, autobiography to memoir and non-fiction. The conversation continued to examine new Dalit English writing emerging in India and a range of more contemporary works, and the response of the literary community. The discussion also went into the nuances of Dalit aesthetics and the methodology of Dalit English. The conversation also addressed questions sent in by members of the audience. This was followed by Chandramohan reading some powerful poems from his new book.

Parent and Teacher Engagement on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy

CSBC and its partners conducted a diagnostic study in Bahraich, Chitrakoot, and Balrampur districts in Uttar Pradesh, India, to identify behavioural barriers and pathways to increase FLN engagement among teachers, parents, and administrators.

Programme Website ⟶

Saksham Haryana

Chief Minister's Good Governance Associates (CMGGA) have worked to ensure continuous learning at all levels for students even during the COVID-19 pandemic through several interventions, such as Ghar Se Padhao (more than 80% of students were reached through WhatsApp, SMS and TV), weekly quizzes (engaged more than 70% students), Shiksha Mitra (encouraged about 13 lakh registrations), Career Counseling (benefitted more than 75% students), Online Teacher Training (achieved 80% successful training completion), among others.

Early Childhood Care and Education

CMGGA Associates have ensured that 1135 of 4000 playschools across Haryana are fully operational and equipped with trained teachers and Anganwadi workers. The associates prepared a detailed curriculum (in both English and Hindi) for Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) along with a 100-day school readiness programme. They also ensured robust on-ground training for capacity building of all stakeholders in the ecosystem. 88 Trainer Monitors were selected and trained, who in turn trained 800+ CDPOs and Supervisors. Multiple online and offline interventions were taken with CMGGA's support to ensure continued momentum throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.
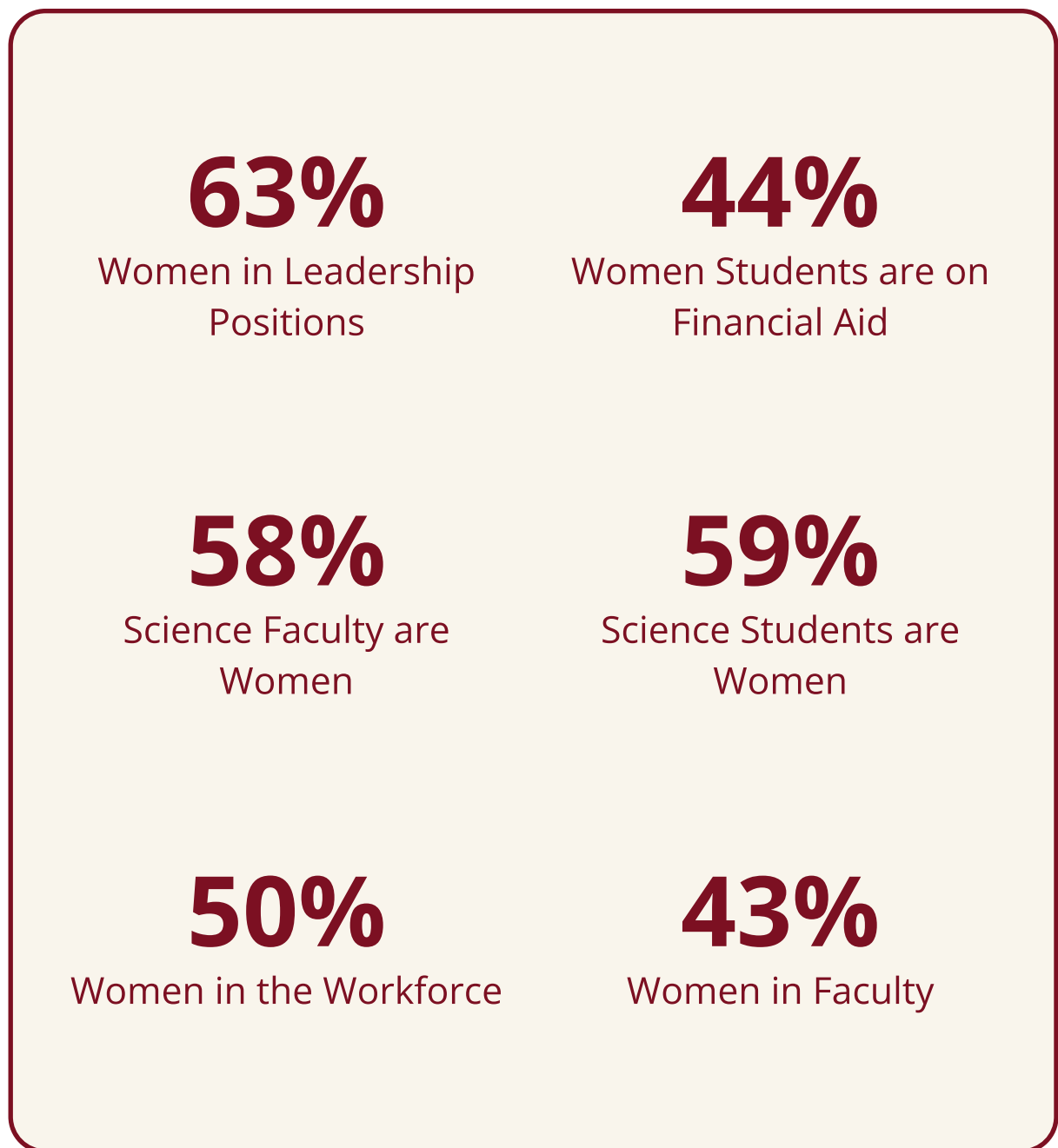
ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS

Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao in Haryana

Under the 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' scheme, more than 100 FIRs are registered additionally every year after successful raids in Haryana and bordering states. This has improved the Sex Ratio at Birth in the state from 830 in 2011 to 925 in June 2021. To strengthen the POSH Act, CMGGA has been successful in constituting 1,000+ Internal Complaints Committees (ICC) and Local Complaints Committees (LCC) in the state of Haryana. These committees benefit 9,000+ women employees. The committee members and employees are being trained in all district government offices to comply with the POSH Act.

63%
Women in Leadership Positions

44%
Women Students are on Financial Aid

58%
Science Faculty are Women

59%
Science Students are Women

50%
Women in the Workforce

43%
Women in Faculty

Governing Intimacies

The Centre for Studies in Gender and Sexuality continues to pursue different projects under Governing Intimacies, a five-year-long research project in partnership with the University of Witwatersrand, South Africa, funded by the Andrew Mellon Foundation. The project encourages new and interdisciplinary scholarship on gender, sexuality and intimacy in postcolonial societies, creating critical conversations and knowledge that would help in building more gender equitable societies.

Women's Collectives as Agents of Norm Change

As part of the South Asia Social Norms Learning Collaborative, CSBC organised a webinar that addressed where government policies and programmes around women's self-help groups place norm change in the theory of change or implementation framework and how donor communities can support them.

Watch the Webinar Recording ⟶

'Charcha'-Advocating for Progressive Philanthropy

Centre for Social Impact and Philanthropy co-hosted a session and hosted four sessions of the philanthropy track at an online event 'Charcha'. These sessions, each of which attracted over 300 participants from civil society and philanthropy, helped to focus the attention of philanthropists on critical issues in mental health, marginalised communities and gender, besides advocating for the application of more progressive philanthropy for all causes.

Prof. Madhavi Menon, Professor of English Director, Centre for Studies in Gender and Sexuality

"With its mandate to cover the multiplicity of issues and practices in the spheres of gender and sexuality, the Centre for Studies in Gender and Sexuality (CSGS) at Ashoka University is uniquely placed to push critical conversations and knowledge on gender equality and women's empowerment."

What Does Work-From-Home Mean for Women?

Ashwini Deshpande, Professor of Economics, wrote an article on "What does Work-From-Home Mean for Women?" There has been near-universal adoption of work-from-home in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Does this shift have similar implications for men and women? She talks about what work-from-home means for different categories of women, and what are the implications of this shift in terms of class, nature of work, location of work, and degrees of informality.

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Volatility in Indian Women's Labour Market Engagement

In their working paper, "Dropping Out, Being Pushed out or Can't Get In? Decoding Declining Labour Force Participation of Indian Women", Ashwini Deshpande and Jitendra Singh demonstrate volatility in Indian women's labour market engagement, as they exit and (re)enter the labour force multiple times over short period for reasons unrelated to marriage, childbirth, or change in household income. They demonstrate how these frequent transitions exacerbate the issue of measurement of female LFPR. Women elsewhere in the world face a "motherhood penalty" in the form of adverse labour market outcomes after the first childbirth. The high unemployment rate and industry-wise composition of total employment provide suggestive evidence that women's participation is falling as women are likely to be displaced from employment by male workers. Their results suggest that India needs to focus more on creating jobs for women to retain them in the labour force.

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Pushing for a Feminist Science Practice in India

This programme was conducted by Sayantan Datta, a queer-trans science writer, communicator and journalist, working with the feminist multimedia science collective, TheLifeofScience.com, and hosted by Poulomi Das, Senior Writing Fellow at CWC. The workshop was highly interactive and examined how scientific discourse and language, both from the end of the instructors and the discipline itself, perpetuate gendered models of learning and share a complicated relationship with disability, sexism, mental health and inequity of access and resources. While the academic sciences claim to be based solely on objectivity, intelligence and capability, science does not exist in a vacuum, and its practitioners - also products of social prejudice and conventions - bring social biases and discrimination into science practice.

This workshop also talked about some of the studies of TheLifeofScience.com on Indian science practice that reveal the glaring loss of marginalized people in Indian science academia. Altogether, the audience was initiated into understanding how important a role science communication and journalism play in Indian science practice, and in engaging with feminist critiques of science in general.

Analysing Work-Life Balance Policies from Japan

Bipasha Maity, Assistant Professor of Economics, analysed the impact of work-life balance policies enacted by the government of Japan on the share of time allocated by Japanese women to paid employment, home production and leisure on a typical working day. She and her co-author find that these policies have had some success in increasing married women's share of time spent in paid employment. However, the increase in the share of time spent in paid employment is not largely compensated by cutting down the share of time spent in home production. This necessitates the need to cut down the share of time spent for leisure, implying a "double burden" of work for women. Further, work-life balance policies in married men do not appear to significantly influence their time allocation between various activities on a typical working day. They find that work-life balance policies help women with children younger than six years raise the share of time spent in paid employment by largely cutting down their time allocation to home production.

Click to Read Article $\longrightarrow$

The Feminist Collective

This students' club facilitate discussions on feminism and gender on campus, create a safe space for people to talk freely, share experiences, and foster a sense of solidarity. The club holds creative events, and campaigns that generate awareness about sexism and the intersectionalities of the Indian feminist movement.

Ashoka University Queer Collective (AUQC)

AUQC sets out to create a space on campus that is queer-affirmative, sensitive, inclusive, and politically active. This students' club actively advocates for the needs and rights of queer individuals and even works towards tackling all civil rights issues based on caste, class, race, gender, religion, and other parameters. AUQC organised a sharing circle on Aro/Ace identities with Dr. Bittu where students shared their experiences openly. The club also organised a fundraiser for the Trans Solidarity Fund (TSF) promoting the social and economic inclusion of the trans community.

6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

ENSURE AVAILABILITY AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF WATER AND SANITATION FOR ALL

Monitoring University's Water Footprint

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

Rainwater Harvesting

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

Behavioural Interventions to Increase the Judicious Use of Water

CSBC suggested evidence-based behavioural interventions to increase judicious water usage in 100 of India's water-scarce districts in order to deal with the challenge of water scarcity arising due to the skewed sector-wise water consumption.
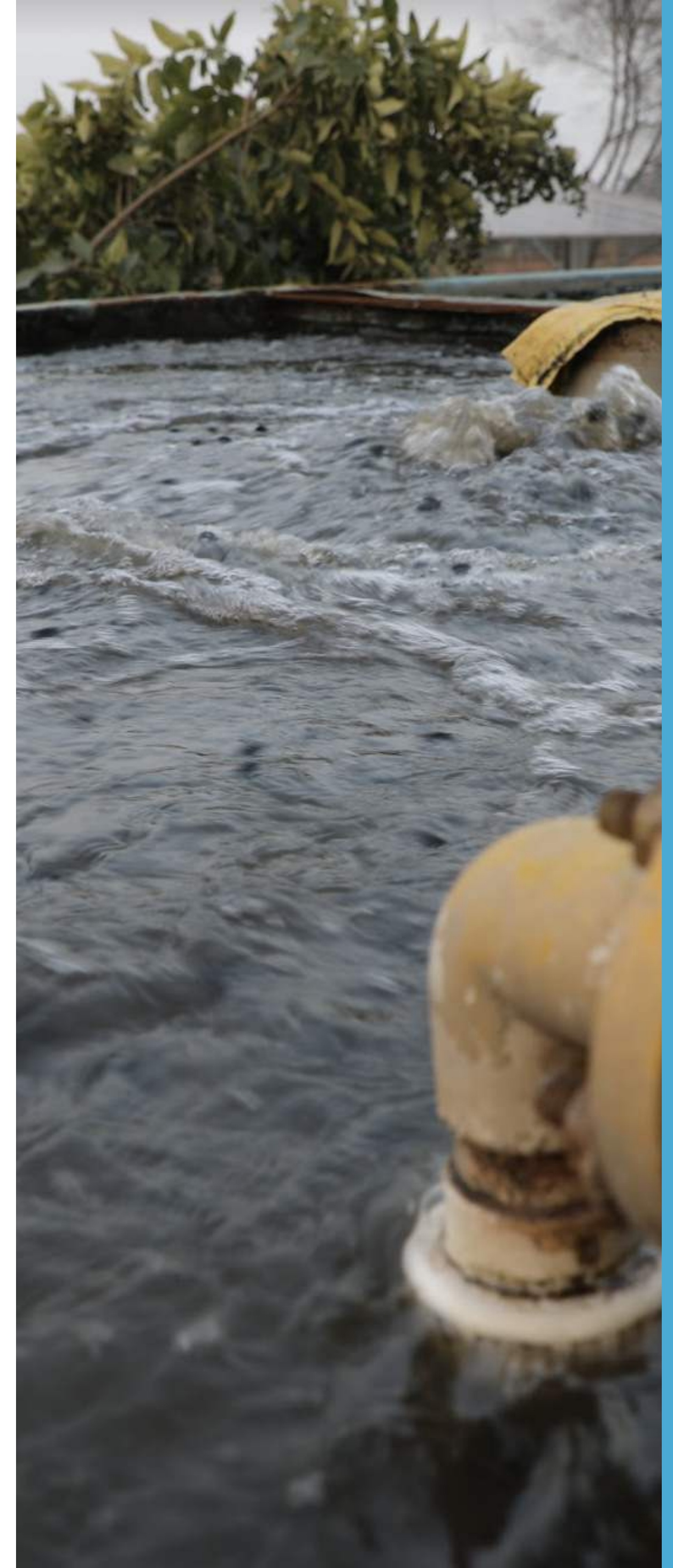
Improving Efficiency of Water Use on Campus

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

Campus Sewage Treatment Infrastructure

Ashoka has two STP plants (100 KLD and 300 KLD) to treat sewage wastewater and make it fit for further use. All the wastewater generated from buildings, the dining hall, and other sources is collected and treated in our sewage treatment plant (STP) at desired parameters set up by the Central Pollution Control Board. The STP plants use the Moving Bed Biofilm Reactor (MBBR) system, the latest technology, for the treatment of wastewater. The treated water is tested for the prescribed limits as per EP Act 1986 for PH levels, suspended solids, chemical oxygen demand, biochemical oxygen demand and oil & grease.

Jal Jeevan Mission

This government scheme seeks to not only provide functional household tap connections to all rural households by 2024 but also seeks to promote holistic management of local water resources. CSBC is a knowledge partner on this project and their mandate is to design the evaluation strategy for the behavioural component of JJM, analyse evaluation data and recommend corrective or alternative interventions and provide strategic inputs to partner organisations working on interventions and/or communication targeted at the behavioural change in JJM.
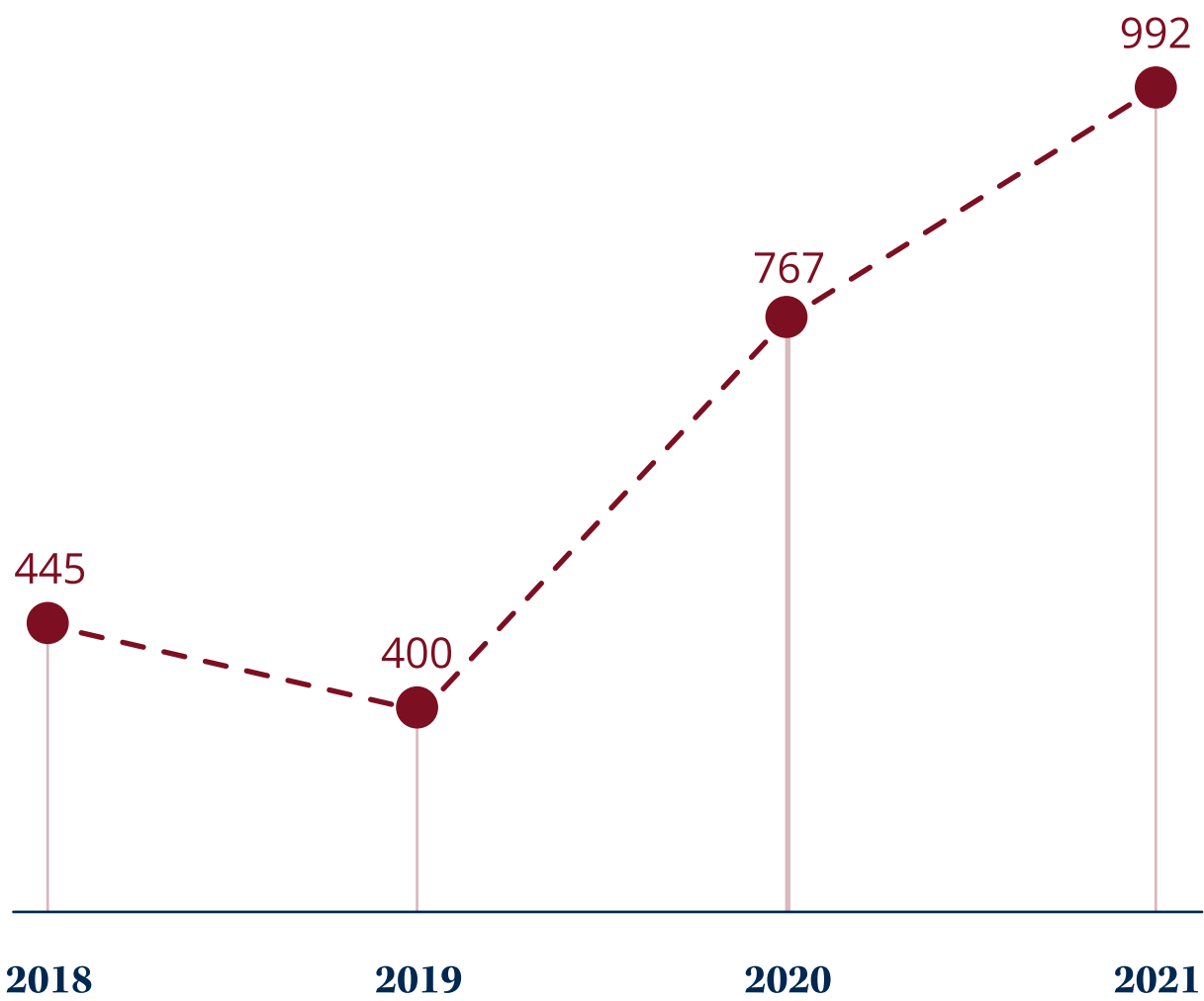
ENSURE ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE, RELIABLE, SUSTAINABLE AND MODERN ENERGY FOR ALL

Monitoring & Reducing Campus Energy Consumption

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

On-Campus Solar Energy Generation (MWh)

445	400	767	992
2018	2019	2020	2021

On-Campus Energy Generation

In order to reduce its carbon footprint, the University has taken several measures. Net Zero Energy Building is one of the major initiatives led by the University. Under this initiative, Ashoka plans to become self-reliant in energy production and consumption. At present, a small amount of electricity used in the operations is generated internally using renewable energy sources like solar. Ashoka has installed 893 kW of solar power panels utilising all available surfaces, such as the rooftops and car parking area to harvest solar energy. Through these panels, we are able to meet about 16% of the campus' power requirements. We are also aggressively exploring off-site solar farms for generating solar power. The government's policy of buying back the extra electricity produced through the decentralised grids has not been implemented yet, thereby leading to a delay in expanding the current solar production capacity.

Energy Backup Infrastructure

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

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

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

Programme to Nurture Innovation and Improve Employability

Tisha Srivastav, Assistant Professor of Film & Media Studies, is on the board of an Innovative India Foundation, running youth fellowships in underserved communities to train in video documentation work across 11 states in India. The focus of the foundation is to create jobs by nurturing an innovation-driven mindset amongst college youth. It builds programmes that increase the quality of innovation and improve the employability of college youth. The idea is for the youth to take back the learning into their rural home base, and find employment and meaning in decent work.

Neev: Community Engagement Club

Neev is a community engagement club run by the students of Ashoka. They work towards providing academic peer mentorship support to students from Asawarpur village. They have also started a Women For Women programme, which provides women from Asawarpur a platform to interact and discuss pertinent issues ranging from sanitation to effective financial management. They are also working on a programme to promote small businesses in Asawarpur within the university community.

Research on Self-Help Groups and Generation of Social Capital

Ashwini Deshpande's article, "Can weak ties create social capital? Evidence from Self-Help Groups in rural India" investigates if weak ties, generated via membership of livelihood programmes, can lead to the creation or enhancement of social capital. The impact of weak ties on community organisations is less well understood. Based on data from one of the largest independent primary surveys for India, the authors find that participation in self-help groups had little impact on livelihoods, but led to the creation of significant social capital, as measured by indicators related to personal efficacy and collective action. The article argues that the social capital generated by the programme has a significant positive impact (even though the main target of the programme is to strengthen livelihoods), as it strengthens the process of women's empowerment.

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Enactus - Empowering Women

Enactus empowers underprivileged women by generating employment opportunities for them by harnessing their creative skill sets and developing their entrepreneurial ability to produce easy to sell products in the market. Their aim is to create a world powered by sustainability and to bring financial independence to women. Enactus partnered with various NGOs for projects Swachh and Lakeer, in an effort to provide marginalised communities with a self-sustainable income source by producing handcrafted organic soaps, candles, masks and diaries.

Prof. Ashwini Deshpande
Professor of Economics
Director, CEDA

"The Centre for Economic Data and Analysis (CEDA)'s data is only a year old, but has already emerged as the leading contributor to the analysis of employment, unemployment and decent work in India and how various segments of India's population are differentially affected. CEDA's interactive data portal allows users to explore the evolution of these key variables over time, across geographies and by socio-economic status."

CEDA | Centre for Economic Data & Analysis

Visit CEDA's Website ⟶

Social Identity and Perceived Income Adequacy

In her article, "Social identity and perceived income adequacy", Ashwini Deshpande and her co-author utilize nationally representative data on perceptions of amounts considered as remunerative earnings from self-employment in India and examine how these earnings are shaped by social identity, namely, caste. They also investigate if institutional change such as the introduction of an employment guarantee scheme alters these perceptions. Finally, they examine the relationship between caste identity and actual earnings. The authors find that caste identity does shape both perceptions of income adequacy and actual earnings: lower-ranked groups perceive lower amounts as being remunerative and also earn lower amounts. Further, the employment guarantee scheme alters self-perceptions differentially for different caste groups, but in more nuanced ways than our ex-ante beliefs.

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Capacity Building of Not-for-Profit Leaders

Centre for Social Impact and Philanthropy trained 30 NGO leaders from the Ashoka Fellows' network working on livelihoods in fundraising skills.

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

9 | INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Construction of Ashoka University Campus

Construction activities are a source of different kinds of pollution and generation of waste. Construction can have both short-term and long-term impacts on environmental sustainability. Noise generated by construction activity affects the well-being of the people in and around the University campus. Thus, to mitigate its short-term impact, construction activity is avoided at night. To reduce the impact of pollution, water spraying is adopted in areas where construction work is undertaken. Efforts have also been made to reduce the impact of oil spills in the soil during construction activities. *Jali*s (shaded structures) are used to provide a natural shade, LED bulbs are used to reduce the consumption of electricity, and sensors are used in the urinal to minimise the wastage of water. Moreover, to reduce the energy requirement for cooling the buildings, the peripheral walls are made up of blocks instead of bricks.

E-Waste Management

E-waste consists of waste from all discarded electronics and electrical devices. While most of the modern electronic equipment is safe, few types of equipment contain toxic elements, such as lithium, lead and mercury, which can be a serious threat to environmental constituents like soil, water, air, and wildlife. There are serious environmental risks if we discard electronic devices and gadgets in a landfill directly. Hence, Ashoka has outsourced an experienced firm to undertake environmentally friendly recycling of discarded e-waste on its behalf.

A Collection of Policy Briefs on AI

A webinar on AI (Enabling a Robust and Technology-Driven AI Ecosystem in India) was organised for enabling effective knowledge exchange, facilitating the dissemination of state-of-the-art research in AI and strengthening academia-industry collaborative efforts in the field. The workshop featured well-known academicians, policy experts, thought leaders from the industry and practitioners who spoke about their insights and experiences in the field ranging from academic learnings to practical applications and policy implications of AI. One of the significant outcomes of the workshop was the release of the compendium on AI by Ashoka University (A Collection of Policy Briefs on AI) that features the potential, challenges and policy roadmap of AI applications in sectors like healthcare, education, supply-chain management, and as a social good.

Click to Read $\longrightarrow$

Biomedical Waste Management

At Ashoka, biomedical waste is generated from the infirmary and the IQC. The waste is accumulated and disposed of in a specialised manner. Separate colour-coded bins have been placed for collecting specific types of wastes: **Yellow** is for pathological waste, used cotton, dressing material, beddings, body fluid, PPE etc; **Red** is for syringe without a needle, I.V. set, catheters, gloves, urine bag, plastic waste etc; **Blue** is for glass and metal; and **White** is for sharp waste, needles, scalpels, blades etc. The university has hired a government authorised firm to manage biomedical waste disposal.
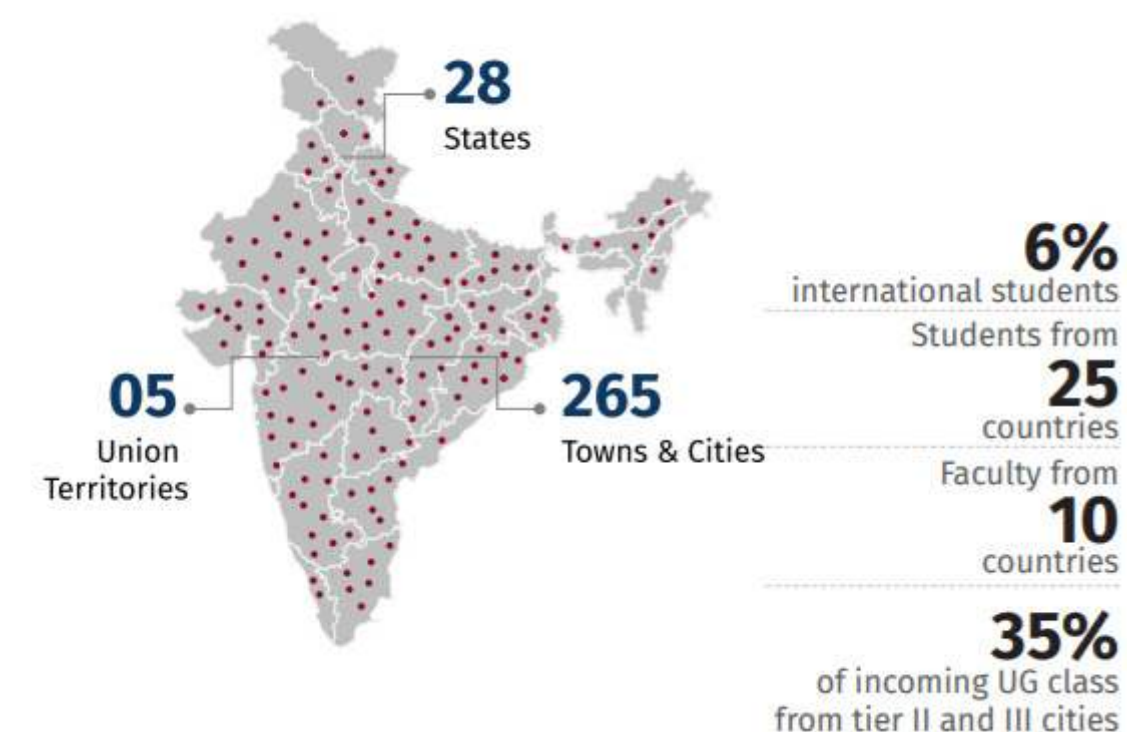
REDUCE INEQUALITY WITHIN AND AMONG COUNTRIES

Inclusion & Diversity on Campus

28 States

05 Union Territories

265 Towns & Cities

6% international students

Students from **25** countries

Faculty from **10** countries

35% of incoming UG class from tier II and III cities

Inclusion and diversity are central to Ashoka's vision of a holistic and nurturing environment. Ashoka is committed to making high-quality education accessible to deserving students, irrespective of their socio-economic background, ethnicity, gender identity or disability. The campus houses 57% women students, students from 25 countries and 265 Indian towns and cities with over 18 languages being spoken on the campus. This academic year, Ashoka welcomed its largest and most diverse undergraduate class with 690 students. Seven per cent of applications for the incoming class were submitted by first-generation students. There was a rise of 15.5 per cent in applications from tier II and III cities.

Academic Bridge Programme

The Academic Bridge Programme is conducted for students who need special assistance, to adapt to the University's academic culture. The class includes low-income students, first-generation college-goers, students from non-English speaking backgrounds, and international students. Thirty-eight students participated this year. More than half were first-generation college-goers.

**Poonam Devi
Housekeeping Staff**

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

Workshops on Gender & Sexuality

CSGS conducted several workshops on understanding gender, sexuality, and inclusion at various schools, universities, and workspaces. Recent ones include NLU Delhi, Manipal University Jaipur, UPES Dehradun, Ambedkar University, GIZ India. These workshops have been particularly necessary during the pandemic, as we see more and more safe spaces shrinking due to the lockdowns. For many queer individuals living at home, especially trans and non-binary people, this time has been difficult as they are often in the midst of phobic spaces. Indeed, over the past year, the centre came across narratives that point to a rise in violence among queer youth, which is both a consequence of, and adversely affects, mental health and well being.

Research on Impact of COVID-19 on Gendered Division of Work

Ashwini Deshpande's paper, "The Covid-19 pandemic and gendered division of paid work, domestic chores and leisure: evidence from India's first wave", examines the effects of the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic on gender gaps in paid and unpaid work until December 2020. The first month of the national lockdown, April 2020, saw a large contraction in employment for both men and women, where more men lost jobs in absolute terms. Between April and August 2020, male employment recovered steadily as the economy unlocked. The estimates show that in August 2020, for women, the likelihood of being employed was 9% points lower than that for men, compared to April 2019, conditional on previous employment. The burden of domestic chores worsened for women under the pandemic. The paper adopts an intersectional lens to examine how these trends vary by social group identity.

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Writing 'Their' Voices: How Not to do Ethnography

The event aimed to open up a discussion on ethnographic practices by using as a starting point the precautionary measures to be practised. Poulomi Das, Senior Writing Tutor at CWC, and Urmimala Sarkar, Associate Professor at the School of Art and Aesthetics at JNU, began the conversation by requesting the audience to say aloud a word they associated with ethnography, which paved the way for a discussion of differences between ethnography and oral history. Questions of vulnerability, intimacy, ethics, and the politics of representation were discussed in detail. The method dealt with how to repeatedly interrupt one's own processes of conducting ethnography to help oneself write a narrative that is informative, compelling, and yet honest to the voices of his/her subjects.

Why are Adivasi Writings Still on the Margins of Indian Literature?

Akash Poyam, copy-editor at *The Caravan* magazine conducted this workshop. For the larger part of Indian history, Adivasi voices have remained on the periphery of Indian literature. Poyam, who is from the Koitur (Gond) community of Chhattisgarh, started the programme by giving a history of the Adivasi writings in India. He examined the existing literature on Adivasis and how they were written first by colonial anthropologists and then by Savarna and non-tribal anthropologists and writers. He then discussed various Adivasi texts both in the oral and written traditions and looked at initiatives led by Adivasi communities.

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

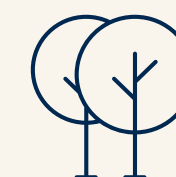## Critical Review of Sustainability Model of Ashoka University

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

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13 Acre
Green Area in Campus

1530
Trees on Campus

2.63 tCO^2
Per Capita Carbon Footprint

ACO^4
Platinum Rating by Indian Green Building Council

Sustainability of University Campus

Sustainability is an integral part of the design thinking of the University campus. Certain features, such as outdoor corridors, natural ventilation in common areas, the use of *jaali* sun shades, and other passive features, in addition to technologically advanced building systems, contribute to a cleaner and greener campus. The building design uses a double-wall construction with brick cladding and AAC blocks that reduce heat gain in the interiors. Fenestrations are arranged to bring in ample daylight in interior spaces. The stone *jaali* plays a vital role in minimising glare and providing diffused light. The design of the *jaali* has become synonymous with the brand of Ashoka, making the architecture a vital part of campus life.

Sustainable Transportation

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

Solid Waste Management-SBM

CMGGA has undertaken a number of decentralised initiatives to strengthen the solid waste management processes in consultation with DMC's office in accordance with the local context of Haryana, India. CMGGA Associates have facilitated Urban Local Bodies (ULB)'s work in waste management, which resulted in Haryana being awarded India's 2nd Best State with under 100 ULBs - a significant improvement from 10th rank in 2015. Moreover, four cities in the state figured in the list of top 100 cities, with Charkhi Dadri ranked as the Fastest mover City in the North Zone. In the Star Rating of Garbage Free Cities by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (based on 25 key parameters across the solid waste management spectrum), Municipal corporations of Karnal and Rohtak have been awarded 3-star and 1-star rating respectively. CMGGA has also published a compendium to capture innovative solutions and best practices.

Inclusive Infrastructure on Campus

Besides focusing on environmental sustainability as part of the construction activity, the University also focuses on ensuring inclusive education for students with different needs. Taking cognisance of students with certain disabilities, the University has constructed ramps in all building entrances, braille signage and accessible toilet facility. The authorities felt that there was less focus on sustainability during the construction of the existing campus. However, for construction of the new campus, a sustainability expert has been hired to have a greater emphasis on sustainability.

12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

ENSURE SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION PATTERNS

Research on Evolutionary Implementation in Aggregative Games

Ratul Lahkar, Professor of Economics, co-authored a paper on "Evolutionary implementation in aggregative games". Due to externalities, the equilibrium behaviour in aggregative games is not efficient in the sense of maximizing aggregate payoff. The authors characterize conditions such that efficiency can be globally implemented in such games under evolutionary dynamics. If payoffs satisfy certain important concavity conditions then the aggregate payoff function of these games has a unique maximizer. 'Public Bads' and the 'Tragedy of the Commons' are two new applications suggested by the paper that provide key insights on the sustainable use of common resources.

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Campus Food Waste Generation

Food is an important source of both organic and inorganic waste generation inside the University Campus. The organic and non-organic wastes are segregated on campus at their source. Nearly 70 kilograms of kitchen waste generated every day is handed over to the local piggery, while 30 kilograms of waste from food plates is incinerated and converted into manure, which is used to meet the internal requirement of the University. Science laboratories are the primary source of hazardous waste generation. The authorities take appropriate measures to collect and hand over the waste to authorized vendors only.

**Divyashree A. N.
PhD Scholar, Biology**

"We use a lot of consumables especially to pour growth media for bacteria. These plates need to be sterile. Although one-time-use plastics are most convenient, our lab is trying to move towards glass consumables that can be recycled and are more environment friendly. We also use Glass Microscope slides for routine microscopy that is washed and recycled instead of discarding it as bio-waste."

Competitive Markets & Pollution Control

In the paper, "An Evolutionary Approach to Pollution Control in Competitive Markets", Ratul Lahkar proposes an evolutionary implementation mechanism to achieve the socially optimal outcome for a large set of firms with external costs like pollution in the production process, characterised by a distinct private cost function. In contrast to the classical VCG mechanism, an evolutionary implementation does not require the planner to know or elicit any private information from firms. By imposing a tax equal to the current external damage being imposed by a firm, the planner can guide the evolution of society toward the social optimum outcome. The imposition of the tax generates a potential game whose potential function is the social welfare function of the model. Evolutionary dynamics converge to the maximizer of this function, thereby evolutionarily implementing the social welfare maximizer.

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Ashoka Farm Fresh

This initiative is led by a passionate group of individuals who strive towards fulfilling their love for gardening involving organic and sustainable agricultural methods and promoting responsible consumption and production among students.

TAKE URGENT ACTION TO COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE AND ITS IMPACTS

Real-Time Air Quality Monitoring Programme

Ashoka has initiated a project titled "Cost-Effective Air Quality Monitoring with Decision Support" to create a real-time air quality monitoring tool with a goal to improve local air quality. Anirban Mondal, Associate Professor of Computer Science, is co-Principal Investigator of this project. The work proposed is not about clean air technology alone, but about providing a powerful tool both to the public, and to administrators and planners charged with improving air quality. The tool will allow the public to assess the air quality around them, and work with local representatives and government officials to take steps to improve local air quality. The final product will also be an easy to use tool for state, regional and local administrators and planners to evaluate various scenarios for improving air quality and assess the impact of various interventions on air quality.

The Centre for Climate Change and Sustainability (3CS)

3CS at Ashoka University is a unique multidisciplinary centre that grew out of a shared concern for our planet and the environment across many disciplines in the University. Faculty members from Physics, Biology, Economics, Environmental Studies, History, Media Studies, Literature, Creative Writing and Computer Science have come together in 3CS to research, have conversations, and plan interventions. 3CS is committed to awareness, advocacy and research on issues of climate change and sustainability, both global and of particular relevance to India.

Healing Earth Conference 2022 by 3CS ⟶

Climate Change, Biases Against Women and Female Poverty

Bipasha Maity's working paper, "Widowhood and Consumption of Private Assignable Goods: The Role of Socio-Economic Status, Rainfall Shocks and Historical Institutions", analyses how weather shocks interact with cultural norms biased against women to affect female poverty within the household. Using expenditure on female assignable clothing per adult woman as a measure of women's intra-household access to consumption, the author documents that spending on female assignable goods is lower in households with at least one widowed woman relative to households with no widows in India. The author then studies how rainfall shocks influence the spending on female assignable goods by the presence of a widow in the household. It is found that although beneficial rainfall shocks increase overall spending on female assignable goods, the increase is lower in households with a widow. The results highlight opposite findings for spending on male assignable goods. The paper shows that persistence in historical norms can potentially prevent women from realizing gains in access to consumption resources within the household even in the event of beneficial environmental shocks.

Click to Read Working Paper $\longrightarrow$

On-Campus Air Quality Management

Bars labelled: Ashoka University, Murthal, Sonipat, Panipat, Anand Vihar (Delhi)

Comparative AQI Dashboard

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

Stubble Burning

CSBC conceptualised behavioural solutions to shift farmers away from the practice of stubble burning to the use of CRM machines for removing paddy stubble. The team compiled a diagnostic review of the behavioural challenges surrounding stubble farming based on a rapid literature review. CSBC also organised a design workshop with various stakeholders with expertise in agricultural practices, communication design and behavioural science. The workshop generated a multitude of ideas, which were then filtered, refined and packaged into final solutions and shared with A-PAG for them to advocate and implement.

Click to Know More $\longrightarrow$

Students' Environment Ministry

The Environment Ministry works towards creating a sustainable, aware and environmentally responsible culture on campus. They carry out various social media campaigns, talks, activities and discussion sessions on campus and online to promote conservation, climate action and sustainable consumption.

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

Research on Ethical and Sustainable Fisheries

The sustainability of global fisheries has emerged as a major concern for the future of marine biodiversity. In the spheres of seafood production and consumption, strict regulation of fisheries and more recently, ethical certifications of seafood products, are favoured as a means to ensure thriving fish stocks and healthy oceans. However, research has shown that such restrictions and market-driven certifications have had mixed results, with socio-ecological impacts detrimental to the long-term sustainability of tropical fisheries in the Global South.

Divya Karnad, Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies, and her co-authors approach this issue of fisheries sustainability in the Global South from the perspective of common-pool resources by considering the practices of seafood producers, retailers and consumers, and their interconnectedness with marine fishing commons in their article "Rethinking sustainability: From seafood consumption to seafood commons".

They build on critical literature on commoning and examine the extent to which seafood consumption patterns and availability can facilitate or unsettle marine fishing commons. They identified patterns of selective seafood consumption and dependence on niche markets that are translated across seafood supply chains and disrupt initiatives by fishermen to sustainably manage local fisheries. The authors discuss efforts to increase consumer awareness and recommend building community-supported fisheries through initiatives like InSeason.

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Narratives of Anti-dam Politics in India

In the 1990s, social movements against large dams in India were celebrated for crafting a powerful challenge to dominant policies of development. These grounded struggles were acclaimed for their critique of capitalist industrialization and their advocacy for an alternative model of socially just and ecologically sustainable development. Twenty years later, as large dams continue to be built, their critics have shifted the battle off the streets to new arenas – to courts and government committees, in particular – and switched to a techno-managerial discourse of maintaining river health.

Amita Bhaviskar, Professor of Environmental Studies and Sociology & Anthropology, questions what accounts for this change in her article "Nation's body, river's pulse: Narratives of anti-dam politics in India". This article traces the trajectory of cultural politics around Indian rivers within the larger imagination of the nation, the rise of economic liberalization and Hindu nationalism, and the emergence of environmental bureaucracies. It argues that, alongside being shaped by this context, current anti-dam campaigns also contend with the legacy of earlier social movements, their gains as well as losses. This political field has narrowed the potential for radical critique, large-scale collective mobilization and, ultimately, keeping rivers alive.

Future for Nature Award

Divya Karnad is one of the three recipients of the Future For Nature Award for her work on the sustainable fishing of sharks and Olive Ridley sea turtles. She successfully reduced the unwanted bycatch of endangered sharks along the Coromandel coast of India through her project – InSeason Fish.

The Future For Nature Award is a prestigious international award that celebrates tangible achievements in protecting wild animal and plant species. The Award provides the winners international recognition, financial support and reinforced linkages to an international conservation network. From 125 global applications, an international jury of experts chose Divya Karnad (India), Fernanda Abra (Brazil) and Olivier Nsengimana (Rwanda).

"Divya is clearly an outstanding leader, and has already initiated an impressive number of programmes and organisations focused on marine species conservation in India. She is now giving her attention to multiple globally threatened shark species, working with an impressively wide array of stakeholders. She is clearly a creative, serious, focused person with an excellent understanding of social, political, economic and biological issues, and the need to integrate these."
    – Simon Stuart, International Selection Committee

**Dr. Divya Karnad
Assistant Professor,
Environmental Studies**

"The marine environment is directly connected to us all, from the food we eat to the waste that we throw out. Identifying these hidden connections and ensuring that our relationships with life under water is ecologically sustainable is a key component of my research at Ashoka University."
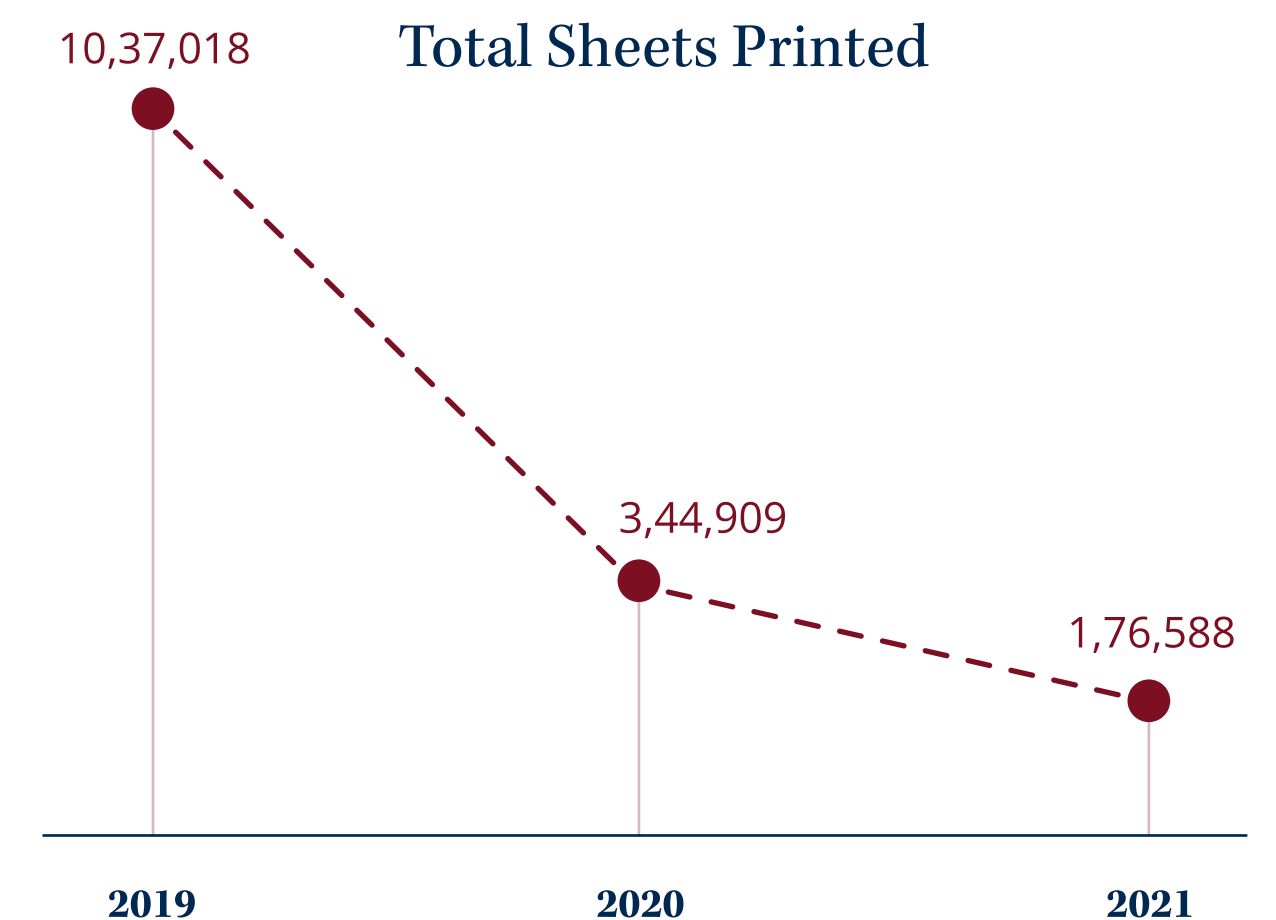
PROTECT, RESTORE & PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE USE OF TERRESTRIAL ECOSYSTEMS, SUSTAINABLY MANAGE FORESTS, COMBAT DESERTIFICATION, AND HALT AND REVERSE LAND DEGRADATION AND HALT BIODIVERSITY LOSS

Mitigating Noise Pollution on Campus

Ashoka University is located in one of the country's fastest urbanising regions. Rapid urbanisation has affected the climate as well as the air quality of the area. The National Highway 1 (NH 1) runs next to the University and the regular movement of heavy vehicles on it is a constant source of noise and air pollution. To address this problem, the University has planted trees along its boundary, which creates a natural barrier against dust and noise.

Reducing Paper Dependency

Total Sheets Printed

	10,37,018		
2019	3,44,909		
		1,76,588	

| 2019 | 2020 | 2021 |

Ashoka has been reducing its dependency on paper, printing and newspapers to minimise biodiversity loss. The consumption of newspapers has been reduced to 473 kgs from 925 kgs. Similarly, the count of papers used for printing purposes has been reduced to 1.7 lakhs from 3.4 lakhs. The use of e-material is strongly encouraged on campus.

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

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

Audit of Women Police Stations in Haryana

Centre for Studies in Gender and Sexuality has worked with the Haryana Police Department to audit Women Police Stations, and determine by comparison with non-dedicated *thana*s, the efficacy of their dealing with crimes against women.

Student Volunteer Programme for Work on Gender Violence

Centre for Social Impact and Philanthropy helped Ashoka University students volunteer for work on gender-based violence amongst underprivileged adolescents in Haryana.

Partnership with Haryana Government for One-Stop Centers

One-Stop Centers (OSCs) are intended to support women affected by violence, in private and public spaces, within the family, community and at the workplace. Despite COVID-related obstacles, all 22 OSCs in Haryana are functioning 24*7 with help from the CMGGAs. More than 15,000 women have benefitted from OSC services in Haryana. The average footfall in OSCs has increased to 575 from less than 150. More than 90% of missing facilities and unskilled staff vacancies have been filled within a year.

Analysing Patterns of Addiction and Violence in Delhi

In his article, "Can a Neighborhood Fall Sick? Opioid Addiction, Collective Violence and Currents of Death in Contemporary India", Bhrigupati Singh analyzes the striking differences between patterns of addiction and violence in two proximate and seemingly similar urban poor neighbourhoods in Delhi, India.

Opioid abuse is an increasingly global phenomenon. Rather than assuming it to be a uniformly global or neoliberal pathology, his article tries to better understand comparative and locally specific dimensions of opioid addiction. He suggests that attention to sharp ecological variation within epidemics challenges social scientists to offer more fine-grained diagnostics. Using a combination of quantitative and ethnographic methods, the article shows how heroin addiction and collective violence might be understood as expressions of what Durkheim called "suicido–genetic currents." He suggests the idea of varying currents as an alternative to the sociology of neighbourhood "effects" in understanding significant differences in patterns of self-harm and injury across demographically similar localities.

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Platform to Track Government-to-Citizen Services

Antyodaya-SARAL is a one-stop unified platform to deliver and track Government-to-Citizen (G2C) services/schemes across Haryana. Under this initiative, CMGGA Associates have transformed service delivery in the state by digitising over 550 schemes. Over 3.5 CR applications have been received, 20 lakh SMS' have been sent for citizen convenience and more than 1 lakh calls have been answered through the dedicated call centre. With average citizen feedback of 4.3 on a scale of 5, *Antyodaya-SARAL* has received six national and state-level awards in the past three years. Continuous Interventions are being made to strengthen systems that ensure quality, ease and speed of processing applications. The project is still unparalleled in most parts of the country in terms of its scale and vision.

Digitizing Government-to-Government Transactions

E-office, a digital workplace solution, aims to achieve a simplified, responsive, effective and transparent working of all government offices by digitizing government-to-government transactions. Successful adoption of Digitised File Management, Knowledge Management and MIS will benefit government employees, make it easier for the leadership to monitor and review the performance of subordinates and benefit citizens in the long term. With the help of CMGGA Associates, Haryana has been able to initiate digital processing of files in more than 95% of all state HQ and district HQ offices. Having trained over 25,000 government employees, over 1 lakh e-Files and 5 lakh e-Receipts have been cumulatively digitized by the users.

Poetry, Patterns and Protest

The workshop on 'Poetry, Patterns and Protest' started with a short conversation between Pervin Saket, author of the novel Urmila and of a collection of poetry A Tinge of Turmeric, and Uday Kanungo, Writing Instructor at CWC. The workshop looked at poetry and its circulation in spaces of protest, examining poetic forms and stylistic experimentation, and the audience was taken through poetry readings and writing tasks. India has seen immense protests over the past few years, and poetry as an expression of public and social anger has emerged from several corners, with poems like Faiz Ahmed Faiz's 'Hum Dekhenge' and 'Bol' becoming the battle cries of protestors.

Partnership with Haryana Government for Family IDs

In an attempt to create a family ID for all families in Haryana, the CMGGA Associates have assisted with the *Parivar Pehchan Patra* scheme to help the government identify families with low family income. Records of more than 85% families have been updated, compared to less than 40%. Moreover, Local Committees have been constituted to ensure verification of details. To take the initiative further, the government has started pushing welfare schemes to the most marginalized families (rather than waiting for the marginalized families to reach out and avail the schemes). Such an intervention increases awareness about the schemes and ensures that each family enlists under eligible schemes. About 36,000 schemes have been sanctioned.

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

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

Cambridge Partnership

The University of Cambridge and Ashoka University signed a Memorandum of Understanding in recognition of their mutual interest in promoting and furthering academic links between the two institutions. The possibilities of collaboration include staff and student exchange and collaborative research.

Global Humanities Project

Recognising our strength in the Humanities, Cambridge University invited Ashoka to be the nodal centre in India to partner with them in their 'Global Humanities Initiative' (GHI). Ashoka thus joined a global network of seven universities spread across Europe, Asia, the Middle East and South America, deeply engaged with each other in developing humanities research and teaching. GHI will develop new approaches to the study of art, literature, film, the digital world, music, history, and language – more global in approach than the current predominant paradigms.

Bridging the Government-Academia-Industry Ecosystem

Ashoka Science Policy Initiative has been making significant efforts in bridging the academia-government and academia-industry gaps to strengthen Ashoka's efforts in enabling the means of implementation and revitalizing the partnership for sustainable development. Partnerships and collaborations have been carried out with the government, think tanks, policy forums and the industry to reinforce capacity building and sustained learning.

Advocating for Philanthropic Funding for COVID-19

Centre for Social Impact and Philanthropy conducted a couple of research studies on the impact of COVID-19 on India's nonprofits which helped advocate for greater philanthropic funding for the work of nonprofits. The report, "The Impact of COVID-19 on India's Nonprofit Organisations", was based on 417 respondent NGOs working in diverse SDG areas. The Centre also published a 12 country research study, titled "How India Can Encourage Charitable Donations", on tax incentives for philanthropy and a policy brief advocating greater incentives for philanthropy.

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Collaborating to Provide Expertise on Mental Health

In its role as a centre for excellence, ACWB has mentored students and faculty across universities in India to curate webinar series as well as set up walk-in centres for emotional problems. A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed with the Central University of Kashmir, wherein ACWB provides the expertise to set up a walk-in centre for students to talk about their emotional issues with a faculty member trained by the centre. Training has been provided in effective listening and identifying anxiety and high risk.

Dr. Vanita Shastri
Dean, Global Education
and Strategic Programmes

"Despite the COVID pandemic, the Office of Global Education & Strategic Programmes, along with its international partners has been actively engaged with the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The last two years have seen several virtual programmes where faculty and students were engaged in research and workshops related to these SDGs."

The Past, Present and Future of the Psych-Clinic: Global Perspectives

A significant achievement for the Ashoka Centre for Well-being has been successfully securing a grant from the University of Cambridge for collaboration, conference and research titled 'The Past, Present and Future of the Psych-Clinic: Global Perspectives'. This partnership will create a unique flagship network between scholars and practitioners across India, Cambridge, and in wider world for collaborative work on mental health.

COVID Global Virtual Research Project

A COVID Global Virtual Research Project was undertaken by five Ashoka students, placed in teams from four other institutions worldwide, which included, Connecticut College (USA), Ashesi University (Ghana), Higher School of Economics (Russia) and Morningside College (Hong Kong). They were part of a four-month research project on sustainable health systems and how COVID-19 impacted each of these five countries.

The University of Waterloo in Canada collaborated on a workshop on 'Transdisciplinary Fisheries' providing training on sustainable ecosystems in coastal regions of India. The University of Toronto through its 'Global Commons' platform held several events on Climate Change and Participatory Institutions. One of these was on what Inuit leadership and culture can teach us about climate change, which Ashoka students attended virtually.

India Candid Portal

Centre for Social Impact and Philanthropy co-created the India Candid Portal helping philanthropists and NGOs working across SDGs to easily and efficiently identify potential partners.

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