



Fostering Social Responsibility & Community Engagement in Higher Educational Institutions in India 2.0



University Grants Commission
Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, New Delhi-
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ज्ञान-विज्ञान विमुक्तये

Fostering Social Responsibility & Community Engagement in Higher Educational Institutions in India

*National Curriculum Framework &
Guidelines*

January 2022

University Grants Commission
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FOREWORD

Higher educational institutions (HEIs) can play an important role to achieve the objectives of socio-economic development of New India through their active community engagement. This approach will also contribute to improvements in quality of both teaching and research in HEIs as they will develop better understanding of issues confronting the society. Therefore, it would in the fitness of things, if HEIs bring in social responsibility and community in their vision and mission itself. It is also important that institutional mechanisms are developed to adopt a holistic and functional approach to community engagement, encompassing all the three functions of HEIs—teaching, research and service. UGC’s ambitious Quality Mandate launched in 2018 has focused on improving societal linkages of HEIs and enabling students to become socially productive.

UGC set up an Subject Expert Group on educational institutions’ social responsibility in 2018 under Unnat Bharat Abhiyan (UBA), a flagship programme of GoI, which worked to develop a report on “Fostering Social Responsibility & Community Engagement in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in India”. The report has emphasised the importance of socially relevant courses that will make all students understand India’s rural society, Government’s rural development schemes and contribute to the betterment of the same.

Since the Govt of India announced a new National Education Policy (NEP) in July 2020, this document has been revised to include key recommendations of NEP, as well as the deliberations of the Review Committee and the Expert Group.

I am happy to present a revised report on “Fostering Social Responsibility & Community Engagement in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in India” to the Vice- Chancellors and Directors of the HEIs.

I would like to acknowledge the valuable contribution of all the members of the Expert Committee in developing this document which will give a fillip to UGC’s long-standing commitment to strengthen social responsibility and community engagement of Universities/ Colleges in India. I would also like to acknowledge the necessary support and relevant inputs provided by Prof. Bhushan Patwardhan, Vice-Chairman , UGC; Prof. Rajnish Jain, Secretary, UGC and Dr (Mrs.) Renu Batra, Additional Secretary, UGC and Dr Diksha Rajput, Deputy Secretary, UGC.

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1. Introduction

This document emerged from UGC's long-standing commitment to strengthen social responsibility and community engagement of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in India. An earlier policy of Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Government of India (2012) had been developed into a Scheme to promote stronger community engagement amongst HEIs in the country.

Unnat Bharat Ahiyaan (UBA) 2.0 was launched by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), UBA 2.0 aims to bring a **transformative** change in rural development by the active participation of higher education institutes with rural communities and reorientation of communities through research and development. It was launched by the Government of India in February 2018. The University Grants Commission (UGC) set up a Subject Expert Group (SEG) on Curricular Reforms and Educational Institutions Social Responsibility for achieving the objectives of UBA 2.0 in June 2018 (Members of SEG **Annexure – I**)

“The Subject Expert Group (SEG) on Curricular Reforms and Educational Institutions Social Responsibility will basically work on the reforms in the curriculum at the level of UG and PG to instil the concept of Rural Community Engagement and Social Responsibility. The endeavour will be to ensure that community engagement is not seen as a standalone activity and is integrated in the regular curriculum of the university to ensure the development of the society around the university.”

This document provides the National Curricular Framework and Guidelines for “Fostering Social Responsibility and Community Engagement” of HEIs in India. It has been developed by the Expert Group through a series of consultations over this period. **It has been revised to include key recommendations of NEP 2020. The experiences of the Covid pandemic and responses by students, faculty and staff of HEIs during the same have been incorporated in this revision.**

To achieve the objectives of socio-economic development of New India, HEIs can play an important role through active community engagement. This approach will also contribute to improvements in quality of both teaching and research in HEIs in India. As a growing and large sector in the country, HEIs need to foster social responsibility and community **engagement** in their vision and mission itself. It is also important that institutional mechanisms are developed to adopt a holistic and functional approach to community engagement, encompassing all the three functions of HEIs—teaching, research and service.

1.1 Global Context

Around the world, HEIs are being encouraged to foster social responsibility and community engagement in their teaching and research activities over the past decade.

The declaration from the second UNESCO Conference on Higher Education held in Paris in July 2009 stated explicitly that, ‘Higher education has the social responsibility to advance our understanding of multifaceted issues...and our ability to respond to them... Through its core missions of teaching, research and service, it should lead society in generating global knowledge to address global challenges, inter alia, food security, climate change, water management, intercultural dialogue, renewable energy and public health.’¹

¹ <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000189242>

After the first international conference on higher education, UNESCO supported a new global network in 1999—Global University Network for Innovations – GUNI (www.guninetwork.org). GUNI's 5th World Report on Higher Education brings together global experiences on the theme “Knowledge, Engagement & Higher Education: Contributing to Social Change” (2014). “Community University Engagement (CUE) is central to the creation of a new citizenship... This Report proposes integrating CUE into all institutional, teaching and research activities, as a way of thinking and acting.”² (GUNI, 2012).

There have been several other initiatives around the world that demonstrate the growing practice of community engagement and social responsibility in higher education.

Living Knowledge Network in Europe (www.scienceshops.org) has emerged from the movement of Science Shops which began in the Netherlands in 1970s. **Science Shops** have been supported through many European governments and the EU over the past decade. These ‘science shops’ are intermediary structures between universities and local communities to mediate research on community identified problems jointly. Science Shops have primarily comprised of engineering and natural science disciplines. **PASCAL** International Observatory (www.pascalobservatory.org) has focused its attention on promoting university partnerships with regional and local governments over the past decade. The **Talloires Network** on Civic Roles and Social Responsibilities of Higher Education (www.tufts.edu/talloiresnetwork) began in 2005 and now has more than 400 universities as its members worldwide; its focus has been on the promotion of university engagement in communities to strengthen democratic citizenship amongst youth.

The Government of UK has supported over the past decade a **National Centre for Coordinating Public Engagement** (www.nccpe.org) by HEIs where universities are supported to foster social responsibility and community engagement. Over the past two decades, European Union’s Horizon 2020 research programme has been explicitly focusing on ‘**Responsible Research & Innovation**’ (www.rri-tools.org) which mainstreams public engagement in all research projects of universities.

In its 6th World Report on Higher Education (2017), **GUNI** has focused on this very theme —“Towards A Socially Responsible University: Balancing the Global & the Local”--- and it calls upon HEIs...” as centres of training and the production as well as transmission of knowledge, HEIs are well positioned to link the local and the global..”³

India is a signatory to global commitment to achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. Achieving these 17 SDG goals requires generating locally appropriate solutions. HEIs can play significant roles by teaching about SDGs and undertaking locally prioritised research for communities around them. Research and teaching of each SDG will enable multi-disciplinarily in HEIs, as each SDG cuts across several academic disciplines. Global University Network for Innovations (GUNI) in its 6th World Report beacons HEIs to engage with SDGs:⁴

- 2 <http://www.guninetwork.org/report/higher-education-world-4>
- 3 <http://www.guninetwork.org/report/higher-education-world-6>
- 4 <http://www.guninetwork.org/report/higher-education-world-6>

- a) Educating the SDG Generation needed to make the SDGs a reality, with the necessary knowledge, skills, competencies and partnerships, thereby helping to produce new SDG leaders;
- b) Conducting transversal reviews and refinements of curricula to ensure the mainstreaming of SDG issues across curricula, and including new values and practices for economic development that enhance social equity while reducing environmental risk.”

1.2 Community Engagement in India

In 2011, a national review was conducted by a Committee of Experts (set up by the then Planning Commission) to analyse the purposes, principles and forms of social responsibility and community engagement which are relevant to our context. Its recommendations to MHRD about “fostering social responsibility and community engagement of HEIs” in India contain several important elements for the new policy.⁵ The National Education Policy (NEP) announced by the Government of India in 2020 has presented a transformative framework for higher education in the country. It has reinforced many of the recommendations already included in the new policy, as exemplified through the below lines:

“The purpose of the education system is to develop good human being capable of rational thought and action, possessing compassion and empathy, courage and resilience, scientific temper and creative imagination, with sound ethical moorings and values. It aims at producing engaged, productive, and contributing citizens for building an equitable, inclusive, and plural society as envisaged by our Constitution (pg 5)”.

The **goals** of ‘fostering social responsibility and community engagement in HEIs’ can comprise of

- Improving the quality of teaching/learning in HEIs, by bridging the gap between theory and practice through community engagement;
- Promoting deeper interactions between higher educational institutions and local communities for identification and solution of real-life problems faced by the communities in a spirit of mutual benefit;
- Facilitating partnerships between local communities and institutions of higher education so that students and teachers can learn from local knowledge and wisdom;
- Engaging higher **education** institutions with local communities in order to make curriculum, courses and pedagogies more appropriate to achieving the goals of national development;
- Catalysing acquisition of values of public service and active citizenship amongst students and youth alike, which would also encourage, nurture and harness the natural idealism of youth;
- Undertaking research projects in partnership with local community through community-based research methods

1.3 Key Principles for Community Engagement

In light of the global and national approaches currently prevalent, and key recommendations of NEP 2020, the following key principles shall guide community engagement of HEIs:

- a) ***Mutual learning and respect.*** Mutually agreed interests and needs of both rural and peri-urban poor communities and HEIs should be articulated and respected. Without ensuring mutual benefit, community engagement does not serve the purpose of social responsibility of HEIs. While community learns from students and faculty engaging with them, students and teachers should also learn from community knowledge and experiences

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https://www.pria.org/uploaded_files/article_category/1531475111_Fostering_Social_Responsibility.pdf

- b) **University-wide, in each faculty and discipline:** Community engagement should not be limited to a few social science disciplines alone. It should be practiced across all disciplines and faculties of HEIs. Faculties of natural sciences and engineering can also promote community engagement in teaching and research. This will help educate local communities about new technological innovations as well as inform students and faculty about ways to harness local technology and knowledge.
- c) **Credit-based for students:** Participation of students in teaching activities of community engagement and research projects and learning should earn them credits. Community engagement should thus be included to meet their graduation requirements and it should be integrated into their assessments.
- d) **Providing credit to Teachers for Engagement activities:** Performance assessments of teachers, researchers and administrators in HEIs should include review of their involvement and contributions to community engagement in teaching and research. Criteria of and weightage to community engagement by teachers and researchers should be explicitly included in assessments for recruitment, regularisation and promotion (by modifying existing API and other faculty evaluation mechanisms).
- e) **Linkages with local institutions:** In order to sustain regular community engagement programmes, HEIs should develop organic and long-term linkages with local institutions around them. These include local governments, district administration, local entrepreneurs, business and local NGOs.

1.4 Forms of Community Engagement

When the above principles are applied in practice by HEIs, they can choose any combination of the following forms:

a) Linking learning with community service

In this approach, students and teachers apply their knowledge and skills in a chosen community to improve the lives of people in that community. This can be achieved through the model of 'service-learning' (a globally accepted best practice), providing engagement opportunities to students from various disciplines and courses to apply their knowledge to address the challenges of a specific community. For example, students of chemistry can conduct water and soil testing in local areas and share the results with local community.

b) Linking research with community knowledge

In this approach, various faculties and programmes of HEIs devise joint research projects in partnership with the communities and local agencies. The community's own knowledge is integrated into the design and conduct of the research. New research by students helps them to complete their academic requirements, and at the same time the community's knowledge is systematized. Community-based Participatory Research (CBPR) approaches are gaining increasing recognition in this regard.⁶

⁶ http://unescochair-cbrsr.org/pdf/resource/Knowledge%20&%20Engagement_26-09-16_pdf%20ver-mail.pdf

Students of engineering, for example, can undertake research in partnership with community on solid and liquid waste disposal.

c) Knowledge sharing and knowledge mobilization

The knowledge available with students and teachers in various disciplines is made available to the local community to realize its developmental aspirations, secure its entitlements and access its benefits from various agencies and schemes. These can take the forms of enumerations, surveys, awareness camps and campaigns, trainings, learning manuals/films, maps, study reports, public hearings, policy briefs, cleanliness & hygiene teachings, legal aid clinics, etc. For example, students can undertake 'swachhta survekshana' and/or nutrition survey for mothers and children, and educate them about hygiene and nutrition.

d) Devising new curriculum and courses

Many institutions of higher education develop new curricula in existing courses as well as design new courses to engage with community. This enriches the curriculum of existing courses through locally-appropriate subject-matter. It also creates new, locally appropriate educational programmes that interest new generation of students. For example, new courses on financial inclusion, entrepreneurship development and nutritional value of local produce can improve knowledge and business opportunities for students.

e) Including practitioners as teachers

Local community elders, women leaders, tribals, entrepreneurs and civil society practitioners have enormous practical knowledge of a wide variety of issues—from agriculture and forestry to child-rearing, micro-planning, water-harvesting and project management. This expertise can be tapped by inviting such practitioners to co-teach courses both in the classrooms and in the field. Such instructors should be duly recognized, compensated and respected for their practical experience and knowledge.

f) Social innovations by students

The students can be encouraged to initiate learning projects with a social impact and supported by HEIs. Incubation of such social innovation projects by students can also have meaningful links to existing curriculum and courses. Some competitions for social innovation are being organized by some HEIs; they should be integrated into the curriculum.

As discussed above, the post-pandemic context and NEP 2020 demands that community engagement be mainstreamed in all teaching-learning, research and service activities of HEIs. The curriculum of 2 credit course needs to focus on community engagement, especially with vulnerable and excluded households. The corona virus has disrupted life and livelihoods of many households and communities. Migrant labour, students in rural and remote areas, basic service providers (like Asha & Anganwadi workers, teachers, panchayat secretaries, etc) have all been affected due to lockdown and disruptions due to virus. Many new social protection and welfare schemes have been since announced by the central government like Atma Nirbhar Bharat, PM Garib Kalyan Yojana, SFURTI, portability of PDS cards, cash transfer, Ayushman Bharat health insurance, etc. Awareness and last mile delivery of all these benefits to the excluded households needs to be included in the syllabus, and field study by students.

Likewise, the roles of panchayats and urban local bodies (ULBs) became very critical during the pandemic. These local governance institutions need support to

perform their responsibilities in the post-pandemic era. Students and their teachers can utilise this 2 credit course to provide such support to panchayats and ULBs around their institutions.

2. Operational Guidelines

This section provides operational guidelines for implementation of this national curriculum framework for fostering community engagement and social responsibility in HEIs.

Support to the framework and its operational guidelines of UGC scheme are so described in the NEP 2020:

“Higher Education plays an extremely important role in promoting human as well as societal well-being and in developing India as envisioned in its Constitution- a democratic, just, socially-conscious, cultured, and humane nation upholding liberty, equality, fraternity, and justice for all. Higher education significantly contributes towards sustainable livelihoods and economic development of the nation.

A quality higher education must enable personal accomplishment and enlightenment, constructive public engagement, and productive contribution to the society. It must prepare students for more meaningful and satisfying lives and work roles and enable economic independence. (Pg 33)”

It contains four sub-sections:

- 1.1 Recommended Curriculum for a new compulsory course in community engagement for all UG and PG students in HEIs

- 1.2 Suggestions for modifying existing courses and curriculum to align with national framework outlined above
- 1.3 Offering new audit courses for promoting community engagement and social responsibility
- 1.4 Undertaking research in partnership with local community

2.1 Compulsory Community Engagement Course

It is recommended that each HEI conducts a compulsory course to provide community engagement to all Undergraduate & Post Graduate students so that their appreciation of rural field realities is holistic, respectful and inspiring.

Model community engagement course is described below.

a) Introduction

New generation of students are increasingly unaware of local rural and peri-urban realities surrounding their HEIs, as rapid urbanisation has been occurring in India. A large percentage of Indian population continues to live and work in rural and peri-urban areas of the country. While various schemes and programmes of community service have been undertaken by HEIs, there is no singular provision of a well-designed compulsory community engagement course that provides opportunities for immersion in rural realities. Such a course will enable students to learn about challenges faced by vulnerable households and develop understanding of local wisdom and life-style in a respectful manner.

a) Objectives:

- To develop an appreciation of rural culture, life-style and wisdom amongst
- students
- To learn about the status of various agricultural and development programmes
- To understand causes for distress and poverty faced by vulnerable households and explore solutions for the
- same
- To apply classroom knowledge of courses to field realities and thereby improve

quality of learning

b) Learning Outcomes

After completing this course, student will be able to

- Gain an understanding of rural life, Indian culture & ethos and social realities
- Develop a sense of empathy and bonds of mutuality with local community
- Appreciate significant contributions of local communities to Indian society and economy
- Learn to value the local knowledge and wisdom of the community
- Identify opportunities for contributing to community's socio-economic improvements

c) Credit

2 credit, 30 hours, at least 50% in field, compulsory for all students

d) Contents

Divided into four Modules, field immersion is part of each Unit

Course Structure: 2 Credits Course (1 Credit for Classroom and Tutorials and 1 Credit for Field Engagement)

S. No.	Module Title	Module Content	Assignment	Teaching/ Learning Methodology	No. of Classes
1	Appreciation of Rural Society	Rural lifestyle, rural society, caste and gender relations, rural values with respect to community, nature and resources, elaboration of "soul of India lies in villages" (Gandhi), rural infrastructure	Prepare a map (physical, visual or digital) of the village you visited and write an essay about inter-family relations in that village.	- Classroom discussions - Field visit** - Assignment Map	2 4 2
2	Understanding rural and local economy & livelihood	Agriculture, farming, landownership, water management, animal husbandry, non-farm livelihoods and artisans, rural entrepreneurs, rural markets, migrant labour	Describe your analysis of rural household economy, its challenges and possible pathways to address them Circular economy and migration patterns focus	- Field visit** - Group discussions in class - Assignment	3 4 1
3	Rural and local Institutions	Traditional rural & community organisations, Self-help Groups, Panchayati raj institutions (Gram Sabha, Gram Panchayat, Standing Committees), Nagarpalikas & municipalities, local civil society, local administration	How effectively are Panchayati Raj & Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) institutions functioning in the village? What would you suggest to improve their effectiveness? Present a case study (written or audio-visual)	- Classroom - Field visit** - Group presentation of assignment	2 4 2

S. No.	Module Title	Module Content	Assignment	Teaching/ Learning Methodology	No. of Classes
4	Rural & National Development Programmes	History of various /development in India, current national programmes: Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao, Ayushman Bharat, Swachh Bharat, PM Awaas Yojana, Skill India, Gram Panchayat Decentralised Planning, NRLM, MNREGA, SHRAM, Jal Jeevan Mission, SFURTI, Atma Nirbhar Bharat, etc.	Describe the benefits received and challenges faced in the delivery of one of these programmes in the local community; give suggestions about improving implementation of the programme for the poor. Special focus to urban informal sector and migrant households	- Classroom - Each student selects one program for field visit** - Written assignment	2 4 2

After completing this 2 credit course, PG students can undertake a field project for additional 2 credits on any one topic appropriate to their regional community context.

**** Recommended field-based practical activities:**

- Interaction with SHG women members, and study of their functions and challenges; planning for their skill building and livelihood activities
- Visit MGNREGS project sites, interact with beneficiaries and interview functionaries at the work site
- Field visit to Swachh Bharat project sites, conduct analysis and initiate problem solving measures
- Conduct Mission Antyodaya surveys to support under Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP)
- Interactive community exercise with local leaders, panchayat functionaries,

- preparation and resource mobilization
- Visit Rural Schools / mid-day meal centres, study **academic** and infrastructural resources and gaps
 - Participate in Gram Sabha meetings, and study community participation
 - Associate with Social audit exercises at the Gram Panchayat level, and interact with programme beneficiaries
 - **Visit to local Nagarpalika office and review schemes for urban informal workers and migrants**
 - Attend Parent Teacher Association meetings, and interview school drop outs
 - Visit local Anganwadi Centre and observe the services being provided
 - Visit local NGOs, civil society organisations and interact with their staff and beneficiaries,
 - Organize awareness programmes, health camps, Disability camps and cleanliness camps
 - Conduct soil health test, drinking water analysis, energy use and fuel efficiency surveys
 - Raise understanding of people's impacts of climate change, building up community's disaster preparedness
 - Organise orientation programmes for farmers regarding organic cultivation, rational use of irrigation and fertilizers and promotion of traditional species of crops and plants
 - Formation of committees for common property resource management, village pond maintenance and fishing

e) Teaching & Learning Methods

A large variety of methods of teaching must be deployed:

UGC will prepare an ICT based **on-line module** for self-paced learning by students for the one credit which can be supplemented **through discussions** in the classroom

Reading & classroom discussions, Participatory Research Methods & Tools, Community dialogues, Oral history, social and institutional mapping, interactions with elected panchayat leaders and government functionaries, Observation of Gram Sabha, Field visits to various village institutions **(see Implementation Strategy)**.

2.2 Adapting Existing Courses for Community Engagement

The purpose of teaching is to enable learning of students. However, the reality of the present system of teaching in most HEIs is that students feel dis-empowered when taught only in the classroom style delivery of content. Despite advances in teaching aids, infrastructure, updated curricula and pedagogies, students are unable to relate what they study in the classroom to the field realities in which they live and where they would work in future. Therefore, it is important that the classroom theory is linked to the realities of the local field areas. Thus, existing courses can be adapted, both in content and pedagogy, for community

engagement to facilitate learning from the field. For instance, management curriculum may include aspects of micro-financing in rural context; chemistry syllabus can have a component of conducting water and soil analysis in surrounding field areas; political science syllabus could include mapping of local rural governance institutions and their functioning.

In terms of adapting all courses to engage with society for mutual learning in the context of the climate crisis and the Covid-19 pandemic, the NEP 2020 suggests:

“Towards the attainment of such a holistic and multidisciplinary education, the flexible and innovative curricula of all HEIs shall include credit-based courses and projects in the areas of community engagement and service, environmental education, and value-based education. Environment education will include areas such as climate change, pollution, waste management, sanitation, conservation of biological diversity, management of biological resources and biodiversity, forest and wildlife conservation, and sustainable development and living (pg 37).”

In all these courses, localisation of content and field work through community engagement can be included. Practical internships and field study can also be used to document and analyse local community innovations and solutions. Local knowledge of farming, livestock, forestry and water management practices can be a source of knowledge in such community engagement, and documentation of the same will make these available to others in the country.

One of the essential pre-requisites for HEIs to fulfil the **twin** mandates of improved quality of learning of students and their practical contributions to socio-economic development of the nation is to introduce such dynamic curricular reforms which facilitate the connection between classroom theory and field realities. Within existing courses being taught at HEIs, community engagement may provide better quality learning opportunities for students, while also contributing to service to local community.

Dayalbagh Educational Institute (www.dej.ac.in) has a farm on campus, and it is compulsory for all students and faculty to spend time on the field in supporting agricultural operations. Likewise, its students of nursing make weekly visit to local communities to provide immunisation and other primary care services, which are then discussed in the classroom.

Keeping local realities in view, HEIs can develop new contents in existing courses which make them more relevant to students from the local areas and also be useful to local community. This will not only enrich the curriculum of existing courses through locally- appropriate subject matter, but will also create new, locally appropriate course content that is useful to local community.

Gandhigram Rural Institute (www.ruraluniv.ac.in) has added some new contents to their existing courses, keeping in view the needs of the local community. For example, Gandhian Approach to Development, Humanistic Values & Sustainable Development, Bio-products of Rural Development, Food Security, etc.

Even within the existing curriculum and syllabus, community engaged learning can be facilitated through use of new and innovative teaching-learning methods. The pedagogies of engaged & experiential learning can be designed in each course and discipline. These include field labs, internships, participatory action research, service-learning, community projects, etc. Engaged teaching entails interaction of students with the curriculum and the world around the university. An engaged, outward, trans-disciplinary stance will enable enriching the curriculum and promoting learning in multi-modal pedagogies in addition to

the classroom and laboratories. Therefore, new approaches to learning based on dialogical, co-learning, participatory and problem-oriented methods are required for teaching existing curriculum. If a part of the theory is complemented with field-based application, the value and usability of the theory increases manifold. This will improve quality of learning through application of classroom theory in the field realities. It will also contribute to deeper sensitisation of students and faculty to the socio-economic realities of our nation. The wisdom, knowledge and expertise of local communities and practitioners will also thus become accessible to students and their teachers alike.

BPS University (www.bpswomenuniversity.ac.in) in Haryana adapted their teaching methods to promote community engagement of students. From such an engagement, students developed field projects on rural energy, self-employment, and women's livelihood. Teaching methods included practice of knowledge gained in classroom with local women's groups and panchayats.

Amrita University has introduced rural field-based learning in several courses where science and engineering students make field projects on rural tourism, energy, housing and sanitation (www.amrita.edu.in). From Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, Live-in-Labs® is a multidisciplinary experiential learning program that breaks classroom and lab barriers by applying learned theory in real-world settings. This credit-based academic program draws on principles of lean research for the development and deployment of sustainable solutions for current challenges faced by rural communities in India. By directly living in rural communities (labs) and co-designing solutions to development challenges at the ground level in rural India, program participants gain first-hand knowledge and know-how of identifying and assessing community needs and subsequently developing and implementing viable solutions through various participatory methods. With over 150 projects in 21 states across India, Live-in-Labs students have touched the lives of about 60,000 rural residents during the past few years."

<https://amrita.edu/international/live-in-labs/>



Students in the Village Placement program at GRI, Dindigul. <http://www.ruraluniv.ac.in/BestPractices?content=VPP>

An example of community mapping exercise



Students from Delhi School of Social Work undertaking a field study in Sualkauchi Village -Silk Industry (<https://www.facebook.com/UniversityofDelhi/photos/a.878264495531132/881874968503418/?type=3&theater>)



Legal Services Clinic by NLSIU Bangalore (https://www.nls.ac.in/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=571%20&Itemid=85)



Students at Gandhigram Rural Institute practising 'Shramdaan'
<http://www.ruraluniv.ac.in/BestPractices?content=Shramdhan>



Awareness through Nukkad Natak by NSS volunteers in village Khara Madana
<http://www.thenewsnow.co.in/newsdet.aspx?q=56096>



Students from Azim Premji University interacting with Panchayat members
<https://azimpremjiuniversity.edu.in/SitePages/students-life-students-reflections-4.aspx>

2.3 Offering new courses

Effective engagement between local communities and HEIs calls for dynamic revision of curriculum and introduction of new courses. Therefore, HEIs need to design and introduce new courses at undergraduate and post-graduate levels which foster social responsibility and enable community engagement. For instance, new courses for engineering students may be designed focusing exclusively on water harvesting, storage, security and distribution; management programmes may design a new course on logistic & business planning for sustainable 24x7 water supplies to rural habitations, etc. Courses on solid and liquid waste management, design of new toilets, and low-cost housing materials are all examples of such new courses which enable community engagement by students. To tap local knowledge, new courses can enable systematisation of local community knowledge (like folk medicine for treatment of household animals).

Such courses can be audited by students, or taken as a part of 25% provision for external (to faculty) courses now allowed by UGC guidelines. These can be short-term certificate courses, or integrated into the existing syllabus. By their very nature, such courses are trans-disciplinary and require community engagement activities by students. Additionally,

new courses which teach about Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will provide local understanding about some of these goals to students, in addition to learning about Agenda 2030.⁷

The NEP 2020 also emphasises the alignment of teaching and research with SDGs as below:

“The global education development agenda reflected in the Goal 4 (SDG4) of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable Development, adopted by India in 2015- seeks to ‘ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all’ by 2030. Such a lofty goal will require the entire education system to be reconfigured to support and foster learning, so that all of the critical targets and goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development can be achieved (pg 3).”

An indicative list of such new courses, compiled from various HEIs, is presented below:

- a) Understanding panchayats and constitutional mandate of local governance
- b) Panchayat administration, Gram Sabha, Mahila Sabha, GPDP, local planning of basic services
- c) Micro-finance, SHGs, system of savings and credit for local business, linkages to banks, financial inclusion
- d) Rural – entrepreneurship, opportunities for small business in local communities, access to financial and technical inputs to new entrepreneurs
- e) Renewable energy, access to household and community level solar and bio-mass systems for sustainable energy use
- f) Participatory Monitoring & evaluation of socio-economic development programmes, cost-benefit analysis of project proposals
- g) Participatory decentralised planning, GPDP, micro-level data analysis for new investments
- h) Urban informal settlements and basic services
- i) Migrant workers’ livelihood security and social services
- j) Hygiene and sanitation, improving health and personal behaviours, locally manageable decentralised systems
- k) Water conservation, traditional practices of storage and harvesting, new systems of distribution and maintenance
- l) Women’s empowerment, gender inequality at home, community and public spaces, safety of girls and women, access to skills, credit and work opportunities
- m) Child security, safety and good parenting, nutrition and health, learning and training for child care
- n) Rural Marketing, market research, designing opportunities for rural artisans and crafts, new products based on demand assessment
- o) Community Based Research in Rural Settings, undertaking research that values local knowledge, systematises local practices and tools for replication & scale-up
- p) Peri-urban development of informal settlements, mapping and enumeration, design of local solutions

2.4 Undertaking research in partnership with local community

If a mutually beneficial partnership with local communities and institutions—business, government, civil society--- is built, community university research partnerships may become supportive of new knowledge and its use.⁸ Many students and faculty undertake

⁷ http://unescochair-cbrsr.org/pdf/resource/BHALL_Community_Based_Research_ENG_Dec13.pdf

⁸ https://www.pria.org/uploaded_files/article_category/1446926999_CURP%20Book.pdf

research in the field. However, such research is currently carried out only to advance the research interests of the students and faculty. Research questions can be framed in partnership with local community so that new knowledge thus produced can provide solutions to local challenges.

In addition, most researchers—students and faculty—generally assume that community does not have much knowledge on the subject of their research interests. Such an orientation is largely based on ignorance of local expertise and knowledge available with the community and other practitioners. Undertaking research in partnership with local communities can access local knowledge and further contribute to new knowledge solutions. Local community can be involved as co-researchers in data-collection and sharing of results.

In several countries, governments incentivise community engagement through additional funding for HEIs. Indonesia and South Africa have developed extensive programmes in this regard. Canada's Social Science & Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) began a separate research funding stream focusing on Community –University Research Council (CURA). "Recognising the significance of the theme of social responsibility in higher education, UNESCO has instituted a Chair on Community based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education (www.unescochaircbr-sr.org)

There is a large body of knowledge on community-based participatory research (CBPR) already in practice in India, and internationally. Use of CBPR methodology generates locally appropriate knowledge solutions, as well as disseminates new knowledge for generating awareness and taking actions to improve the situation in light of that new knowledge⁹

Pt Ravi Shankar Shukla University Raipur is undertaking such CBPR on issues of women's empowerment jointly agreed with local tribal community and State Planning Commission. It is a part of a global consortium on Knowledge4Change (K4C). K4CConsortium)

In addition, undertaking research in partnership with local community helps in documenting and systematising local knowledge generated through years of practice and experience. **Centre for indigenous knowledge in agriculture - (CIKA)** at Gandhigram Rural University is set up to document, analyze, validate, standardize and further propagate the Indigenous Knowledge/ Practices in Agricultural and allied fields under various farming systems of Tamil Nadu. Likewise, Centre for Society-University Interface (CSUIR) at BPS University undertook documentation of local Ayurvedic practices for treatment of animals and propagated the same.

In order to promote the practice of sustainability in the infrastructure and functioning of HEIs, it can undertake research in partnership with local communities to reduce energy and carbon consumption. Such partnership research can also help recycle water and waste in ways that are locally useful by communities around them.

When HEIs undertake research in partnership with local communities and other institutions, they can improve the relevance and quality of their research. Local governments, district administration, local business and NGOs can all benefit from

research undertaken by students and faculty of HEIs, if it is undertaken in partnership with them. Students thus gain a sense of satisfaction about their research making a useful contribution to society through community engagement.

In line with this framework, the NEP 2020 has made a strong recommendation to produce locally relevant knowledge to address India's needs:

"The societal challenges that India needs to address today, such as access for all its citizens to clean drinking water and sanitation, quality education and healthcare, improved transportation, air quality, energy, and infrastructure, will require the implementation of approaches and solutions that are not only informed by top-notch science and technology but are also rooted in a deep understanding of the social sciences and humanities and the various socio-cultural and environmental dimensions of the nation. Facing and addressing these challenges will require high-quality interdisciplinary research across fields (pg 45)."

Internships with various local agencies can be an effective mechanism of undertaking field research which is locally relevant and can contribute to local development and provide feedback for effective implementation of various development schemes of the governments.

3. Implementation Strategy

A national workshop for discussing the framework of "Socially responsible" teaching and research through extensive community engagement was organized by UGC during January 21-22, 2020 at IUAC, New Delhi. More than 125 participants (including UBA coordinators) from various universities and colleges participated (see Report in Annexure).

Further implementation of this initiative was disrupted due to the pandemic and consequent lock-down of all educational institutions, including colleges and universities. The Expert Group deliberated on taking forward the recommendations from the National Workshop after that.

The launch of new National Education Policy (NEP) in July 2020 gave new recommendations for making higher education relevant to society. The experience of the Covid virus spread had demonstrated the active engagement of students, faculty and staff of several HEIs in voluntary community service, from food relief, to migrant support to preventive health care and also curative hospital care.

The Review Committee set up by UGC to review this initiative in light of NEP made some critical recommendations (see Report of Review Committee). The Subject Expert Group then deliberated upon these recommendations in light of NEP and the prevailing pandemic situation in the country.

This revised Implementation Strategy has resulted from the above process.

1. For implementation of this initiative, building capacity of teachers is critical. Additionally, the context of community engagement varies greatly in different regions of this diverse country. Therefore, Regional Centres must be identified and supported by UGC to act as regional hubs for anchoring implementation of this important initiative.
2. Each Regional Centre should undertake Training of Master Teachers who would begin piloting this course. Such training should include teachers

from all faculties, disciplines and types of HEIs (including colleges and specialized technical institutions too).

3. A centrally designed faculty development programme for Capacity Building of Master Trainers in Community-based Participatory Research (CBPR) should be conducted at each Regional Centre regularly to prepare teachers for conducting field-based, community engagement component of the compulsory course.
4. An online module should be prepared, which provides information about the various content areas, especially government schemes and development programmes being implemented for the poor and vulnerable rural and urban households, youth and women.
5. This online module for one credit should be complemented with field –based practical engagement activities as outlined in this report. Master Trainers will pilot such teaching in their respective HEIs immediately after training at Regional Centres by UGC Expert Group.
6. A separate one credit MOOC can be prepared using the contents developed above, which students can take on their own self-study mode.
7. Each regional centre will maintain & update a learning platform which includes teaching/learning materials as resources in the region. Practical experiences of teachers from the field can be documented, especially in local languages, and shared widely from such platforms.
8. Regional Centres can also maintain data-bases of courses, field-teaching, partnerships with local agencies, teachers trained as Master Trainers such that the course can be scaled-up systematically, based on annual reviews of teaching experiences.
9. As per recommendations of NEP, internships with local agencies can become a method of earning credits while undertaking locally useful field research by students, as a part of their academic achievement. Internships can be undertaken in partnership with Panchayati Raj Institutions (at village, block & district levels), district administration, Nagarpalika/Municipality and other ULBs departments, local business associations, local NGOs and other development partners.
10. UGC must support a national knowledge platform on Community Engagement & Social Responsibility, which can periodically synthesise and systematize field case studies and create primers, manuals and collections of teaching aids. UGC can begin to contribute to development of a field of study on Community Engagement & Social Responsibility in Higher Education through organizing periodic national conferences, publications of books and encouraging/supporting focused research in this field, based on rich Indian experiences.

11. National accreditation agencies (NAAC, NBA,) and National Ranking Framework should include explicit indicators and weightage of community engagement in teaching and research, as proposed in this document. This will encourage HEIs to undertake community engagement seriously.
12. MHRD should ask all 15 Statutory Professional Councils to take urgent note of the recommendations of this national framework on fostering social responsibility in HEIs and align curriculum and pedagogy of those professional courses to these recommendations soon.
13. Faculty assigned to operationalise & implement these recommendations should be provided additional API scores to sustain their motivation and professional progression. Community engagement activities in teaching and research, as recommended in this national framework, should be given sufficient weightage in professional evaluation of teachers, researchers and administrators.
14. MHRD may request Ministry of Corporate Affairs to include activities undertaken for fostering social responsibility and community engagement by HEIs under the list of eligible areas for receiving funds for CSR.
15. UGC may forward this National Framework to Ministry of Rural Development, Govt. of India with a request that HEIs are involved in research, monitoring and training functions for various development and welfare schemes of the national and state governments.
16. Likewise, UGC may approach Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs to request that MPLAD/MLALAD funds are made available to HEIs in their constituencies to implement various proposals included in this document.
17. UGC may support a national centre to facilitate knowledge sharing, professional learning and continuous monitoring of this national framework and its recommendations. Such a centre can undertake systematic documentation of good practices and undertake new publications and convene national and international conferences to further support this initiative for 'fostering social responsibility and community engagement by HEIs in the country.

Annexure – 1: Composition of the UGC SEG

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UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMISSION

QUALITY MANDATE

concept, and application

Improve the
graduate
outcomes

Promote student
linkages with
society and
industry

Train students
in professional
& soft skills

Teacher
Vacancy not to
exceed 10
% of sanctioned
strength

All HEIs to
obtain
minimum
NAAC score of
2.5 by 2022

-
1. Student Centric Initiatives including Induction Programme for students - *Deeksharambh*.
 2. Learning Outcome based Curriculum Framework (LOCF)- revision of curriculum at regular intervals.
 3. Use of ICT based learning tools for effective teaching-learning process including MOOCs and online degrees.
 4. Imparting Life Skills (*Jeevan Kaushal*) to students.
 5. Social and Industry connect for every institution: Every institution shall adopt at least 5 villages for exchange of knowledge and for the overall social/ economic betterment of the village communities. University-Industry linkages to be promoted to improve employability.
 6. Evaluation Reforms-test the

improve the graduate outcomes for the students to ensure that they get access to employment/self-employment or engage themselves in pursuit of higher education.

promote linkage of students with the society and industry to ensure that at least 2/3rd of the students engage in socially productive activities and get industry exposure during their period of study in the institutions.

train the students in essential professional and life skills such as team work, communication skills, leadership skills, time management skills etc; inculcate human value and professional ethics, and the spirit of innovation/ entrepreneurship and

7. Student Career Progression and Alumni Network.

ICT based Tools
Online Learning

8. Faculty Induction Programme (FIP), Annual Refresher Programme in Teaching (ARPIT) and Leadership Training for Educational Administrators (LEAP).

Mentoring of non-accredited Institutions (PARAMARSH)
Quality research by Faculty (CARE STRIDE)
Faculty Induction Programme (FIP) & ARPIT

9. Scheme for Trans-disciplinary Research for India's Developing Economy (STRIDE) and Consortium for Academic & Research Ethics (CARE).

10. Mentoring of non-accredited institutions

(PARAMARSH

critical thinking among the students and promote avenues for display of these talents.

ensure that vacancies of teaching posts at any point of time do not exceed 10% of the sanctioned strength; and 100% of the teachers are oriented about the latest and emerging trends including ICT in their respective domains of knowledge, and the pedagogies that disseminate their knowledge to the students.

every institution shall get NAAC accreditation with a minimum score of 2.5 by 2022.

Social and Industry

connect

Regular Curriculum Revision (LOCF)
Deeksharambh-Student Induction Programme
Life Skills for Students (Jeevvan Kaushal)

Evaluation Reforms

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