

The Deloitte logo is positioned in the top left corner of the page. It features the word "Deloitte" in a bold, black, sans-serif font, followed by a small green dot.

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The background of the top half of the page is a photograph of a modern library interior. Large, white, dome-shaped pendant lights hang from the ceiling. In the foreground, several blue ergonomic chairs are arranged around a light-colored wooden table. A woman with long dark hair and glasses is seated at the table, looking down at a laptop. In the background, tall white bookshelves are filled with books. Some shelves have labels like "D1", "D3", "D5", "D7", and "D9".

IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT

Library and Archives at Ashoka University

2023

Prepared for:  **HDFC**
WITH YOU, RIGHT THROUGH

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1. Introduction

1.1 About HDFC

Housing Development Finance Corporation Limited (HDFC) is a pioneer in the field of retail housing finance in India. Cumulatively, HDFC has funded over 9 million homes. Through its group companies, HDFC has grown to become a financial conglomerate with presence in banking, asset management, insurance (life & general), real estate, venture capital, and education finance.

HDFC's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives are undertaken through direct partnerships with non-profit organizations and through its primary implementing agency, the H. T. Parekh Foundation (the Foundation). The Foundation is a Section 25 (now Section 8) company incorporated in 2012, to honor the rich legacy of its Founder Chairman, Shri H. T. Parekh.

The H T Parekh Foundation (HTPF) envisions an inclusive India where vulnerable communities have access and opportunity to transform their lives and move from a state of 'surviving to thriving'. HTPF's philanthropic activities are aimed at enhancing the quality of life of people from marginalized and vulnerable communities and creating a stronger and inclusive India. The support given to Ashoka University to build a new Library and the Archives is an effort to contribute towards the development of a core academic resource within a premier higher education institute in the country, with the potential to impact the quality of learning of both current and future students at the University.

1.2 About Ashoka

Ashoka University is a leading university in India that has a prime focus on liberal arts. It has been recognized as a private university by the Haryana state in 2014 and complies with rules of the University Grants Commission (UGC). It is a project run under the aegis of the International Foundation for Research and Education (IFRE). The growth of Ashoka has been co-led by the coming together of leading philanthropists, corporate donors, academicians, and a carefully selected student body. With over 189 founders, both individuals and organizations from India's leading institutions, the university has benefitted from several industry stalwarts. The core group includes stalwarts in the field of academia, entrepreneurship, private equity, philanthropy and venture capital. The founding trustees included Ashish Dhawan, Pramath Raj Sinha, Sanjeev Bikhchandani and Vineet Gupta, who joined forces in 2008 to build what we know today as Ashoka University.¹ Ashoka University aspires to provide students the opportunity to become well-rounded individuals who express their capability to think critically using a multi-lens approach, communicate effectively and become leaders with a commitment to public service. The University also lays equal importance to the development of foundational knowledge through academic research and rigorous pedagogy along with practical experience through real-world exposure. Ashoka has been a leading choice for students searching for a multi-disciplinary, integrated liberal arts undergraduate programme. The interdisciplinary approach of Ashoka University provides the student community with a variety of choices to advance their career, including Ashoka's Young India Fellowship (YIF) and Global Education Programmes which prepare students to become future ready. The University is currently offering undergraduate degrees, masters, and PhD programmes in the Sciences (pure sciences including Computer Sciences), Humanities and Social Sciences.²

Amalgamation of sciences with humanities and social sciences has created several unique interdisciplinary research opportunities at the university which is reflected in the institution's 14 centers of research including the Center for Climate Change and Sustainability, Center for Economic Data and Analysis, Center for Entrepreneurship, Center for Social and Behavior Change, Center for Writing and Communication, Science Policy Initiative and Trivedi Center for Political Data.³

Aiming towards maintaining a global outlook and ethos of collaboration, Ashoka University emphasizes international partnerships. The University has fostered mutually beneficial partnerships with prestigious universities across the

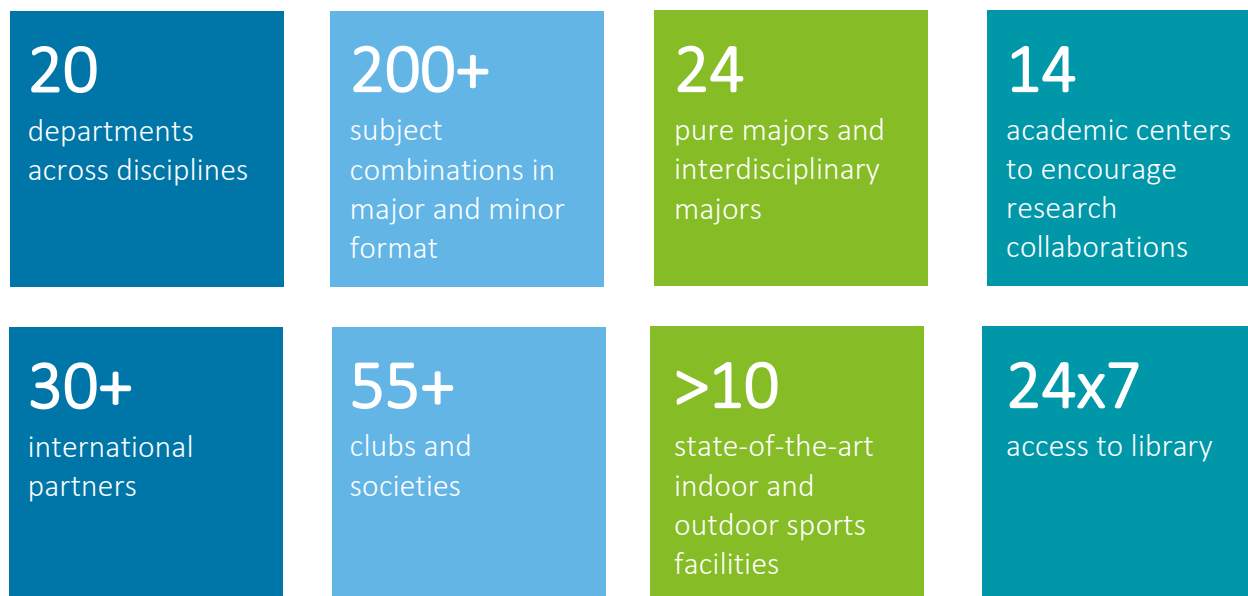
¹ Applicant Brochure (2002), Ashoka University

² www.ashokha.edu

³ www.ashoka.edu

globe, including Harvard University, King’s College London, Amherst College, Cornell University, Duke University, HEC Paris, London School of Economics and Political Science, Sciences Po, Stanford University, University of Cambridge, University College London, Yale University, among many others. Through such collaborations, Ashoka aims to provide its students opportunities for research collaborations, short term study opportunities, and joint programmes to become emerging leaders of tomorrow.

ASHOKA IN A SNAPSHOT



Data source: Ashoka University Annual Report 2021-2022, Ashoka University website

1.3 Scope of Work

HDFC Limited granted an amount of **INR 60 crores** from FY 2019-2020 to FY 2021-2022 for the construction and set up of a Library and Archives in South Campus (Phase 1) at Ashoka University. The library and archives are housed within the marquee Library and Archives Building of Ashoka University, a premium building that houses several facilities and spaces, and was envisaged to enhance the learning and teaching experience at the University. The construction of the new Library and Archives Building was completed in FY 2021-22. The new Library and Archives is a key educational and research infrastructure and houses several important amenities, which include – the Library, the Archives of Contemporary India, lecture rooms, café, library, conference room, the Black Box Theatre and gallery, faculty offices, workstations, and meeting rooms.

Project Title: Grant support for constructing Library and Archives Building



Investment: INR 60 cr.



Project Location: Sonipat, Haryana



Project outreach:

3,022 students

200 faculty
members

Library and other
non-teaching staff

Research scholars

Deloitte Touche Tohmastu India Limited Liability Partnership (DTTILLP) was approached by HDFC Ltd. to undertake an impact assessment of the grant support provided for the construction of a Library and Archives Building, to gain a holistic understanding of Ashoka University.

Impact of Library and Archives at Ashoka University

- Benchmarked to international and Indian universities
- Interactions with implementing team
- Post-development changes, advantages, and improvements (resources, research and so on)
- Impact on Ashoka's research and learning capacity
- Experience and feedback of beneficiaries

1.4 The Relevance

India's population remains young, as 52% of the population is below 30,⁴ with an estimated population aged between 18 to 23 years to be around 150 million.⁵ India's higher education system is the world's third largest in terms of students, after China and the United States. Despite growing investment in education, 25% of the country's population is still illiterate, and a mere 7% are graduates.

As per the New Education Policy of 2020, the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) is to be set up to regulate higher education. The primary goal of the Council will be to increase gross enrollment ratio. One of the four verticals of the Higher Education Grants Council (HEGC) will be responsible for funding and financing colleges and universities.⁶ This sets focus on increase in enrollments and improvement in the realm of higher education in India.

Furthermore, the role of private stakeholders has taken a pivotal role in the sphere of education. This is evident from the involvement of said stakeholders in higher education. Presently, more than 60% of higher education institutions in India are promoted by the private sector.⁷ This has led to accelerated establishment of institutes. In turn, making India home to the largest number of higher education institutions in the world, with the second highest student enrolments.⁸

There has been an increase in the number of universities from 20 in 1950 to 677 in 2014.⁹ Despite these numbers, international education rating agencies have not placed many of these institutions within the best of the world ranking. A crucial element lacking in several educational institutes is the presence of high-quality infrastructure such as libraries, lecture rooms, conference rooms, and other equipment that can truly govern and positively influence student outcomes.¹⁰ Several studies provide strong evidence of a correlation between the quality of infrastructure and improvement in student outcomes and dropout rates among other advantages¹¹ which makes it an imperative focal point for institutes to draw attention towards infrastructure. Thereby, the provision of libraries emerges as a vital organ to the system of university education.

Out of the many educational infrastructures, libraries serve as the backbone of institutions functioning as critical centers of knowledge. University libraries play an important role in facilitating research scholars, students, and teachers at all levels of education generally and at higher education particularly.¹² The role of libraries has been particularly acknowledged and considered crucial in the Indian discourse, evident through a plethora of discussions centered around the same. Notable researchers in Indian library sciences have put forth the five laws of library which

⁴ "Telling Numbers: Over half of India's population is still under age 30, slight dip in last 5 years", The Indian Express, August 11, 2022.

⁵ Sheikh, "Higher Education in India: Challenges and Opportunities," Journal of Education and Practice 8, no. 1 (2017): p. 41.

⁶ Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development, *National Education Policy 2020*, 2020.

⁷ Sheikh, "Higher Education in India: Challenges and Opportunities," p. 39.

⁸ Sheikh, "Higher Education in India: Challenges and Opportunities," p. 39.

⁹ Sheikh, "Higher Education in India: Challenges and Opportunities," p. 39.

¹⁰ World Bank Group (2019). The Impact of School Infrastructure on Learning.

¹¹ World Bank Blogs (2017). Why education infrastructure matters for learning.

¹² Ali, Nusrat; Shoaib, Muhammad; and Asad, Dr. Iqbal Hussain, "Research is a Scientific Capital: The Role of University Libraries in Higher Education Institutions" (2021). Library Philosophy and Practice. 5116.

need to be acknowledged and pursued every time: 1. Books are for use; 2. Every reader his/her book; 3. Every book its reader; 4. Save the time of reader and staff; 5. Library is a growing organism.¹³ The Review Committee on Library Science Education of 1965, and the Kothari Commission of 1964-66 indicate towards the most critical discussions centered around the discourse. Former refers to the committee set up for the improvement of standard of Library and Information Science and formation of independent library science departments.¹⁴ Furthermore, latter stressed on positive steps to modernize the framework of library and development of university libraries.¹⁵ A recent National Mission on Libraries Committee of 2012 formulated the scheme for upgrading the libraries, including the creation of National Virtual Library of India.¹⁶

The emphasis indicates toward the quantitative as well as qualitative standards of libraries with respect to higher education. Therefore, libraries play important roles in gauging admirable knowledge and information from books, periodicals, magazines, manuscripts, archives, articles, standards, reports, Government resolutions etc.¹⁷ These centers of knowledge offer ample opportunity and space for students to learn and provide an excellent environment for research.

A library is considered as the heart of any educational institution offering higher education¹⁸. Conversely, the situation of university libraries is different due to lack of technology and unavailability of internet facilities in the developing world.¹⁹ Albeit recognized as a foundational infrastructure and an indicator of quality education, libraries in institutions providing higher education often suffer from inadequate support and financing. Considering these realities, the support towards Library and Archives at Ashoka University emerges as a prime means to attain and match international standards. It aids expansion into diversified disciplinary areas and meets the needs of the growing student body.

¹³ Chaudhari, "The Role of Library in Higher Education," *Scholarly Research Journal for Humanity Science & English Language* 6, No. 26 (2018): p. 7617.

¹⁴ Librarianship Studies and Information Technology website - <https://www.librarianshipstudies.com/> accessed on 31st March 2023

¹⁵ Chaudhari, "The Role of Library in Higher Education," p. 7619.

¹⁶ Librarianship Studies and Information Technology website - <https://www.librarianshipstudies.com/> accessed on 31st March 2023

¹⁷ Bhavanishankar B, "Role of University Library in Higher Education," *Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research* 5, no. 7 (2018): p. 57.

¹⁸ Chaudhari, "The Role of Library in Higher Education," *Scholarly Research Journal for Humanity Science & English Language* 6, No. 26 (2018): p. 7616.

¹⁹ Ali, Nusrat; Shoaib, Muhammad; and Asad, Dr. Iqbal Hussain, "Research is a Scientific Capital: The Role of University Libraries in Higher Education Institutions" (2021). *Library Philosophy and Practice* (e-journal). 5116.

2. Approach and Methodology

2.1 Study Design

The study adopted a dual-pronged approach to gain a holistic understanding of the impact of the project parameters of the support provided through the Library and Archives. The study incorporated benchmarking with globally renowned Indian and international universities. Our approach was consultative and grounded, based on interactions with key stakeholders, aided by focused primary and secondary research along with data analysis, and complemented by domain knowledge.

An impact assessment study of development projects is an analysis of the change, positive and negative, brought about in the lives of intended or unintended beneficiary either directly or indirectly due to the implementation of the said projects. The impact assessment for the current project utilized both qualitative and quantitative research methods to evaluate the impact the project has on the lives of stakeholders. The impact assessment helped in mapping the progress of the programme across the outcomes outlined along with providing recommendations of best practices that can be implemented in future projects of similar nature.

2.1.1 Indicators evaluated for the assessment



2.1.2 Benchmarking exercise

Deloitte adopted a consultative approach for the benchmarking exercise, followed by a thorough desk-based research. The benchmarking with peer and aspiring universities of Ashoka was conducted to understand the competitive advantage of Ashoka over the peer group, identify gaps, and learn from the best practices of other leading universities.

The list of Universities shortlisted for the benchmarking exercise was arrived at through secondary research and desk review of multiple Indian and international higher educational institutes rankings, including the [US News Best Global Universities in India](#), [Times Higher Education's World University Rankings 2022 for Best Universities in India](#) and [National Institutional Ranking Framework India Rankings 2022 for Universities](#).

The selected universities have been filtered based on the ethos, domain, and approach of universities that are like Ashoka University. The recommendations from HDFC Ltd. CSR and Ashoka University were also considered while selecting the universities.

SHORTLISTED UNIVERSITIES

NATIONAL



SHIV NADAR UNIVERSITY



Name of university	Year of establishment	Type of institution	Rationale for selection
Flame University	2014	Private	Flame University focuses on liberal arts education and applies an Interdisciplinary approach to education combining subjects including social sciences, business, design, fine and performing arts, communications management, and computational sciences
Shiv Nadar University	2011	Private	Shiv Nadar University provides a holistic Liberal Arts Education in its graduate and postgraduate programmes
O. P. Jindal Global University	2009	Private	O. P. Jindal University advances liberal arts education with a heavy focus on research and internationalization
KREA University	2018	Private	KREA University is a Liberal Arts institution that utilizes a holistic approach with a focus on interwoven learning
Symbiosis International University	1971	Private	Symbiosis acknowledges the importance of a liberal arts lens to education and utilizes a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary education. The university's prime focus is on management programmes

SHORTLISTED UNIVERSITIES

INTERNATIONAL



Name of university	Location	Year of establishment	Type of Institution	Rationale for Selection
Princeton University	United States of America	1746	Private University	Princeton is an Ivy League research university that uses a Liberal arts approach and has a strong focus on Undergraduate and PhD Programmes
National University of Singapore (NUS)	Singapore	1905	National Public Research University	NUS is a research focused institute providing undergraduate and post graduate degrees in several disciplines ranging from social sciences to medicine
Pompeu Fabra University	Spain	1990	Public University	Pompeu Fabra University is a research university and has a high reputation for subjects including economics, political science, and law
Maastricht University	Netherlands	1976	Public research University	Maastricht is a research university that is focused on internationalization
Australian National University (ANU)	Australia	1946	Public research University	ANU is a research university and is a member of the Group of Eight (Go8), a consortium comprising of Australia's leading research-intensive universities

2.2 Stakeholder Mapping



- Students
- Faculty
- Alumni
- Library Staff
- Leadership Team
- Technical Staff

2.2.1 Field level stakeholder interactions

The assessment was conducted using both qualitative, and quantitative methods. Field visits to Ashoka University campus accounted for the primary research component and were conducted by a team of five members of the engagement team in the third week of January 2023. The qualitative tools employed included focus group discussions, key informant interviews, and case studies. Additionally, survey forms were used to gather feedback from the primary beneficiaries.

- **Focus Group Discussion (FGD)**

A FGD is a qualitative research method used for collecting data in which a homogeneous group of individuals are facilitated by a moderator towards exploring and unearthing a given topic in-depth. The method helps in understanding the thoughts, perceptions, and attitudes of the group on several concerns that allows the

researcher to delve deeper into both the individual experience along with the collective narrative of the group. The FGD utilizes a semi-structured set of questions that guide the discussion where the moderator encourages equal participation to the discussion.

- **Key Informant Interview (KII)**

KII is a tool where the researcher can closely interact with the critical members or “key informants” of the project implementation team. The key informant interview utilizes semi-structured guidelines to gather insights and observations made by the informant on a wide range of concerns related to the project implementation. These observations are then validated across different stakeholders.

- **Survey**

A survey is a research method which involves collecting information or data from a sample of elements drawn from a well-defined population using questionnaire or interview schedules to infer the characteristics of a defined population or universe. In this study, the survey questionnaire was used to understand the feedback of primary beneficiaries impacted by the intervention.

- **Case study**

Case study method is an in-depth study of a particular situation or a subject or refer to study of a small group of persons or events regarding analyzing the same in depth. It is a method used to narrow down a very broad field of research into one easily researchable topic. The case studies look intensely at an individual or small participant pool and draw conclusions only about that participant or group and only in that specific context.

2.3: Sampling Plan

The sampling technique varied basis the population at hand. The assessment employed Random sampling and Purposive sampling for selection of stakeholders.

Data Collection Tool	Stakeholder	Sample	Sampling Method
Survey	Students	290	Random Sampling
	Faculty	85	
Focus Group Discussion	UG Students (group of 10)	1	Purposive Sampling
	PG Students (Group of 10)	1	
	Research Scholars (Group of 10)	1	
Case Studies	Students including International Students, differentially abled, sexual minorities, students from backward/minority communities	10	Purposive Sampling
	Top Scorers from UG and PG		
	Faculties with the greatest number of publications		
	Research Students who have the greatest number of publications		
Key Informant Interviews	Faculties	1/department	Purposive Sampling
	Library staff	5	
	Alumni	5	
	Technical Partners	3	
	Leadership	12	
	Funding partner	1	
Fact Sheet	Library Staff	-	
	Admin Staff	-	

3. Impact Assessment Findings

3.1 Creating a Strong Knowledge Ecosystem

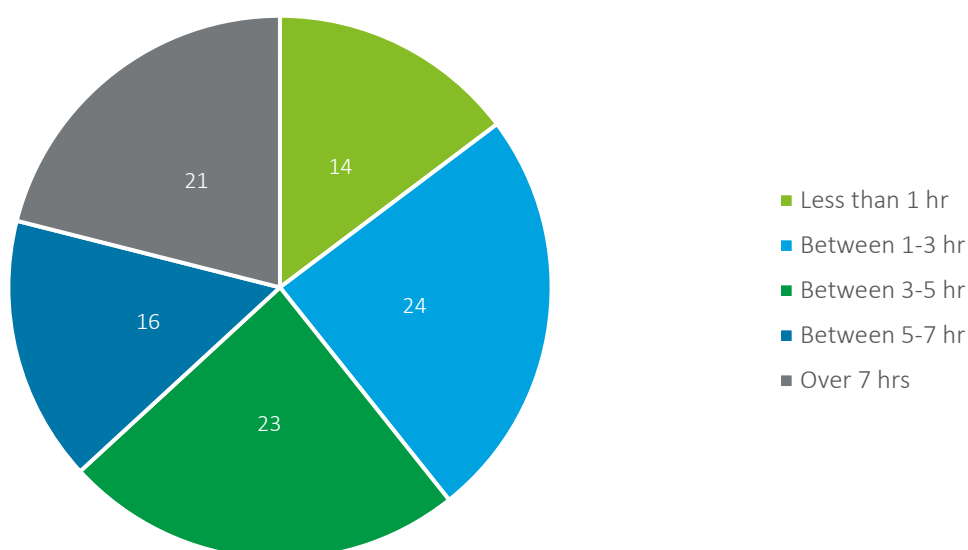
Libraries play a pivotal role in the development of higher education institutions and universities, by serving as networks of information and knowledge sharing. Apart from the functional provision of academic and learning resources, libraries also provide a conducive environment for learning, encouraging the thinking process, creativity, inquisitiveness and developing a more holistic learning experience. Libraries are integral to the process of learning subjects by enhancing one's analytical processes, allowing them to filter and process information and thereby, improving the quality of work and research output. As the library represents one of the major resources for the exchange of ideas, knowledge, and academic resources, it is evident that quality education and research outputs are contingent on modernized libraries.



“The library gives opportunities for students to acquire knowledge, be more curious and engage in research. Overall, it will be a fulcrum of knowledge exchange.”

- Pramath Raj Sinha, Founder and Trustee, Ashoka University

Number of hours spent by students in the library (on a weekly basis)



Data source: Ashoka University Student Survey

3.1.1 Relevance

The activities and functions of a research library hinges on the development, availability, and presence of functional infrastructure. Library infrastructure plays an essential role in facilitating curiosity and learning among its users. Libraries are essential in enhancing student learning outcomes by offering a range of study spaces that suit a wide variety of learning preferences.

Libraries of all type require adequate infrastructure ranging from computer, internet facilities, photocopier, scanner, purpose-built library building, furniture and fittings, lighting among others to keep up with the advances in information and information technology (IT) services.

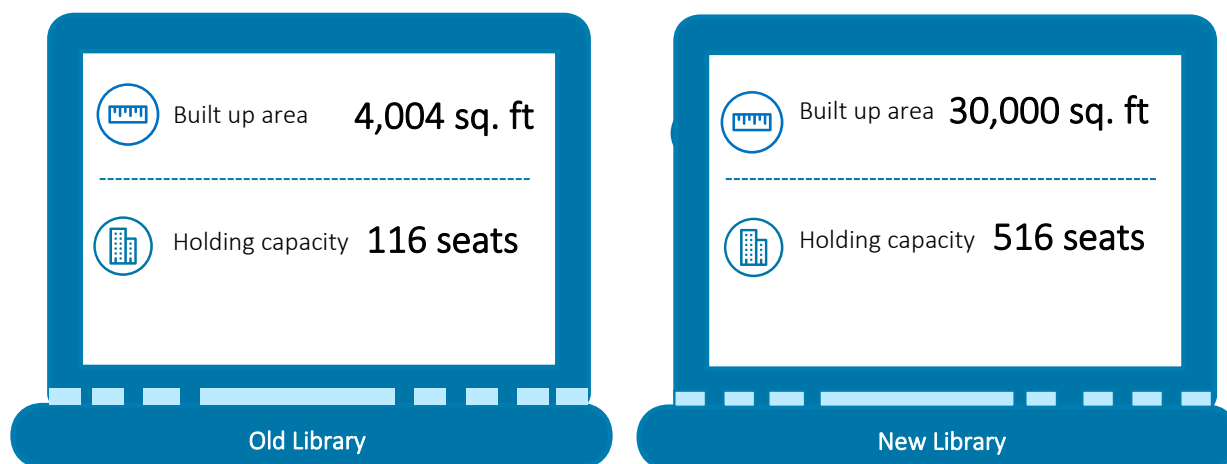
Prior to the setting up of the current HDFC library at Ashoka University, the institution had an existing library in another campus building. However, primary interactions with students and faculty revealed that the old library was unable to meet the requirements of the growing student body at Ashoka.



“During my first year, the common areas were the only place to study in the old library and that too had inadequate space for the growing students. Not a lot of students used this and preferred to study in their rooms or empty classrooms as there was no dedicated study space. The new library has changed this by providing a soothing and conducive environment for working, I end up spending a lot of time there. Although the library has silent areas, it is a casual library and students are allowed to speak and have discussions as well, which creates a good learning atmosphere.”

- Third year undergraduate student at Ashoka University

Library aesthetics, structure and design also play a pivotal role in helping students focus and immerse themselves in the learning process. The earlier library design and architecture comprised of large windows, allowing for large-scale visibility from large sections of the library to the surroundings. This, in turn, have created a distractive environment for students and impede their ability to engage solely on learning.



The development and coming together of the new HDFC library has proved to be immensely useful for the students and research scholars within Ashoka University.



65,000+ printed books



3.97 lacs E-Books

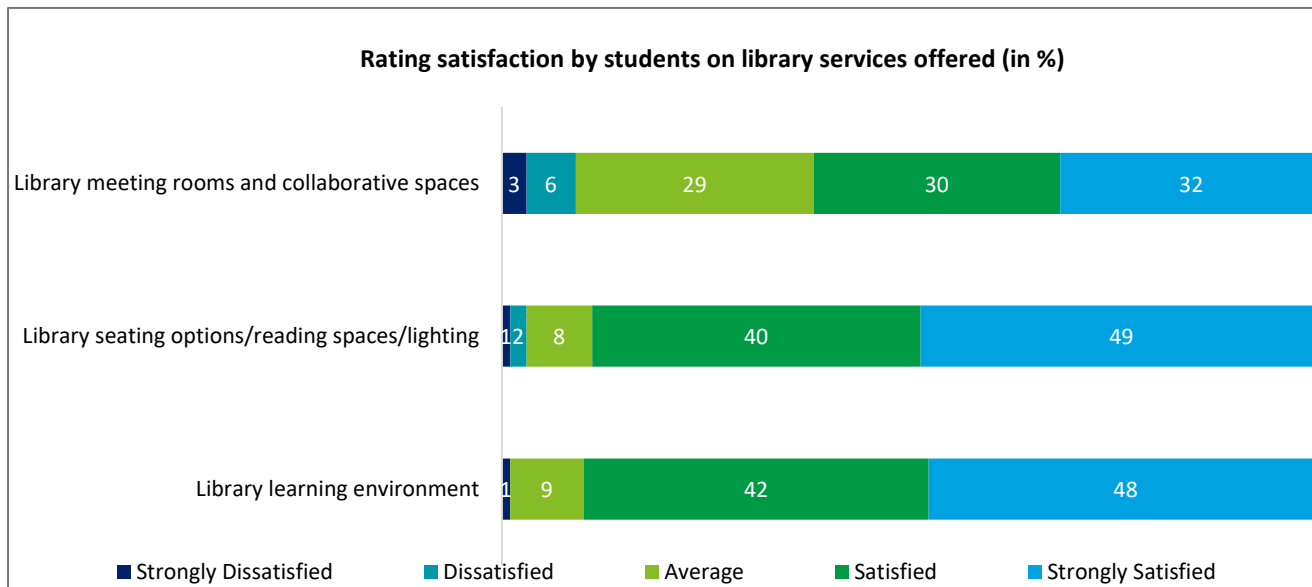


20,000 E-Journals



Image source: Primary field visit to Ashoka University

The new library provides a grander space that allows students to learn, collaborate and study as per their specific learning preferences. The library management recognized the evolving nature of libraries beyond just providing silent areas for individual study and has accommodated a range of learning environments to suit a plethora of study habits. Additionally, student preferences to work late in the night has also led **the library to function as round-the-clock resource, providing students with 24x7 access** to the facility.



Data source: Ashoka University Student Survey

The library provides a range of different learning spaces, including common reading rooms, study pods, research carousels, collaborative spaces for group work, among others. The presence of a larger range of learning spaces and infrastructure allows students to engage in multiple study environments most conducive to their study needs and requirements, thereby allowing for better focus and enhancing quality of learning.

In addition to the provision of reference books, archives, research databases and personal collections, the library also provides an array of services for digital curation, research support & multimedia reference, as well as user-oriented activities, book exhibitions, and training workshops.



“The HDFC library at Ashoka University is my secret getaway where I spend a lot of my time. It is the only quiet place in Ashoka’s busy campus and provides a conducive learning environment. The new library also provides accessible resources such as audiobooks, which help me focus better than long written books and help in multitasking.”

- Student with Special Needs at Ashoka University

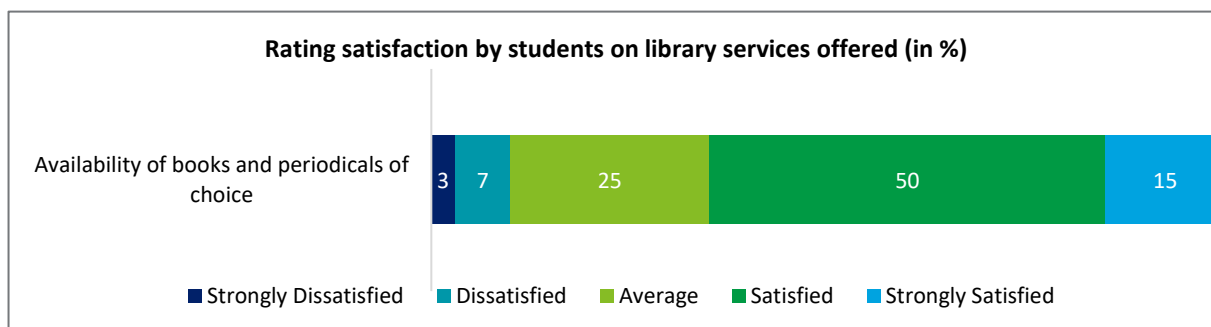
3.1.2 Effectiveness

The evolution of university libraries from merely physically housing knowledge resources to becoming the core of research and teaching for an institution cannot be overemphasized. A university library caters to the needs of higher education institutions and research by serving as a central recourse for information access and dissemination, where a user can consult and acquire desired information under a single roof.

Ashoka University has taken cognizance of this changing nature of the academic library and the multidimensional uses of such a space. The library serves several functions as a catalyst for research and learning as is indicated below.

1. Library as a learning resource

The Ashoka library provides a plethora of resources, including textbooks, references, periodicals, research conducted till date on various subjects to students, teachers, and researchers. It also provides a platform for accessing research materials through the digitization of library resources. Ashoka's e-library is enabled with remote access technology which allows scholars to access the digital resources from anywhere at anytime.



Data source: Ashoka University Student Survey



"Students from the Young India Fellowship have a lot of group work and project work as part of their curriculum. 30% of their curriculum requires them to work in collaboration, requires research and study, putting together reports, surveys, etc. Hence, they have had an active relationship with the library which provides space to do collaborative work."

- Aniha Brar, Dean of the Young India Fellowship and Vice Chancellor's Office,
Ashoka University

The library also serves as a key learning resource through the provision of teaching and learning technologies, including e-learning resource guides for teachers, institutional repositories, data curation for students as well as research support, providing supplementary resources associated with improved learning and teaching outcomes.



176 out of 187 students pursuing their bachelors listed **coursework** as one of the reasons for accessing the library, as compared to 65 mentions of **research**, 63 of **non-academic reading**, and 8 of **group projects**.

Data source: Ashoka University Student Survey



"Libraries initially had a single use of providing a quiet environment to focus and study. Now there are multiple uses for libraries. The role of a library has fundamentally changed, it needs to be adapted for the 21st century."

- Ashish Dhawan, Founder and Trustee, Ashoka University



Survey responses gathered from students attest to the success of Ashoka University's goal of providing world-class services and adapt the library for multidimensional purposes. Students cited coursework as the most frequent reason for accessing the library and its facilities, followed by research. 90% students are reportedly satisfied with the library learning environment being provided, and 64% students are satisfied with the availability of books and periodicals that the library provides. The new library has been fully functional for just over a year and is looking at a long-term approach to build a rich repository of materials over time.

Image source: Ashoka University image repository

2. Ashoka Archives: Capturing contemporary India

Taking the initiative of preserving materials relevant to contemporary India through its archives collection, the International Foundation for Research & Education established the Archives of Contemporary India (ACI) in 2017, the **only private papers archive in a private university in India**.²⁰ The ACI was established with a vision to preserve the rich cultural, social and political heritage of India, through the collection of documents pertaining to economic and political developments in the country and creating a repository of primary source material for the study of contemporary Indian history by making the research material available to the scholarly community at large.

The collections in the ACI at Ashoka University house rare and original documents including handwritten notes, drafts/manuscripts of writings, articles/lectures and speeches pertaining to pivotal moments in India's history. These also include photo archives, video, and audio materials in addition to the analog resources.



Image source: Primary field visit to Ashoka University

²⁰ Ashoka University Archives website

i. State of the art infrastructure

Recognizing the critical importance that archives play in creating an indispensable repository of public affairs and research, Ashoka University has developed a robust and dedicated archival system. The ACI has dedicated an entire floor to the archives collection, occupying **15,228 square feet** of area in the basement of the Library and Archives building.

The collections can be consulted in the Reading Room of the Archives in Ashoka University, Sonipat.

ii. The archival process

Ashoka University has invested heavily in ensuring that the ACI strictly adheres to the highest quality of documentation, cataloging, and preservation of resources.

When acquired, the materials go through a fumigation process using a vacuum air compressor to clean, remove dust, and get rid of any insects that might be present in the records. As a lot of the documents are valuable antiques, the archivists also perform restoration work to preserve the material if required.

The ACI has a dedicated archival room where the contents of the donated material are sifted and catalogued by the archivist team. The ACI has a dedicated team of trained archivists who make a concerted effort to list collections and prepare catalogues for the ready reference of scholars from all around the world. The contents are then stored in an access and temperature-controlled room to prevent ageing-related yellowing or damage of the archival materials.



Image source: Primary field visit to Ashoka University

iii. Private collections

The Archives team engages with prospective donors to facilitate the transfer of private papers to the Archives and has achieved extraordinary growth in the collection of primary source material from all over India. The ACI currently has **over 50 Collections from pre-eminent figures in Indian history**, including the private papers of a former Prime Minister and President of India, eminent diplomats, journalists, authors, environmentalists/wildlife conservationists, historians, activists, artists, etc. A few notable collections have been listed below.

S. Radhakrishnan Papers

These include the **private papers of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan**, donated by his daughter-in-law, Mrs. Indira Gopal, in 2018. The papers are a huge treasure trove of historical material spanning a period from 1920 to 1967, with original documents covering the tenure of three Prime Ministers in post-independent India and the initial years of the Indian republic. Besides correspondence with his contemporaries, the collection also contains material related to his publications, handwritten notes, drafts/manuscripts of writings, articles/lectures and speeches on religion and philosophy. There are also rare books, journals, pamphlets, photographs, and photo albums.

Manmohan Singh Papers

The digital collection, acquired in 2017, was compiled by Dr. Manmohan Singh's daughter, Daman Singh, and document Dr. Manmohan Singh's academic and political career spanning over six decades. There are writings and speeches of Dr. Manmohan Singh that were published in various books and journals including mimeographs during the period 1957-2003. These include writings/papers that relate to the periods before, during and after his term as the Union Finance Minister (June 1991- April 1996). The video recordings include speeches, lectures, interviews, press conferences and various public events by Dr. Manmohan Singh as Prime Minister during 2004 to 2014. The collection also includes a total of 9970 official photographs taken between May 2004 and May 2014. The collection of papers of Dr. Manmohan Singh is an important source material for the study of economic reforms initiated in the 1990s and the subsequent political, social, economic, and foreign policy changes that took place in the country.

Girish Karnad Papers

The papers of Girish Karnad relate to his multitudinous literary and cultural activities spanning over six decades, through personal and travel diaries, notebooks and memoirs, and private papers of his parents. In addition to vital correspondence with Doordarshan, Sangeet Natak Akademi, National School of Drama (New Delhi), Janus Films (New York), and several film and theatre personalities, the collection also contains conference and seminar papers; book reviews, translations, interviews and articles; scripts/manuscripts/drafts of documentaries, telefilms and TV serials; and CDs of films, press clippings and photographs showcasing his contribution to the new wave of progressive Hindi movies and radical Kannada art cinema of the 1970s and 1980s.

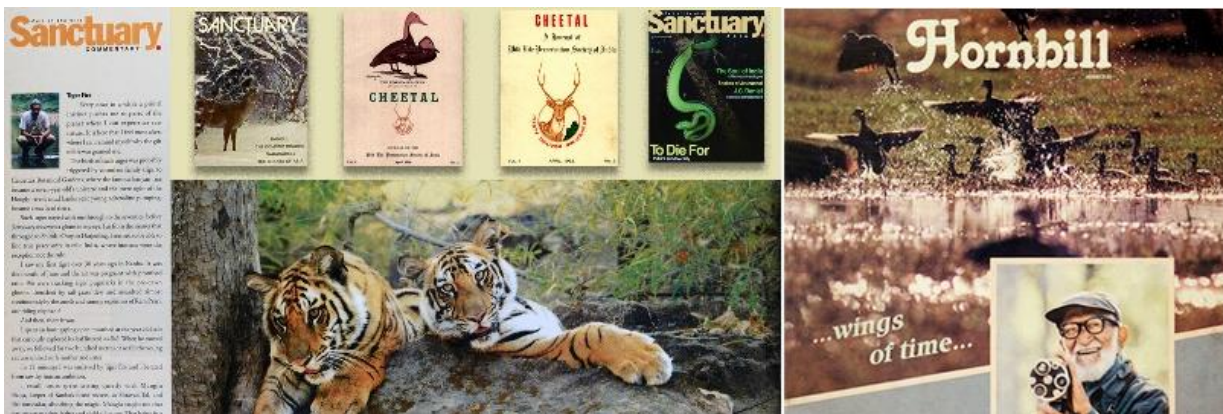
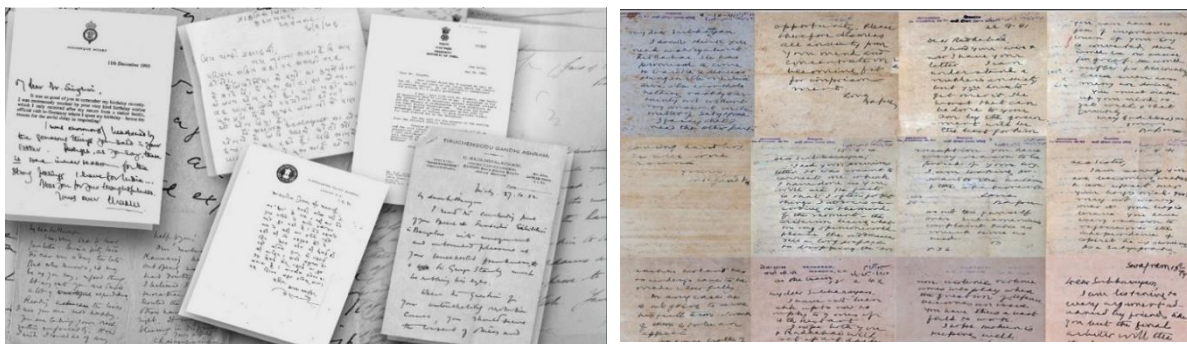


Image source: Ashoka University image repository

iv. Digitization process

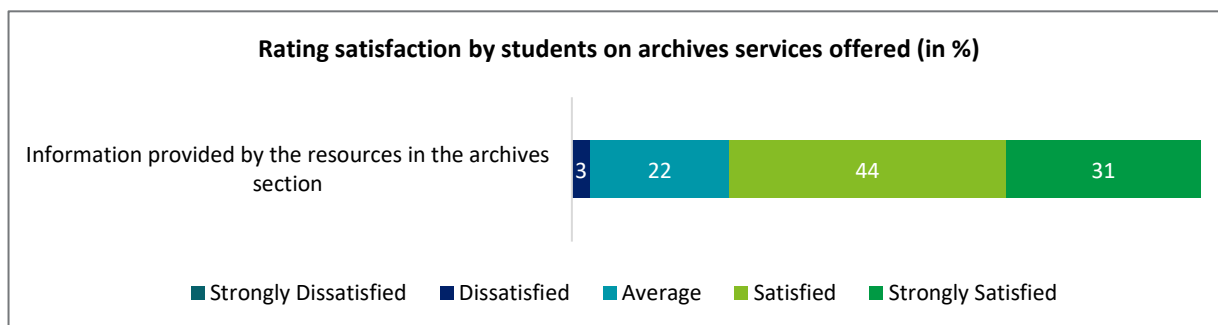
The Archives team not only collects and preserves the collections, but concurrently digitalizing them for preservation, as well as for easier access to scholars from across the globe through the ACI website. Every analog collection is catalogued and digitized in a separate room, with Ashoka University having onboarded external vendors to ensure high resolution digital documentation of the archival collections. The digital

material will be available through a website to interested parties, including students, journalists, and other members of the scholarly community.

v. Archives and Research

Archives play a critical role in supporting learning and research by providing access to primary source materials and providing in-depth analysis of evidence through archival records. Ashoka University strives to enable a robust research ecosystem and have the Archives as a crucial facilitator for content and research, by encouraging the usage of primary source material through innovative use in curriculum. The University actively conducts workshops and training sessions for students to give them practical knowledge of archives and acquaint them with the basic principles of archival management.

Student survey responses attest to efforts undertaken by the Archives team in integrating collections as an accelerator for research, with more than 70% students responding positively to the availability of resources in the archives section. According to respondents, the dissatisfaction has been attributed to the relative dearth of materials pertaining to science and technology fields. Stakeholder consultations with Ashoka leadership and management reveal that this matter has been taken into cognizance and development of sciences and technology related archival material as a major pillar in Ashoka's future pathway, which has been further delved into in the subsequent chapter.



Data source: Ashoka University Student Survey

vi. Expansion of Ashoka Archives

The university aims to build a world-class archives collection, with plans for the subsequent year (FY 2022-2023) including acquiring 10-12 new, high-quality collections.

The archives team aims to digitize approximately 2 lakh pages from different collections, to preserve these materials and make them accessible to researchers across the globe. The team also plans to make approximately 1 lakh documents and photographs available for scholars' consultation on the ACI website, in the next year, for easy accessibility of resources. Furthermore, the digitization endeavor will also include digitization of photographs, audio, and video cassettes from their analog form, with archival polyester covers being prepared using the encapsulation machine for the preservation of old photographs in the collections.

Moreover, Ashoka University strives to organize theme-based exhibitions on the source material available in the archives and increase visibility and scope of the Ashoka University Archives through collaborative lectures, seminars, and workshops by experts in the field.

vii. Collections in vernacular languages

The university also strives for distinctive collections of relevant text in Indian languages, including Urdu, Tamil, etc. to encompass the multicultural diversity of India and Ashoka's student body.

3.1.3 Efficiency

Advances in information and communication technology and widespread use of the internet by users has raised the need to modernize the set-up of academic libraries through the provision of IT related services by universities. Digital libraries combine technology and information resources to allow remote access, breaking down physical barriers, and allowing teachers and students to take advantage of wider ranges of materials and communicate with people outside the formal learning environment.

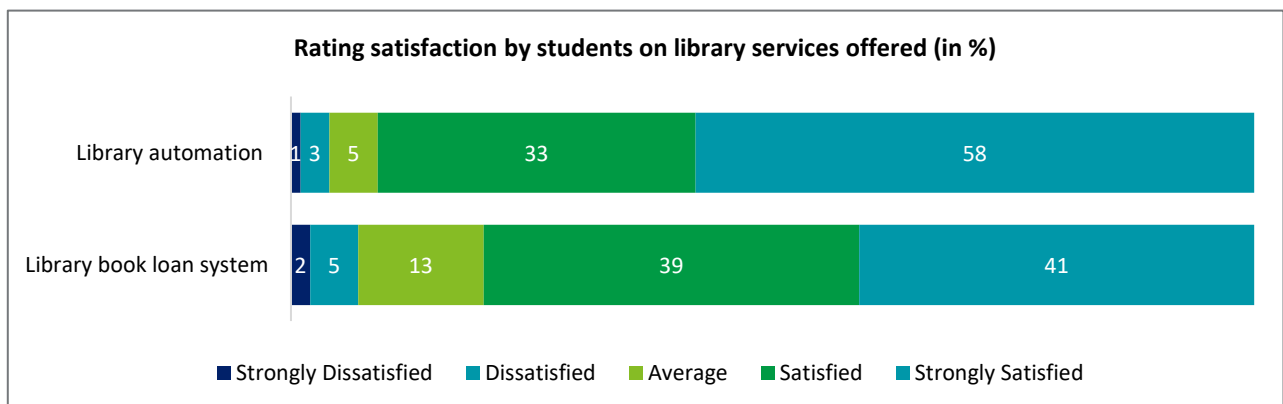


“In order to enhance the library’s function as a training and learning resource, Ashoka University has recently gotten into an agreement to initiate training sessions with Cambridge University in the United Kingdom as well as the Special Libraries Association in the United States to help create a library that is well adapted to the ever-changing education landscape.”

- B.P. Prakash, Director of Library Services, Ashoka University

University libraries have morphed from solely housing and providing access to learning resources. Looking towards the future, an effective library is one that responds to the varying user requirements and actively facilitates a collaborative environment for research and innovation. This includes investment in virtual spaces that complement existing technology, unique collections, and content expertise, and a redefinition of the library space to accommodate the shifting nature of work in new arenas.

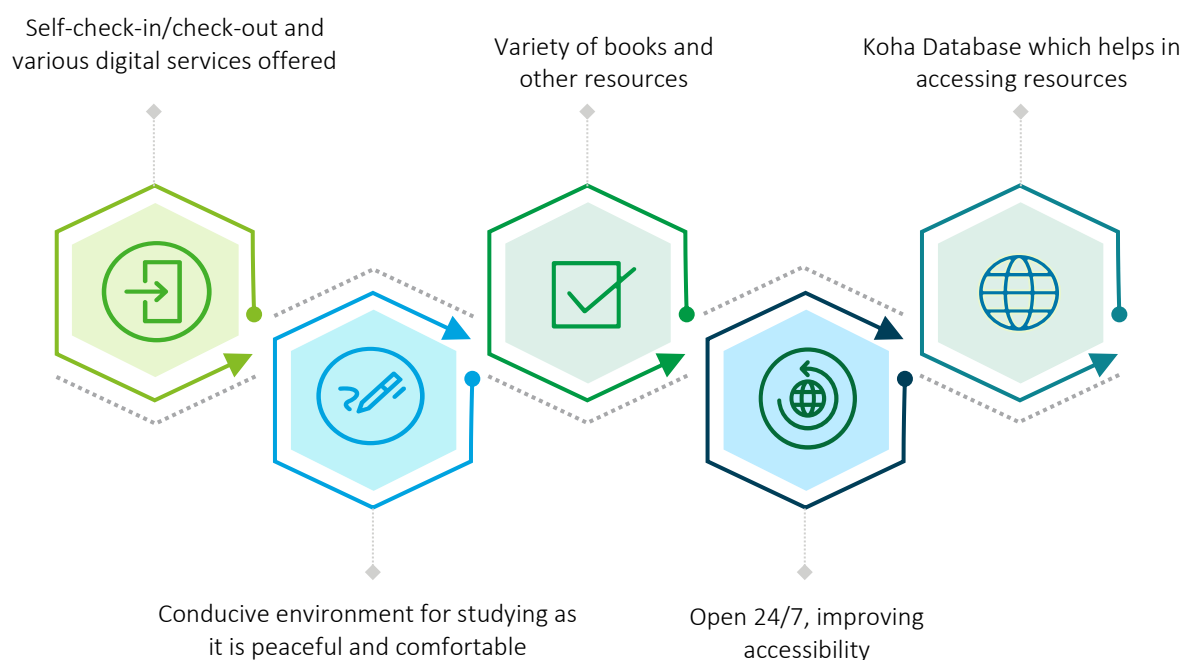
Ashoka University has taken this to the forefront in the development of the new library. Student survey responses recorded high levels of satisfaction from the library infrastructure as well as related features. Almost 57% students are extremely satisfied by the library automation features like self-check-in/check-out machines, RFID gates, touch screens, QR based registration, library software and remote access.



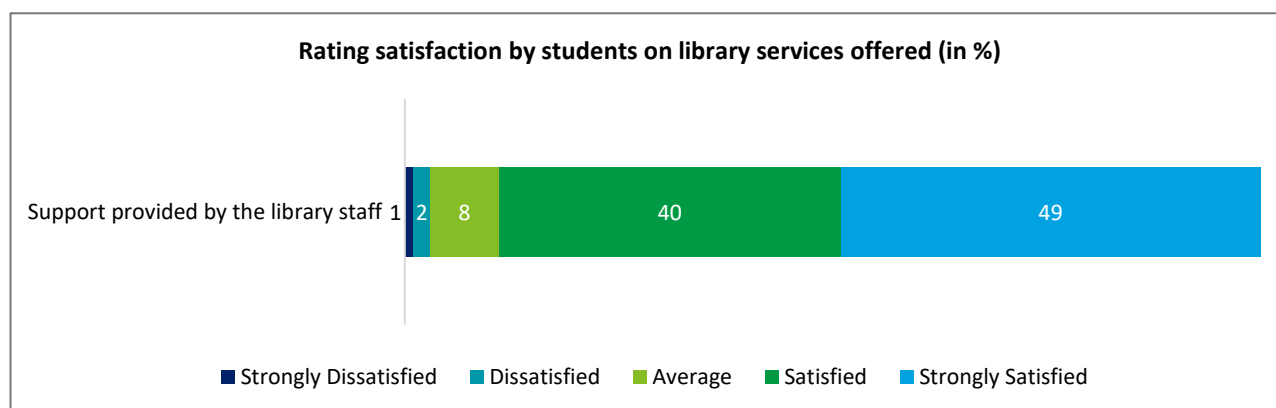
Data source: Ashoka University Student Survey

3.1.4 Replicability

A quality university library cannot be realized without effective management incorporating its organization, the availability of staff, supporting access to Open Access Resources, and effective utilization of digital technologies. The Ashoka University library employs several best practices of library facilities and services that have enabled users to access resources more easily and utilize the available services to their maximum potential. Some of such practices employed by the university library are as follows.



- Ashoka University Library is open 24x7, except Friday evenings when the library is closed due to weekly maintenance. This allows students the flexibility of utilizing the library space as their schedules and/or study habits permit, instead of being confined to a narrow time-bound window
- Ashoka University also undertakes active steps to make the library accessible to all members of the community. The university opens its library and related services to members of the surrounding village in Sonipat so that the children of the community can gain access to the available library resources.
- The University library also upholds the principles of ethical knowledge sharing and respect of information resources through several library services pertaining to bibliography and referencing services, research consultations, workshops on skill development and issues such as copyright.
- The library committee and staff also keep a track of the resource usage, based on which a budget is subsequently prepared to accommodate user needs.



Data source: Ashoka University Student Survey

3.1.5 Impact

On a larger scale, libraries have the potential to become chief repositories of knowledge for researchers and academicians to seek the knowledge generated in a certain geographical sphere and access it globally. Interactions with the Ashoka University leadership gave insight to the institution's mission toward creating an effective library ecosystem, while simultaneously making the library accessible to everyone. Members of the leadership emphasized the need for an open access system in academic libraries that would allow knowledge and research resources to be transferred across physical boundaries. At the core of its vision, Ashoka University aims to provide easy accessibility to all users, by encouraging direct use of the library by alumni or visitors of the University and making it a common resource instead of an exclusive service restricted to Ashoka students.



“The library should not be seen as an ivory tower. The physical and virtual space should be accessible to everyone. When I visited my alma mater in Pennsylvania, I had no access to the library. The university library should be accessible to alumni too, it should be known as a public library.”

- Pramath Raj Sinha, Founder and Trustee, Ashoka University

Ashoka University promotes a culture of collaboration, both through its global partnerships with international educational institutions as well as collaborations with other libraries through DELNET (Delhi Library Network) and JGATE. Moreover, Ashoka University library has also joined hands with other centers within the university such as the Center for Translation, Center for Climate Change, and the Rakesh Jhunjhunwala School of Economics and Finance to assess the individual research and resource requirements that these interdisciplinary centers may require.

3.1.6 University Library

In cognizance of the crucial role that university libraries play towards fostering innovation, knowledge creation and research in the higher education landscape, Ashoka University's Library and Archives was benchmarked against that of the cohort universities, both national and international. Benchmarking at library level undertakes a comparison of Ashoka University's HDFC library with the peer and aspirant university libraries on the parameters such as library infrastructure, library as a learning resource, services and programmes, IT infrastructure and library maintenance.



Ashoka University stands out in terms of library as a learning resource, providing unparalleled facilities, when compared to national universities in the country, offering supplementary learning resources through **access to past exam papers, online access to library resources, and subject specific reading lists.**

Ashoka's library also provides features including **interlibrary loans, automated check-out services, research consultations, library lockers, publishing services**, present in exclusive, modern university libraries such as that of Princeton University, NUS and Maastricht University.

Moreover, Ashoka University presents innovative and best library practices through the provision of **24x7 access of library services to users, and extension of library services to alumni and visitors of the University**, which is a feature that is limited to only alumni in most other cohort universities.

3.2 Ashoka: Institutional Level

Since its establishment in 2014, Ashoka University has witnessed rapid growth as an institution, a reflection of its pedagogical ethos of interdisciplinary education, and core vision of making quality education accessible to all.

3.2.1 Admission and Enrolment

One of the facets at the core of our institution level analysis pertains to the admissions outreach undertaken by Ashoka University. The University takes active steps in increasing institutional outreach, especially in non-metro cities as well as low-income schools, reflecting its goal of increasing in scale, while maintaining a diverse student body that is inclusive of smaller towns and cities, and economically weaker sections of society.

- Ashoka University has witnessed a 31% Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) in enrolments – 905 undergraduate and postgraduate students in 2016-17 to a current student strength of 2,697 in 2021-2022, with a 13% annual increase in undergraduate applications, in the year 2021-22 from year 2020-2021, depicting that the students are drawn to Ashoka in terms of its interdisciplinary pedagogical approach and methodology.



115 students in the 2021-2022 undergraduate batch are first-time college goers from their families, accounting for **6%** of the total batch

On an average, **1 out of every 10 applicants** gets accepted to Ashoka University

Data source: Ashoka University Annual Report 2021-2022, Ashoka University Inclusion, Diversity and Belonging Report 2021-2022

3.2.2 Ashoka faculty

Teaching resources play an important role in shaping an institution, and continuously improving its pedagogical approach and process. Effective deployment and utilization of qualified and diverse faculty can enhance the learning experience by improving the quality of instruction and provision of multiple perspectives. Moreover, student-teacher interactions are also crucial as increased engagement between students and teachers enables educators to meet individual student learning needs and develop effective learning strategies that can improve learning outcomes.



79% of Ashoka full-time faculty have a PhD degree or equivalent

9.7 years of average academic experience for faculty

Data source: Ashoka University Annual Report 2021-2022, Page 92

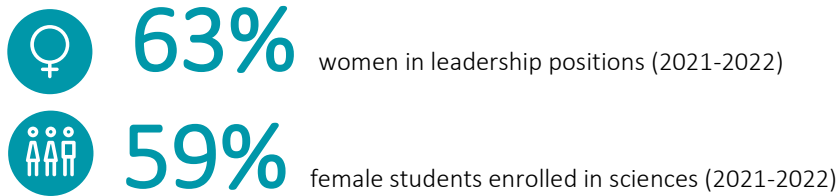
- Despite the large increase in student population, **the student-faculty ratio at Ashoka University has remained constant throughout its operations**, aligning to Ashoka's vision of delivering quality learning and teaching outcomes.
- Ashoka faculty represents **11 countries** globally and include distinguished faculty from prestigious institutions including Harvard, Yale, Stanford, University of Oxford etc.

3.2.3 Diversity and Inclusivity

Diversity in the classroom encompasses a wide range of factors, including but not limited to, differences in gender, socioeconomic backgrounds, learning abilities and student personalities. Diverse and integrated learning environments, consisting of multiple and diverging perspectives, not only inculcates a sense of tolerance and

acceptance toward unique differences, but can also create positive learning outcomes by encouraging deeper learning, critical thinking, creativity and problem-solving.²¹

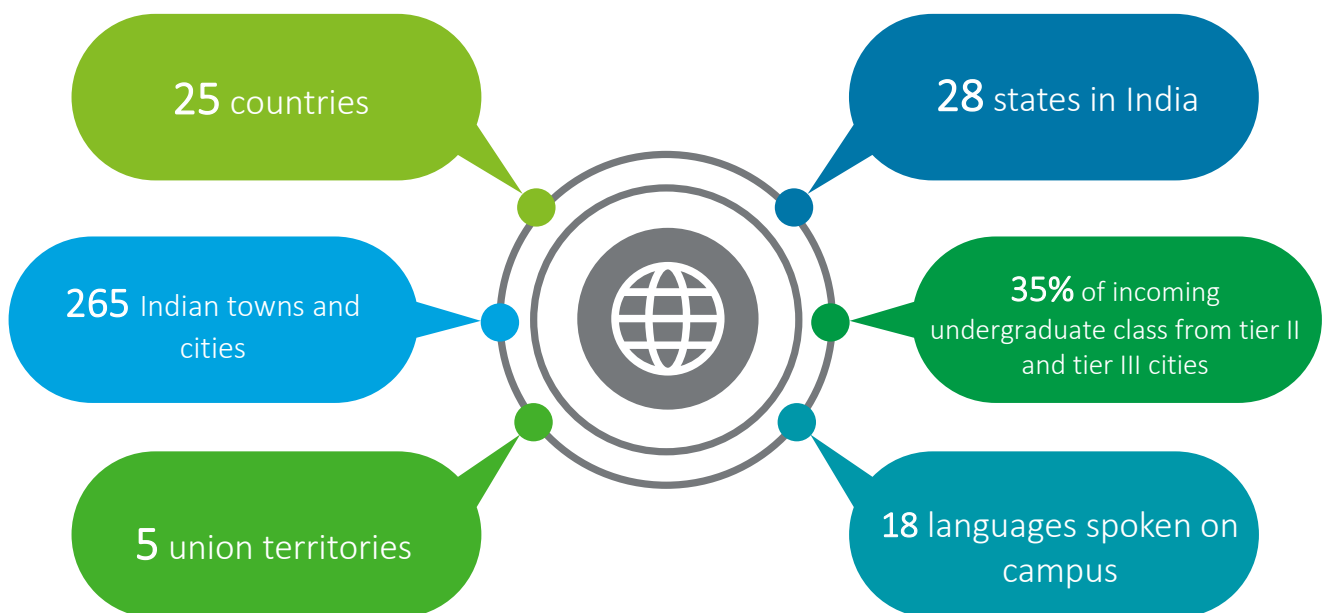
i. Gender Diversity



Data source: Ashoka University Inclusion, Diversity and Belonging Report 2021-2022; Ashoka University Annual Report 2021-2022, Page 92

- During the period 2016-17 to 2021-22, Ashoka has maintained a diverse student body and this trend has continued with **women comprising more than 50% of the student body in both undergraduate and post graduate programmes over the six-year timeline.**
- Among the 1,564 women students at Ashoka, **44% are receiving financial assistance**, which indicates the University's commitment towards increasing gender diversity through provision of financial support.

ii. Student body diversity



Data source: Ashoka University Inclusion, Diversity and Belonging Report 2021-2022, Page 9

²¹ (The Benefits of Socioeconomically and Racially Integrated Schools and Classrooms, The Century Foundation, 2019)



“The quality of faculty, focus on innovation, cross-pollination between sectors and global perspective that Ashoka provides, brings the best of western style education right here in India.”

- International student at Ashoka University

3.2.4 Financial support

Financial support plays an integral role in making quality education accessible to deserving students, irrespective of their socio-economic backgrounds. A core vision of the university is to increase accessibility to education by delinking a student's academic ability from their ability to pay, and it does so through disbursing need-based scholarships and grants to admitted students, both domestic and international.

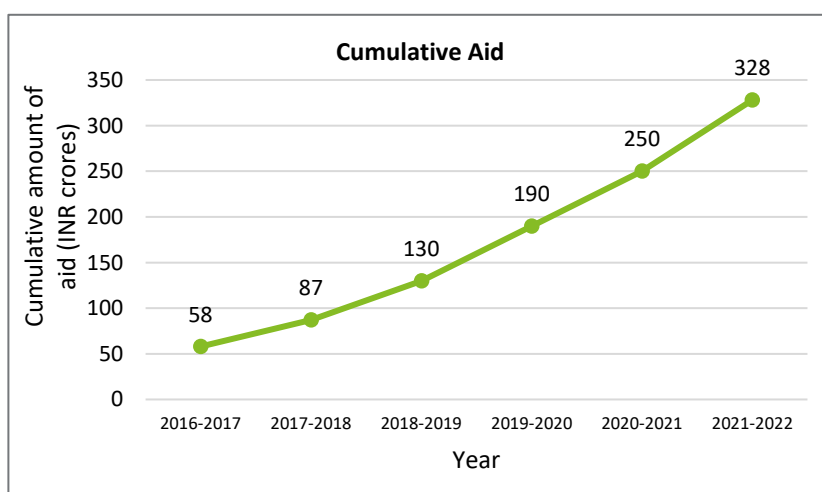
The financial aid model undertaken by Ashoka University started in 2014 and has become the largest financial aid programme in India's higher education space. This has been directly aligned to Ashoka's vision of creating a level playing field for students where finance does not constrain education opportunities.

The financial aid office is a cost function and not a revenue function of the university. It is treated as a cost expense and accounted for on an annual basis as per the academic year.

There are multiple criteria for financial aid being disbursed to students, wherein household income is only one factor. The criteria include a vetting of family background, lifestyle indicators, where the student stays, and any additional explanations that can be provided in the comments section of the application form at the time of admission. Depending upon the student's ability to pay, the university grants financial support, ranging from partial scholarships from 25% of the total tuition fees to 100% scholarships that cover the total cost of tuition, room and boarding, books, digital devices such as laptops, medical insurance, and a monthly stipend of INR 3,000/- for students' miscellaneous expenses.

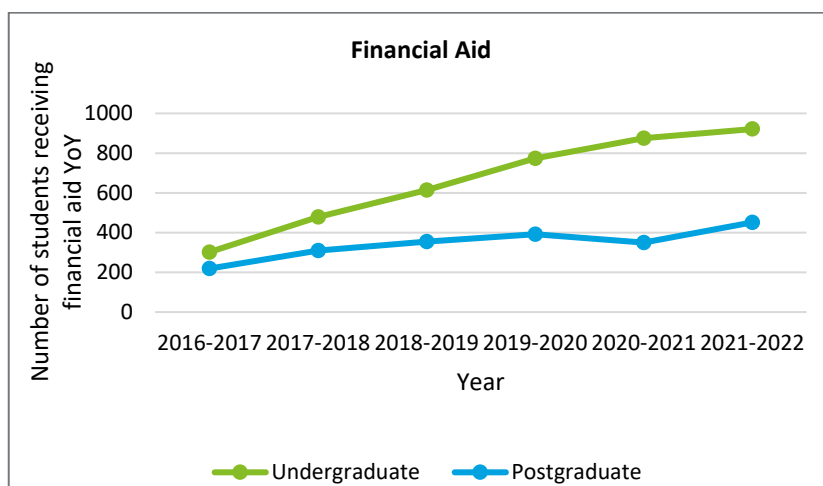
During an academic year, if students require additional support, the quantum of aid can be increased. In case of any gaps in donor funding for student aid, the gap is filled through internal funds provided by the university. Moreover, although students are expected to uphold a certain grade point average (GPA) during the academic session, the disbursement of financial aid is not connected to student learning outcomes. This thereby allows students to focus on schoolwork without the added pressure of potentially losing their awarded scholarship.

The financial aid office also collaborates with College Board, where they support students by paying a fraction of application fees for universities, thereby acting as a facilitator for students pursuing higher education beyond Ashoka as well.



The amount of aid given by Ashoka University has increased by **INR 230 Cr** in just four years.

Data source: Ashoka University Annual Report 2021-2022, Pages 92-93



As of 2021-2022, over half of the students studying at Ashoka University receive aid and scholarship, with **48%** of all undergraduate students and **58%** of all post graduate students receiving financial support.

Data source: Ashoka University Annual Report 2021-2022, Pages 92-93

3.2.5 Student placements

Student placements provide a direct endorsement of the learning outcomes of an institution, reflecting its commitment to not only foster students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills, but also help students develop the necessary industry skills to increase their employability after graduation. The Career Development Office (CDO) at Ashoka University is dedicated to helping students build the necessary toolkit to make them industry ready, while facilitating interactions with recruitment companies through career fairs and workshops. Recruiting companies come to Ashoka University from a wide range of sectors, including consulting, edtech, social sector/think tanks, media, advertising, research, and analytics, among others.



Ashoka University has exhibited an exceptional placement rate, with **100% student placements for 4 out of 6 years**. Despite Covid-19 related disruptions, the university displayed a high placement rate of 87% in the academic year 2019-20, before rising back to 100% in the subsequent year.



Nearly **35%** Ashoka University alumni have opted for a career in the social sector, working with leading non-profit organizations such as **Samagra Governance, Tata Trusts, Antara Foundation, Aarogya International** etc.

Data source: Ashoka University Placements Report 2021-2022

- **336** graduates received placements in 2021-2022, indicating a **100% placement rate across 120 organizations**, including top companies such as Bain & Company, Boston Consulting Group, Inc., Deutsche Bank AG, Hindustan Unilever Limited, among others.
- Recruiter highlights from 2021-2022 reveal that out of the existing recruitment partners, there was a **return of 53 recruiters** for campus recruitment. This thereby implies that Ashoka University maintains quality standards in improving the employability of students and is seen as a preferable recruiting destination.
- Over **20% of companies and organizations return to Ashoka University** every year for new recruitments. This is a significant endorsement of the quality of teaching and the students, more so considering that **an average of 70 new companies join the recruiter pool every year**.
- The overall average compensation increased from INR 8.79 lakhs to INR 10.86 lakhs from 2020-2021 to 2021-22, exhibiting an **increase of 23.5% in compensation**. Despite the covid-19 pandemic's impact on the job market with overall recruiter pool coming to Ashoka reducing to 126 companies, there was an increase in the number of placements with **336** students receiving job offers.

3.2.6 Ashoka Alumni

Alumni relations play a strategic role in the growth and development of higher education institutions by helping expand institutional footprint, both internally and externally. These avenues include alumni being institutional ambassadors, generating invaluable word-of-mouth interest among their social and professional networks, providing guidance and mentorship to current students on career advancement, as well as being future fundraising prospects. Thus, it is very crucial for an institution to develop and strengthen a continuous rapport with alumni. Towards this endeavor, the Alumni Association at Ashoka University is a crucial resource in facilitating alumni-student engagement and creating a broader alumni network to expand the Ashoka community.



With an increase in student strength over the years, Ashoka University's alumni body strength has **quintupled** in six years

Data source: Ashoka University Annual Report 2021-2022, Pages 92-93



- Ashoka's alumni network is spread over **36 countries** and across **175 career paths**
- **4 alumni** students on Forbes 30 under 30 list
- Awarded prestigious scholarships including **Rhodes, Chevening, Fulbright, Yenching** and **Commonwealth**. The distinguished alumni are Ashoka's ambassadors globally

Despite its short journey, Ashoka University has contributed immensely to the larger higher education ecosystem through its alumni and global collaborations with higher educational institutions. Ashoka's short but robust journey so far has placed it among one of the finest liberal arts institutions in the country. Even in the international sphere, Ashoka has proven to stand out on various aspects such as diversity, academic and enrollment competitiveness, as well as quality of student-faculty engagement.

- Ashoka University has a **low acceptance rate of 8%**, placing it amongst the top 3 most exclusive universities in terms of student acceptance among the comparison cohort universities
- The student faculty ratio of Ashoka University, at **11:1 is lower than the average of 15:1** represented by the cohort universities. This demonstrates increased student-teacher engagement and is indicative of Ashoka's strategic approach in maintaining high standards of teaching and learning
- Ashoka is in the lead, along with Pompeu Fabra University and KREA University among the cohort universities, in terms of female student intake

4. The Way Forward

Since its establishment in 2014, Ashoka University has witnessed spectacular growth as an institution, a reflection of its pedagogical ethos of interdisciplinary education and core vision of making quality education accessible to all. As the University aims to continue its growth trajectory, creating a dynamic and flexible knowledge ecosystem centered on collaboration, quality, and innovation becomes critical. The University's focus on an inter-disciplinary approach to education is evident from its flexible and open approach to learning where students are given the time to select their major subjects. The internal processes are driven by defined targets, and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), which sets them apart from other Universities following a traditional approach of day-to-day functioning.

4.1 A 21st century library

Ashoka University is committed to creating a library ecosystem that is continuously evolving to meet the dynamic knowledge landscape.

4.1.1 Analog-Digital hybrid

The library focuses on a hybrid mode of functioning, to cater to both the analog and digital niche of the library. **On the analog front, the University is undertaking active steps to make the physical infrastructure and resources accessible to external students on a registration basis, so that they can visit the premises and utilize the available facilities.**

The library also aims to deliver content in an electronic format as a mode of going paperless and reducing paper dependency. **The library aspires to expand open access to various databases and develop collaborations with more research institutions over time, reflecting its vision of making quality resources available to users from across the globe.**

4.1.2 Focus on research and science

Along with promoting exemplary Social Sciences education, Ashoka University is making a conscious effort to develop the Pure Sciences vertical as well. While most students appreciate and find value in the variety of books offered, students of pure sciences find themselves with limited options to access journals/books in their specific subjects. Till recently, a major volume of books at the library pertain to the social sciences and humanities. However, focus is now being given to physical and life sciences as well. Interactions with library staff revealed that sciences materials require significant capital investment and will thus require time in terms of building up as a resource in the library. **However, as the University aims to strengthen its research and science capabilities, a major focus of the library is to increase the acquisition of high-quality scientific journals and periodicals.**

4.4 The 10-year vision

Ashoka University strives to continue providing broad spectrum knowledge and emerge as a leading research and teaching university in terms of multidisciplinary, holistic education. **The goal is to be a pioneer in this domain and provide a replicable example for new universities to develop a similar pedagogical model, as well as traditional universities to also look at morphing into this interdisciplinary model of education.**

As the University continues to expand, an ongoing technical challenge pertains to the adequate availability of high-quality resources to sustain and grow library's ongoing operations. The University will need to continue to employ multiple strategies to combat this resource issue, which is an omnipresent challenge among higher educational institutions of learning. Leadership and management interactions have given further insight into the University's goal of building networks among other undergraduate research institutes to create a repository of shared resources that can be accessed by members of the network,

similar to ecosystems created in larger, established institutes such as Indian Institution of Technology (IIT). Moreover, the University strives to increase access to open-source platforms and utilize collective bargaining to reduce the economic and financial implications of accessing exclusive knowledge resources, which expanding Ashoka's resource base.

Ashoka University's long-term vision is to become the leading Liberal Arts and Sciences University in India. In the process, the leadership group also sees Ashoka University transforming itself into one of the top multidisciplinary Liberal Arts institutions in the world. The path to that long-term vision will be built on three parallel tracks. **The first track will be built on high-quality research conducted by faculty and PhD students, in departments and across the inter-disciplinary centres, through collaborative projects with industry partners and other key stakeholders. The second track will be built over an integrated and a digitally enabled and enhanced knowledge centre.** The knowledge centre is seen as a natural evolution of the current library infrastructure and archival facilities with both over time integrating with each other and turning into digitally searchable repositories. **The third track will be built on top on international collaborations and partnerships with a clear focus on research partnerships, faculty and student exchanges, training-cum-capacity building programmes. Building these three parallel tracks requires significant financial and non-financial resources and investments.** The growth of Ashoka University in the last decade indicates neither resources nor intent will be challenge and there is immense self-confidence and belief within the University and its people to that end. Ashoka University is primed and ready to take off and reach the next level and put India in the map of global educational excellence.

5. Appendix

5.1 List of abbreviations

Abbreviation	Details
ACI	Archives of Contemporary India
CAGR	Compound Annual Growth Rate
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
CDO	Career Development Office
E-LEAD	E-Learning Excellence for Academic Digitisation
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
HDFC	Housing Development Finance Corporation Limited
HTPF	H.T. Parekh Foundation
ICSSR	Indian Council for Social Science Research
IFRE	International Foundation for Research and Education
IIT	Indian Institute of Technology
KII	Key Informant Interview
LAB	Library and Archives Building
NAAC	National Assessment and Accreditation Council
NEP	National Education Policy
NIRF	National Institutional Ranking Framework
NUS	National University of Singapore
OLS	Office of Learning Support
QS	Quacquarelli Symonds
RBM	Result Based Management
RePEc	Research Papers in Economics
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
UGC	University Grant Commission
YIF	Young India Fellowship
YoY	Year-on-Year

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