

SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities

SDG 10 in India: Reduced Inequalities

Sustainable Development Goal 10 (SDG 10) focuses on reducing inequality within and among countries. In India, a country with diverse demographics and socio-economic conditions, addressing inequalities is critical to achieving inclusive growth and sustainable development. The government has implemented policies and programs to uplift marginalized communities, reduce income disparities, and promote social inclusion.

Efforts by the Indian Government to Address Inequalities

- Affirmative Action Policies:**
 - Reservation policies provide representation for Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in education, employment, and politics.
 - Laws and programs ensure equal opportunities for economically weaker sections (EWS) through targeted schemes and subsidies.
- Economic Inclusion Programs:**
 - Financial inclusion initiatives like **Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY)** enable low-income individuals to access banking services, promoting economic equality.
 - Schemes like **Stand-Up India** and **MUDRA loans** provide credit to small businesses owned by women and marginalized communities.
- Social Protection Schemes:**
 - Programs such as **National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP)** provide pensions and support for the elderly, widows, and disabled individuals from vulnerable groups.
 - Initiatives like **Ayushman Bharat** ensure access to healthcare for economically weaker sections.
- Education for All:**
 - The **Right to Education Act (RTE)** mandates free and compulsory education for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.
 - Scholarships and free coaching schemes are offered to SC/ST and minority students to support higher education and professional development.
- Women's Empowerment:**
 - Initiatives like **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao** focus on reducing gender disparities in education and employment.
 - Reservation in local governance for women enhances their participation in decision-making processes.
- Addressing Regional Disparities:**
 - Special development packages target underdeveloped regions like the North-East, Jammu & Kashmir, and tribal areas.
 - Infrastructure and livelihood programs aim to bring equitable growth to rural and remote areas.
- Digital and Social Inclusion:**

- The **Digital India** campaign bridges digital divides by providing internet connectivity and e-services in rural areas.
 - Mobile technology and e-governance initiatives improve access to information and services for marginalized populations.
8. **Reducing Wage Inequality:**
- Programs like **MGNREGA** provide a minimum wage for rural workers and ensure employment opportunities for economically disadvantaged groups.
 - Gender wage gap reduction efforts focus on improving women's participation in the workforce and providing maternity benefits.

SDG 10 at the University of Petroleum and Energy Studies (UPES)

UPES actively contributes to SDG 10 by fostering an inclusive campus environment, providing opportunities for underrepresented groups, and promoting equity through education and community engagement.

1. **Scholarships for Marginalized Groups:**
 - UPES offers scholarships for students from economically weaker sections (EWS), SC/ST communities, and minority groups.
 - Programs like the **Shakti Scholarship** empower female students by ensuring equitable access to education.
2. **Inclusive Education Policies:**
 - The university ensures an inclusive learning environment by accommodating students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds.
 - Fee waivers, flexible payment options, and financial aid programs make higher education accessible to all.
3. **Support for Students with Disabilities:**
 - UPES provides accessible infrastructure, assistive technologies, and personalized support for students with disabilities.
 - Counseling and mentorship programs address specific challenges faced by differently-abled students.
4. **Career Development for Underprivileged Students:**
 - The university's placement cell works to ensure equitable employment opportunities for all students, focusing on bridging the gap for those from underprivileged backgrounds.
 - Training and skill development workshops are tailored to meet the needs of marginalized groups.
5. **Community Outreach Programs:**
 - UPES conducts outreach programs in rural and tribal areas to promote education, skill-building, and employment opportunities.
 - Partnerships with NGOs and government schemes amplify the impact of these initiatives on reducing inequalities.
6. **Promoting Gender Equality:**
 - The university ensures equal representation of women in leadership roles, academic programs, and student organizations.
 - Events and workshops addressing gender sensitivity and empowerment foster a culture of inclusivity.
7. **Research on Social Inclusion:**
 - Faculty and students engage in research addressing socio-economic inequalities, policy recommendations, and solutions for inclusive growth.

- Collaborative projects with government bodies and NGOs contribute to meaningful change.
8. **Awareness Campaigns and Advocacy:**
- Regular seminars, workshops, and student-led initiatives focus on issues related to inequality, discrimination, and social justice.
 - Awareness campaigns promote respect for diversity and highlight the importance of reducing inequalities.

Impact of UPES's Contributions to SDG 10

By fostering an inclusive culture, providing financial and academic support, and engaging with marginalized communities, UPES exemplifies its commitment to SDG 10. The university empowers students from diverse backgrounds to succeed, ensuring equitable opportunities and reducing disparities. Through education, outreach, and advocacy, UPES aligns its efforts with India's national priorities and global goals for reducing inequalities.

UPES alumna creates history, pedals from Kashmir to Kanyakumari on one leg

[https://blog.upes.ac.in/upes-alumna-creates-history-pedals-from-kashmir-to-kanyakumari-on-one-leg/\[1\]](https://blog.upes.ac.in/upes-alumna-creates-history-pedals-from-kashmir-to-kanyakumari-on-one-leg/[1])



Tanya Daga, a UPES alumna from the 2017 batch of MBA Oil and Gas, completed a charity cycle ride from Kashmir to Kanyakumari. Pedalling with one leg, she concluded the gruelling journey in record 43 days on a road bike

“Count your blessings and learn to appreciate what you have in hand,” says Tanya Daga, who has scripted history along with nine other para-athletes by completing the Infinity Ride 2020 organised by Aditya Mehta Foundation to raise funds and support para-athletes. She is the only female para-cyclist in the group to complete such a demanding ride from the Northern to the Southern tip of India.

In 2018, Tanya met with a fatal car accident. Her family ensured the best of the medical treatment but despite undergoing multiple surgeries and more than six months of treatment, she lost one leg. What made the challenge worse was the lack of funds and poor support from the insurance company due to policy loopholes.

Reminiscing about how she found her calling in para-cycling, Tanya says, “I have been a sports enthusiast since childhood but had no plans to take it up as a full-fledged career. It was after my amputation when I had to choose between a desk job (which everyone suggested me to go for) and

sports; I found my calling in the latter. In the process of figuring out my way, life took a beautiful turn when I got connected with Aditya Mehta Foundation through a referral and took up cycling.”



Tanya is the only female para-cyclist in the group to complete such a demanding ride from the Northern to the Southern tip of India

The Aditya Mehta Foundation is an Indian NGO that supports physically challenged people to pursue sports and supports them with all the necessary training, specialised sports equipment, and sponsorships.

“The counsellors at the foundation helped me to gradually gain confidence. Thereafter, I began setting up shorter goals. I worked on my endurance and first accomplished a milestone of 100 km. My coach Mr. Aditya Mehta mentored me all the way. I cannot thank him enough for everything he has done for me. I was shortlisted by the officials of the Border Security Forces in the top 10 list to participate in the Infinity Ride 2020 – a fundraising event that enables the foundation to nurture para-athletes and build a strong Indian Contingent at the Paralympics,” she adds.

Everything was going as planned. However, in the middle of the ride when Tanya had reached Hyderabad, she got the news of her father’s untimely demise. After attending her father’s funeral, she rejoined the team in Bangalore and resumed the ride. She was depressed but determined to realise her goal.

“It was my father who had encouraged me to prove that losing a part of the body cannot stop you from achieving your target in life. It was my father’s dream that I complete the mission. To fulfil his dream, I joined the expedition back,” says Tanya, dedicating this grand feat to her father, late Mr. Alok Daga.

A never-say-die attitude and a compassionate heart, Tanya is truly a force to reckon with
Picture Credits: Aditya Mehta Foundation

Tanya was conferred with the ‘Youth Icon of Rajgarh 2021 and Brand Ambassador of Women Empowerment’ award by the Rajgarh police, Government of Madhya Pradesh.

Talking about Tanya’s journey of becoming a para-athlete, Priyadarshini Shivkumar, her close friend from UPES, School of Business days says, “Her struggle with self, convincing her parents that she would be able to manage on her own in that training camp and social stigmas around disabilities, it has not been easy. The initial days of para-cycling were crazy and hectic for her mentally as well as physically, owing to her medical history. I am proud of the massive feat she has achieved. What a wonder this girl is! I strongly feel she has a long way to go, and this is just the beginning.”



“I have always known Tanya as a strong-willed and determined woman”, shares Sujit Surendran, her classmate from MBA Oil and Gas at UPES School of Business. “I remember it was during our M Cube program (the orientation program for MBA students), she hurt herself while playing Table Tennis and due to a ligament tear, was advised not to play. But she did not quit. She played and even ended up winning a few matches. She also tutored and purchased books for the kids working at tea stalls near our campus. A never-say-die attitude and a compassionate heart, she is truly a force to reckon with”, he adds.

Talking about her future, Tanya says, “Adaptive devices like prosthetic limb cost a fortune. Like in my case, it took all my father had. I would like to raise funds to support para-athletes and work towards a more inclusive world, where people are not categorised and judged basis their physical disabilities and spread awareness that anyone can achieve anything in life.”

Project Abhilasha

<https://www.upes.ac.in/social-impact/project-abhilasha> [2]

Children are often deprived of education due to inequalities that emanate from socio-economic status, gender and cultural identities. The idea behind this project is to identify meritorious students from the marginalized regions of the state and invite them for a month-long residential coaching camp on the campus. The focus is on strengthening their grasp of subjects such as Physics, Chemistry, and Maths, thereby making them ready for engineering entrance exams.

UPES brings disabled persons on common platform for ‘Sahayak Hackathon’

<https://garhwalpost.in/upes-brings-disabled-persons-on-common-platform-for-sahayak-hackathon/> [3]

Dehradun, 1 July 2020: UPES achieved yet another milestone by organising ‘Sahayak Hackathon 1.0’ – India’s first ever completely virtual hackathon for the disabled sections of society. The pioneering event was organised by the ‘School of Computer Science (SCS)’, UPES, in close association with the ‘ACM & ACM-W (Association for Computing Machinery) Student Chapters’. The participants at the event comprised persons with visual impairment; autistic spectrum disorder; cerebral palsy; Parkinson’s disease; hearing impairment, etc. The subject matter experts guided the participants ‘online’ in conceiving and developing solutions to the various challenges being faced by persons with diminished abilities due to the ongoing pandemic ‘Covid-19’. The experts guided the participants in deploying modern technologies viz. Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Augmented Reality, Virtual Reality, Internet of Things, Biometrics, Cyber Security, etc., in creating possible solutions for the challenges.

Event Convener Dr Virender Kadyan – Assistant Professor, Department of Informatics at SCS, revealed that the two-day event saw participation of 816 contestants from 110 institutions spread across 21 states of the country and 3 Overseas Teams from USA. Dr TP Singh – Head, Department of Informatics, SCS, declared the event open and presented the competition ‘problem statements’ to the participants. The pre-selected seven problem statements for the event included ‘Social Inclusion’; ‘Sanitisation Solutions’; ‘Educational Technologies’; ‘Maintenance of Social Distancing’; ‘News/Information Delivery Systems’; ‘Doorstep Delivery of Essentials’ and ‘Shifting from Old to New Conditions’. Shubhi Sharma – Assistant Professor SCS & ‘Faculty Coordinator’ for the event, updated that PR teams working in close coordination with the design, editorial and VFX teams over a number of promotional

articles, brochures, flyers, invitations, posters and videos prior to the event, the registrations for which had commenced from the last week of May onwards.

'Sahayak Hackathon 1.0' also saw the nation's eminent personalities sharing their insights with the participants on a plethora of topics. Prominent amongst these included Rajive Gulati, Senior Programme Officer & Head Evaluation, UNTIL, who spoke on 'Emerging Technological Innovations'; Philanthropist Col Karminder Singh, Secretary, Patiala School for the Deaf & Blind; Sanjay Kumar, Deputy Director, ISLRTC, shared know-how on matters involving Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) in India; Dr Himangshu Das, Director, NIEPMD; Arijit Bhattacharyya, Founder & CEO, Virtualinfocom; Nalin Singh, Founder & CEO, Natio Cultus. Hari Ramasubramanian – Business Development Lead, IBM ICE, updated on IBM's history of Projects for the disabled populace.

'Team Sparflakes' from Aarupadai Veedu Institute of Technology, Chennai, claimed the 'First Position' with a cash prize of Rs 25,000; while 'Team Grumm' from UPES, clinched the 'First Runner-up' award with a cash prize of Rs 15,000; and 'Team Braille' from Dagriation Solutions, Karnal, won the 'Second Runner-up' award with a cash prize of Rs 10,000, along with a round-trip travel tickets to Singapore for all the three winning teams.

Besides the winners, three other teams were shortlisted for their notable performance and conferred the titles – 'Most Innovative Idea Team' that went to 'Team Phoenix' – Chitkara University, Chandigarh; 'Team – The Minimalists' from SRM University, Chennai, was awarded the 'Most Sustainable Idea Team' title; followed by 'Team Bliscare' – GH Raison College of Engineering, Nagpur, was given the 'Most Cost Effective Idea Team' title.

Vice Chancellor, UPES, Dr Sunil Rai congratulated the Winners.

Briefing the media, Arun Dhand, Senior Director, disclosed that UPES has always endeavored to align with the National Policies and Schemes and this 1st version of 'Sahayak Hackathon' is an attempt to support the 'DIVYANGJAN' scheme which has been launched under the aegis of the 'National Handicapped Finance Corporation'. "The university was ably supported in this noble cause by its industry and external partners which included IBM; UNTIL – United Nations Technology Innovations Labs; ISLRTC – Indian Sign Language Research and Training Center; NIEPVD – National Institute for the Empowerment of Persons with Visual Disabilities; Guaana – a community-based platform to run online innovation & research challenges from Estonia; 'Creative Tim' and 'Learning While Travelling'," he added.

Dr Virender Kadyan appreciated the efforts put in by all team members – Shubhi Sharma, Sugandha Sharma, Pankaj Badoni, Dr Deepika Koundal, Anupam Singh and Chandramani Sharma.

[Sahayak Hackathon 1.0: Ideas to mitigate challenges faced by differently-abled](https://blog.upes.ac.in/sahayak-hackathon-1-0-ideas-to-mitigate-challenges-faced-by-differently-abled/)

<https://blog.upes.ac.in/sahayak-hackathon-1-0-ideas-to-mitigate-challenges-faced-by-differently-abled/> [4]



UPES ACM conducted Sahayak Virtual Hackathon with a brilliant theme for helping the differently-abled

The School of Computer Science at UPES, Dehradun, in association with UPES ACM and ACM-W Student Chapters, organised Sahayak Virtual Hackathon 1.0, India's first-ever state-of-the-art Hackathon directed at aiding Divyangjan – the differently-abled people – especially affected by an endangered economy, health implications, and limited prospects amidst the COVID-19 outbreak.

Says Varun Tondon, B.Tech Computer Science, Open Source and Standards, "When we thought that there is nothing to look forward to in this lockdown, UPES ACM brought Sahayak Virtual Hackathon with a brilliant theme for helping differently-abled people. Taking care of the needs of the differently-abled has been the most ignored issue by all of us. With Sahayak Virtual Hackathon, more than 816 students came together and brainstormed in order to find the best possible solutions." Kashika Chopra and Apoorav Srivastav from B.Tech E-Commerce Retail and Automation were also in Varun's team.

Ideas that employed the latest technology in the game were showcased – AI, ML, AR, VR, IoT, Biometrics, Cybersecurity, and Robotics to devise solutions, build prototypes, and develop applications that make a positive and palpable difference in the lives of the specially-abled during this pandemic.

Says Ms. Shubhi Sharma, "In line with social distancing guidelines, the Hackathon was hosted online in its entirety, using video-conferencing and instant messaging apps, and a top-end website. Over 816 participants participated in the month-long event. Extensive digital publicizing and consequent outreach strongly influenced the course of the Hackathon. Teams from 110 distinct institutions, across 21 Indian states, in addition to teams from the US, participated."

The event was kickstarted by convenor Dr. Virender Kadyan and coordinator Ms. Shubhi Sharma. Eminent speakers at the event were Mr. Rajive Gulati (Sr. Programme Officer & Head Evaluation, UNTIL), Karminder Singh (Philanthropist; Secretary, Patiala School for the Deaf and Blind), Mr. Sanjay Kumar (Deputy Director, ISLRTC) and Dr. Himangshu Das (Director, NIEPMD). Themes included Social Inclusion, Sanitization Resources, Educational Technology, Maintaining Social Distancing, News/Information Delivery Systems and transitioning to changed circumstances. Sahayak Hackathon 1.0 was declared open by Dr. T.P. Singh, Head Department of Informatics.

- Winner: Team 'Sparkflares', Aarupadai Veedu Institute of Technology, Chennai

- First Runner-Up: Team 'Grumm', University of Petroleum and Energy Studies, Dehradun
- Second Runner-Up: Team 'Braille', Dagriation Solutions, Karnal

These teams won cash prizes of ₹25000, ₹15000, and ₹10000 respectively, and round-trip tickets to Singapore. Sponsors, reputed collaborators, knowledge partners, and other associates, all of whom helped SVH 1.0 scale an unprecedented pinnacle of success, include, IBM, United Nations Technology Innovations Labs (UNTIL), Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre (ISLRTC), National Institute for the Empowerment of Persons with Visual Disabilities (NIEPVD), Gaaana, Creative Tim, and Learning While Travelling.

Says Varun, "From the very beginning, our aim was not to win this hackathon but to build something. It has been a wonderful experience to be a part of such a great event where we got to showcase our skills and contribute to the society at the same time and I am sure that every team would take their ideas further with the same level of enthusiasm as we participated in the hackathon. A big thank you to UPES School of Computer Science for giving us this platform to be able to do our bit for the differently abled and the gifted. It was a great learning experience!"

[UPES teacher attends WHO workshop on disabilities](https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/archive/features/upes-teacher-attends-who-workshop-on-disabilities-280259)

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/archive/features/upes-teacher-attends-who-workshop-on-disabilities-280259> [5]

DEHRADUN: Dr Neelu Ahuja, head of computing research Institute, R&D centre, University of Petroleum and Energy Studies (UPES), attended a workshop organised by the Centre for Rehabilitation and Advancement of Disables (Cradle) in collaboration with the WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia, in New Delhi on August 10.

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She has been working on a project involving IT interventions in developing tools and technology beneficial for people suffering from "learning disabilities", especially dyslexia'—reading disabilities, 'dysgraphia'—writing disabilities and 'dyscalculia'—disability with numbers. Dr Ahuja's suggestion of enhancing involvement of academia in general and the large student community in particular in this endeavour was appreciated and welcomed. During the question and answer session she stressed incubation and entrepreneurial support to youths so that they could contribute to improving the access to assistive technology for disabled and elders.

[Diversity, Equity & Inclusion](https://twitter.com/UPESDehradun/status/1640293987087990786)

<https://twitter.com/UPESDehradun/status/1640293987087990786> [6]

Meghna Sabharwal's research has extensively focused on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion. Join her as she discusses the challenges women face in progressing to leadership positions.

Register: <https://bit.ly/3lFEiW6>

