

# Community Engagement (CE) in Higher Education Institutions: Indian Perspective



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# Study Background

- Carried out in association with British Council, India, in 2013-15
- Broad idea of mapping the state-of-the-art practices in the field of CE in Indian HEIs
- Punjab, Bengal, Assam and Karnataka covered
- Efforts aimed at spreading the idea of community engagement, generating awareness on the issue

# Mapping details

## OBJECTIVE

- Mapping CUE Initiatives in India
- Understanding perceptions, attitudes towards social responsibility of HEIs

## HOST UNIVERSITIES

- Punjab University
- North Bengal University
- IIT-G
- Jain University

## INSTRUMENTS

- Surveys
- Interviews
- Dialogues



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# Key Features: PUNJAB

## Action Projects

- Executed in association with communities
- Centre for Social Studies, Department of Lifelong Learning & Extension

## Adoption of villages

- Efforts to build skill sets/capacities of communities
- Extensive knowledge sharing initiatives



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# Key Features: BENGAL

Joint initiatives for promotion of horticulture

- Initiative of COFAM, DBT, NBU
- Collaborates with communities, uses indigenous knowledge, builds capacities

Initiative of Christian colleges

- Pursuing extensive community engagement
- Part of their broad mission statement
- Capacity building, social outreach

Joint Agri-researching

- Carried out by Agricultural Universities
- Research carried out in participatory mode



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# Key Features: ASSAM

## Student initiated projects

- Part of service-learning, application of knowledge in the field
- Ensuring well being of the communities

## Novel & innovative courses

- Programme on Peace & Conflict Studies
- Course on literacy & language education

## Community Radio

- Nodal initiative of Gauhati University
- Provides an open forum for discussion of social issues



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# Key Features: KARNATAKA

## Tripartite approach of RadioActive

- Integrates Participatory Research, Citizen Engagement & Community Voice
- Serves as popular activist space

## Practitioners as Teachers

- Social work activists, folk artists invited as lecturers in HEIs
- Also function as Adjunct faculty in some colleges

## Partnership with local CSOs

- JU associates with Bala Janagraha, Kadam Foundation
- CSOs also partner with RadioActive



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# Emerging trends

- Ambiguity on 'community' and 'community engagement'
- Institutional impediments: Structural fallacies, rigid pedagogy
- Limited capacities of the community to engage
- Absence of synergy between the academia and community
- Lack of liasoning between different stakeholders
- Resource constraints: Lack of finances, shortage of manpower



# Ways forward

- Need to chalk out a clear vision on community engagement
- Alignment of institutional policies & practices in favour of CE
- Advocacy at various platforms, coordination between various stakeholders
- Developing sensitivities with respect to community needs and aspirations
- Tremendous opportunities under the new UGC Scheme

# Thank You



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