

Community University Engagement (CUE) in Indian HEIs: Experiences from Punjab, Bengal & Assam

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Higher Education in India



Important actor vis-à-vis the quest for sustainable solutions

In a state of turmoil: massification, quality, funding

Increasing demand for public accountability

Need to re-visit its essence, relevance & credence

Faced with both challenges & opportunities

CUE: Concept & Rationale

- Implies relationships between the university and the targeted communities
- Seeks two-way discourse between the Universities and the communities
- Connects the institutional missions of teaching, research and service
- Recognition to alternate knowledge forms
- Emphasizes co-production of socially relevant knowledge

Global Scenario

Canada: Extensive emphasis on socially relevant research

Ireland, Netherlands: Science Shop model

Indonesia: National Policy on Community Engagement

SA: Growing importance of social responsibility of HEIs

UK: RAE conducted by Research Councils

Networks: GUNi, PASCAL, CCPH, AsiaEngage, GACER, etc.

Indian Perspective

- Escalation of socio-economic problems despite a steady economic growth
- Education system expected to contribute in providing solutions.
- 12th plan emphasized on the role of HEIs in societal development
- Importance given to mutually beneficial relationships between the universities, community & CSOs
- UGC launched the Scheme on fostering community engagement in HEIs

Study in India

OBJECTIVE	UNIVERSITIES	INSTRUMENTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mapping CUE Initiatives in India• Understanding perceptions, attitudes towards social responsibility of HEIs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Punjab University• North Bengal University• Gauhati University, Tezpur University, IIT-G	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Surveys• Interviews• Dialogues

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

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

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

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 community engagement
- Advocacy at various platforms, coordination between various stakeholders
- Developing sensitivities with respect to community needs and aspirations
- Tremendous opportunities under the new UGC Scheme