



SDG 1: No Poverty

END POVERTY IN ALL ITS FORMS EVERYWHERE

IIT Gandhinagar aims and pursues towards the eradication of social problems through its research, outreach and community engagement programme. Removing poverty is one such objective of the institute. The institute attempts to accomplish this through various scholarships, grants and academic programmes offered to students. Also, by delivering neighbouring villages with different training and support, and by providing health-related services to both people (student/staff/faculty/workers) inside the campus and in the vicinity.

Research

Plenty of research activities at IIT Gandhinagar aim for technology transfer which would help the economically marginalised section of society. Low-cost technologies focused on the low-income group are at the core of various research. A few of them are:

- (a) Development of low-cost novel biomaterials for in-situ groundwater/soil remediation: A safe drinking water production perspective - SERB.
- (b) Low-Cost and Non-Electric Water Filter for Point-of-Use(POU) Water Disinfection - WIN Foundation.

Education

Laptop grants, as mentioned in the table above, were provided to students. Besides these, under the operations section, the financial aid details are also included that were provided to the students. In yet another academic innovation, the Institute has introduced the Undergraduate Teaching Assistantship (UGTA) programme with a vision to enrich the educational experience of UG students, which not only gives financial support to the assisting student, but it also helps their fellow juniors feel more comfortable and have a friendly discussion.

Academic relief to students: The second wave of the pandemic posed a number of challenges for the students in Semester II 2020-21, as the pandemic affected them and their families in different ways. Considering the extraordinary and challenging circumstances and their possible impact on the academic performance of students, the Senate approved several measures to provide relief to the students for Semester II 2020-21, including provision for multiple make-up examinations, opportunity for reassessment to students who receive E/F grade, option to drop project courses, among others.

Work and study M.Tech. programme: In addition to the existing full-time two-year M.Tech programme, IITGN introduced a Work and Study M.Tech. programme to create a specialised workforce for major facilities/laboratories and research projects within the Institute as well as for various research establishments. While MTech graduation requirements will remain unchanged in this programme, enrolled students can complete it at a relatively slower pace while simultaneously working in the Institute with a hiked fellowship.

Community Outreach

Youth and women from rural and urban localities from the surrounding areas have been empowered through workforce development by the institute. NEEV, the community outreach programme, works for the same by providing training to villagers. The IITGN community is also encouraged to consider donating to the neighbouring villages. Education, support and awareness programmes in the village for Covid-19 were also conducted. In April 2021, the Institute took the initiative to form a team of volunteers comprising young villagers and IITGN community members to spread awareness about the pandemic and provide initial medical care.

A variety of training and skill development programmes are offered by NEEV, including entrepreneurship workshops, entrepreneurship awareness sessions, vocational skills training courses, stitching skills training courses, etc. were designed to improve the employability and entrepreneurship mindset of the local communities.

- **Stitching**
NEEV IITGN had earlier taught stitching to more than 100 women in the two neighbouring villages of Palaj and Basan through a 2-month training. The pandemic situation provided an opportunity to NEEV to engage the village ladies in making cloth masks in the comforts of their homes in their free time and earn some money. A total of 25 women in the age group of 18-40 years from the villages of Palaj and Basan were trained to stitch products such as reusable cloth masks, curtains, cushion covers, tote bags, laptop bags, pouches, palazzos etc. The trainer for the project was Ms Ritu Singh, program intern, NEEV. The training was conducted in the NEEV training room at IITGN. The training enabled the women to achieve cumulative earnings of around Rs 3.7 lakhs. Also, Close to 3800 Masks made by village women trained by NEEV IITGN being distributed in the neighbouring villages on Palaj and Basan.
- **Chocolate confectionery making project**
Ten women from Basan village in the age group of 17-37 years were provided training in making 15+ variations of chocolate-based confectionery through the 'Chocolate Confectionery Making Workshop' conducted in the campus during October 12-16, 2020. The trainer was Ms Neepa Sanghvi from Ahmedabad. The trainees were also taken on a visit to an Ahmedabad based vendor of tools, raw materials, packaging on October 15, 2020. Notably, eight women collectively sold products worth around Rs 34,000 through stalls put up at IITGN and through orders facilitated by NEEV during the Diwali festival season.
- **Decorative candle making project**
A 'Decorative Candle Making Workshop' was conducted for 10 women from Palaj during October 21-23, 2020, and for seven women from Basan during November 3-5, 2020, wherein the participants were taught to make 10+ variations of colourful and aromatic candles. The workshop

was held on the IITGN campus. The trainer for the Palaj group was Ms Neepa Sanghvi from Ahmedabad and the trainer for the Basan group was Ms Roshani Patel from NEEV.

- Dry-snacks making project
NEEV organised a ‘Dry-Snacks Making Workshop’ on campus for 11 women from Basan village, in the age group of 18-45 years, during October 26-30, 2020. The trainer was Ms Geetaben Katva from Ahmedabad. The participants were taught to make dry-snacks such as shakarpara, mathri, besan ladoos and chakli. The trained village women collectively sold products worth around Rs 8,000 through stalls put up at IITGN campus and through pre-orders facilitated by NEEV during the Diwali festival season.
- Computer skills training course
The mission of this project was to increase computer literacy among youth and women from the JANvillages surrounding IITGN. Through this course, the participants were taught basic computer operation, MS Word, MS Excel, MS PowerPoint, logging into the network, use of the internet, email basics, search engines, etc.
 1. The first batch of eight participants (four women and four men) from the villages of Palaj and Basan, in the age group of 19 - 37 years were provided training in basic computer skills for four weeks during October 12-November 7, 2020. The course was held in a room set up. The trainer was Ms. Hemangi Patel from H&B Computer Education in Gandhinagar.
 2. The second batch of fourteen participants (eight women and six men) from the villages of Palaj and Basan, in the age group of 18 - 32 years, were provided training in basic computer skills for four weeks during March 1-27, 2021. The course was held in the computer lab at IITGN. The trainer was Mr Umesh Vaghela from Gandhinagar.
- A 5-day entrepreneurship workshop was conducted from January 20-24, 2020, for 27 young men from Industrial Training Institute, Gandhinagar. The last day included a business plan poster presentation, which was judged by Ms. Richa Kokcha, Branch Manager, Canara Bank, IIT Gandhinagar Branch.
- A free Covid-19 screening test of all workers was done in the workers’ housing colony. Institute also provides ambulance services to workers needing medical examination or treatment.
- Local small-scale business assistance: NEEV, in collaboration with NYASA, offers guidance on forming self-help groups and opening up small-scale businesses with skills the community members already possess. A few examples of it include engaging the local village ladies in making cloth masks (during the pandemic) and stitching hostel curtains for the new hostel blocks. The masks were supplied to the IITGN community and also to outside people through a company. This project has contributed towards a new kind of capacity-building for rural women and has opened up livelihood opportunities for them, at the same time making them more confident. The earnings made by villagers in different training are mentioned in the table above.
- NYASA with the help of the student community provides educational assistance to kids of nearby villages and construction workers. Also, the distribution of cloth and other materials for the cleaning staff of IITGN is conducted by them.

Operations

IITGN focuses on the welfare of all the stakeholders (children of staff members, and construction workers involved in various development activities on campus and nearby villagers), especially people from

economically backward classes. Below mentioned are some of the major activities undertaken during the assessment period.

Student admissions and financial support:

IITGN firmly believes in, “Education is a battle against poverty that everyone should fight “. We strive that money doesn’t come in any student's academic pursuit. For this, the institute has adopted liberal financial aid policies. The table below lists different aids provided to students in the period 2020-21. The institute follows government norms for admitting students from socially/economically backward classes, and the proportion of undergraduate admissions includes Economically Weaker Section (EWS) - 10%, Other Backward Classes - Non-Creamy Layer (OBC-NCL) - 27%, Scheduled Caste (SC) - 15% and Scheduled Tribe (ST) -7.5%. The institute also offers tuition fee waivers and financial aid for economically backward students and Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe/Physically Handicapped students. All students, except a few, reside in hostels, where food and accommodation are significantly discounted. From the academic year 2020-21, all undergraduate and postgraduate students at IITGN having an annual parental income of less than Rs 2.5 lakhs are provided full tuition fee support by the institute

Vikram Sarabhai Research Fellowship:

IITGN introduced Vikram Sarabhai Research Fellowship that aims to encourage PhD students to complete their PhD early and enable them to have a competitive advantage. PhD students who submit their thesis within four years of joining will be eligible for this 12-month research fellowship. It will enable IITGN doctorates to explore new research areas, extend their PhD work, and publish scholarly articles and books, besides looking for rewarding career opportunities.

Successful completion of courses:

Guided Progress Scheme (GPS), continuing since 2014, is still functional- helping academically weak undergraduate students to develop their own plan and follow for their completing graduation from the institute. It also puts a cap on credits registration for students and aids students by advisors on the academic trajectory to be followed.

Another supportive programme is Peer Assisted Learning (PAL), for undergraduate students. As peers sometimes can guide better with their experience. The students (peers) who are identified for this task are generally second and third year undergraduates, sometimes first-year also. The selection is based on personal interview by counsellor and faculty in charge of the PAL. The peer educators are compensated for their service through the Earn While You Learn (EWYL) scheme at IITGN- a financial aid scheme of IITGN.

Covid-19:

Smooth functioning of all facilities- academic/non-academic or official/Unofficial was a big challenge during the Covid times. During the second wave, the institute was still able to host students and have uninterrupted services because of various measures taken. The facilities and aids were not only for the students but also for the staff, their families, and different workers commuting daily to the campus.

Some of the key actions taken are listed below:

COVID-19 testing drive: Besides regular testing facility available at institute's medical centre. A Community level testing drives (October 2020, About 1800 community members) were conducted to minimise the spread of the virus. The Institute arranged testing for the campus construction workers as well. Daily checkup of staff and workers commuting from outside.

190-bed Covid Care Facility: The community members whoever found to be positive were provided with different rooms, care and all other needed medical support. This not only saved the unaffected people but gave affected people a better facility to heal.

Whitepaper on covid care facility: A detailed document mentioning the effective system adopted within the campus was released. (<https://iitgn.ac.in/pdf/ccf.pdf>)

Financial aid to needy students: Both medical and other support was provided.

Empathy fund: IITGN has created an Empathy Fund with strong support from the IITGN Foundation in the United States, in order to show empathy and support to numerous individuals attached to IITGN who have been adversely affected economically and psychologically. The support enabled the institute to provide liberal aid to 160 financially impacted students, including grants for the purchase of laptops, and tuition fee waivers. Due to the prevailing situation of COVID-19, there was a need to carry out the online classes. Many students from economically backward classes did not have a laptop of their own, which would have become an obstacle in continuing or completing their studies.

IITGN continued to extend a helping hand to its neighbouring villages during the second wave of COVID-19. In April 2021, a volunteer group named Special Volunteer Force was formed by the institute, comprising students, staff, and faculty who had voluntarily come together to help fellow community members in challenging times.

Children Education Scholarship

The institute provides Children's Education Scholarship for the children of the institute's staff up to INR 10,000 per annum per child, which is restricted up to INR 20,000 for a family.

Miscellaneous support includes:

- On-Campus Employment Opportunities and UG Teaching Assistantships
- Long-term, short-term loans and financial grants
- Free basic messing and pocket allowance assistance for the different marginalised sections of students.