



SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities

REDUCE INEQUALITY WITHIN AND AMONG COUNTRIES

Sustainable Development Goal 10, as defined by the United Nations, aims to "reduce inequality within and among countries." It calls for efforts to ensure that economic growth benefits everyone, regardless of their social, economic, or geographical background. To achieve this goal, institutions and organisations around the world must take proactive steps to reduce inequality at various levels. IIT Gandhinagar, established in 2008, is one of India's premier technical institutions. It is known for its commitment to academic excellence and research, but it also recognizes the broader responsibilities it has towards society and sustainable development. This report focuses on IIT Gandhinagar's initiatives and activities that specifically address the reduction of inequality.

IIT Gandhinagar has implemented a range of initiatives and actions that directly contribute to reducing inequality.

RESEARCH

Prof A. Agrawal contributed to one of the chapters in the book "Techno-economic Challenges." The title of the chapter is 6G: Sustainable Development for Rural and Remote Communities. Since there are discussions on the objectives of 6G, one of them being social impact, Prof Agarwal argues it is important to also consider key performance indicators (KPIs) of 6G related to societal considerations. These could be measured by such parameters as increase in life expectancy due to increased consumption of healthcare information and improved environment; increased literacy rates in rural and remote areas; reduction in unemployment rate; gender equality, and good governance.

OPERATIONS

Efforts to reduce inequality extend to IITGN's employees and workers. Nyasa, IITGN, calls for donations and conducts distribution drives for items like clothes, winter wear, toys, umbrellas, footwear, and bags for on-campus workers and construction workers. These efforts provide monetary relief to more than 1000 construction workers and promote their well-being.

The Outsourced Workers Outreach Programme Committee organises workshops to make outsourced workers aware of the benefits they are entitled to under the Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC). These workshops ensure that workers have access to the social security benefits they deserve.

EDUCATION

Scholarships and Financial Aid: One of the primary ways in which IIT Gandhinagar reduces inequality is by providing financial aid and scholarships to deserving students, particularly those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. The institute offers a wide range of scholarships and financial assistance programs, including merit-based and need-based scholarships. These programs help bridge the financial gap and ensure that talented students have access to quality education. By doing so, IIT Gandhinagar directly addresses economic inequality.

Alumni of IIT Gandhinagar also create scholarships for the students that need financial support. For instance: Aparna Tumkur and Avinash Tumkur, BTech alumni of IITGN, established the Dr. T. G. Visweswaraiiah Scholarship in honour of their late grandfather. This scholarship supports BTech students at IITGN by providing financial assistance of Rs 1 lakh per year. Rishi Bubna, a BTech alumnus of IITGN, founded the Shri Satyanarayan Kakrania Scholarship, while Ms. Ngan Le established the Shri Anandilal Bubna Scholarship. These scholarships, also offering Rs 1 lakh per year, support BTech students at IITGN.

Collaboration with NIT Sikkim and NIT Hamirpur: IITGN has signed Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with NIT Sikkim and NIT Hamirpur to promote student exchange, academic cooperation, and research collaboration. These collaborations aim to bridge regional educational disparities, promote diversity, and enhance equality in education. By partnering with institutions in different regions, IITGN contributes to the reduction of inequality in access to quality education.

Education Outreach to Rural Areas: IITGN collaborates with local educational organisations and institutions to provide exposure and awareness about higher education opportunities to students from rural and underprivileged areas. For example, the Humanities and Social Sciences discipline, in collaboration with Azim Premji Foundation, organised a three-day exposure camp on higher education opportunities for students from a rural tribal district in Gujarat.

Nyasa, IITGN also successfully conducted a 10-day summer camp from May 30 to June 8, 2022, for about 90 children from neighbouring villages and construction workers' colonies of IITGN. About 40 mentors, including students, faculty, and community members of IITGN, along with about 50 student volunteers conducted various sessions to help these kids explore their hobbies and hidden talents with a plethora of exciting activities and learning modules.

Awareness and Education: IITGN plays a crucial role in raising awareness and providing education to address inequality.

- IITGN conducted "Camp HSS," a free online event for school students, focusing on developing critical thinking, empathy, and creativity. This three-day virtual camp received widespread participation, enabling students from different backgrounds to enhance their skills and broaden their horizons.
- Nyasa, IITGN runs a school for children of construction workers and also takes classes for the security staff preparing for government jobs.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

IITGN is actively involved in community engagement initiatives that reduce inequality at various levels.

- The Shramik Kalyan Samiti, in collaboration with Nyasa, IITGN, distributed hoodies and T-shirts among construction workers and contractual staff as a gesture of gratitude for their relentless efforts during the pandemic. These initiatives not only acknowledge the contributions of these workers but also provide them with necessary items.
- NEEV, IITGN, conducted training courses for rural women and youth from nearby villages, focusing on skill development. These courses include Ladies Tailor Training, Training Of Trainers in Sewing, Beautician Skills Training, and Desktop Publishing Training. NEEV also organised the sale of handcrafted products made by village women, further promoting economic empowerment.
- Medical Camps at the construction workers' colonies, organised by IITGN, provide essential healthcare services to the labourers and their families, addressing their healthcare needs and promoting well-being.
- NEEV-IITGN provides free skill development courses, including Stitching Skills, Beautician Skills, Basic Computer Skills, Spoken English Skills, Tally Skills, and Vocational Skills of wiring and CNC machining, to rural youth and women. These courses empower individuals with skills that can enhance their employability and economic prospects.
- Additionally, NEEV conducts seminars and workshops on various topics, including menstrual health management, career development, and entrepreneurship development, to empower individuals and improve their well-being.