

CRISP

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MAASAM

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Successes and Memories

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Internalizing and Institutionalizing Quality Assurance in Indian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)



Dr. K Rama

CRISP State Lead, Telangana

The new technologies and economic developments across the globe have thrown immense challenges to the education systems. The biggest challenge of the Universities is not just to survive and sustain but to stay competitive and excel. The adaptive capacity of the University thus needs to be reflected in its administrative practices which involves a participatory management approach involving staff from all levels and functional units of the University. Towards this, the universities need to evolve strategies and quality systems.

With a range of definitions of quality, the best way to define quality is “as a multi-dimensional entity”. Quality in education is most often grouped and defined under the following headings:

1. **Quality as exceptional high standards - Excellence**
2. **Quality as perfection or consistency - conformity to agreed processes and reliable outcomes**
3. **Quality as fitness for purpose - meeting minimum stakeholder requirements**
4. **Quality as value for money - efficiency and effectiveness**
5. **Quality as transformative - focus on continuous enhancement and improvement**

These five ways of viewing quality in education, reflect that traditionally, quality in higher education has been linked to the idea of exceptionally high standards (“**exceptional**”), quality in terms of consistency (“**perfection**”) with reference to processes and sets of well defined criteria, relating quality to **fitness for purpose wherein** quality is accepted as a relative concept, as different interest groups or beneficiaries: namely students, teachers, staff, parents, would-be-employers, funding agencies and society, have different priorities. A fourth approach to quality equates it **with value for money**. This factor brings in the idea of



accountability, efficiency, and effectiveness. A fifth view of quality sees quality as **transformative**.

In the earlier days when the norm was social accreditation and the criteria was the performance of the faculty reflected in the alumni performance, the quality of the HEIs was purely the reflection of the internal performance of a HEI. As institutions proliferated, diversity in the institutional management increased and the system fell prey to various unethical practices leading to mistrust and unrest among the stakeholders the need arises for more and more external regulations on the HEIs. This led to quality becoming more of an external control process and losing its sanctity as an inbuilt culture of the institution. Now at the crossroads quality assurance in most cases is a combination of internal and external processes with controls from the governments and regulatory bodies.

The quality assurance process in India has changed the track from the process of assessment of past performance to assessing the level of the institutions’ commitment to quality and its potential to identify and evolve effective processes to meet future challenges. The responsibility of the institution in the current Quality Assurance (QA) process is envisaged as



an internal participatory endeavour of the institution, wherein the collective knowledge and skills of the staff will result in identifying the key challenges and the performance measures for continuous improvement of the institutional provisions. The new models of QA rely on Internal Quality Assurance Systems (IQAS) and the institutional QA frameworks evolved through proactive and participatory processes. The QA frameworks are expected to be the enablers for institutional change and are designed to inspire the development of effective educational processes and encourage creativity, passion, honesty and zeal in the institutional community.

Quality assurance practices lie on a continuum between two different purposes i.e. Accountability and Improvement. While Accountability is all about informing the stakeholders on the quality in terms of meeting the standards and assurances made Improvement indicates the institution's efforts towards excellence in all its operations and provisions. These are reflected in the institutions' continuous efforts to raise performance through systematic, structured self-review. Based on the purposes and objectives, the QA systems are designed differently for capturing accountability and/or improvement. Methods and approaches designed for accountability purposes are most often related to compliance with minimum standards and informing the stakeholders of meeting the requirements whereas the systems designed for improvement focus on self-reflection, systemic review, frank discussion and transparent information sharing. Improvement-oriented systems designed for internal review purposes should be rigorous enough to confer credibility and provide information required for accountability including verification by stakeholder and external QA agencies.

Taking a holistic approach to build a picture of a system and how it is working, using quantitative and qualitative data on inputs and processes and results with the involvement of all stakeholder groups, especially internal staff will best result in achieving both the purposes of QA i.e. accountability and improvement. Such an improvement-oriented system will balance the different purposes of QA and ensure that they reinforce rather than undermine each other.

Different Models of QA such as Traditional Academic Quality Management Models, for example, Academic Audits of the University; Higher Education Quality Models such as the NAAC Seven Criteria based Institutional Assessment and Accreditation (A&A), NBA outcomes based Programme accreditation; Business Quality and Excellence Models like the CMM and ISO standards for Quality Management are in vogue and used by different types of institutions. If we look at the details of the above models every model has its strengths and weaknesses. While the earlier NAAC models emphasised on input and processes, the NBA programme accreditation is outcomes-based, Business excellence models lack specific education orientation and are less flexible for contextualizing to HEIs. Recognising the need for QA models focusing on "Excellence" the new Accreditation model being developed by NAAC (to be introduced in 2024) in response to NEP 2020, includes both processes and outcomes and is expected to be more relevant to the reformed educational systems and stakeholder needs. Whatever be the adopted model, the ultimate process should engage and extend to all areas of operation, such as management and leadership, stakeholder engagement, planning and process orientation, facts-based decision-making, performance outcomes and organisational learning.



Quality management emphasises structured formal processes in a cycle of 'plan, do, check, act' that is auditable and leads to improvement. A quality-managed organisation thus continuously measures its results, adjusts its processes and improves its performance as shown in the figure below.



Adopted from COL RIM (2014)

The following quality principles developed by Deming, Juran and Crosby(1989) are most suitably applicable to quality management in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

- **Leadership and commitment of top management plays a significant role in quality improvement**
- **Creating an environment for learning and staff development is crucial to do tasks right every time**
- **Adopt new philosophies and technologies that can improve quality**
- **Encourage teamwork and participatory management**
- **Develop a communication strategy to report progress and results**
- **Recognise the efforts of staff without creating a competitive environment**
- **Encourage quality circles and a culture of quality.**

Many academics, placing stress on academic freedom and the autonomy of institutions, believe that assessment of quality should be done through self-evaluation. As every institution has its own goals and objectives and the ethos of an institution is best understood by its constituents. NAACs (2007) decision to establish Internal Quality Assurance Cells (IQACs) in HEIs as a mandatory pre-requisite for Accreditation is considered appropriate and timely. The initiative is aligned with the plans for sector-wide policy reform and activities to improve higher education quality as well as the targeted interventions facilitating quality enhancement and excellence. The IQACs are designed to support the current reforms and meet the needs of the HE system to ensure their accountability to the stakeholders. IQACs are developed to address four major education challenges (1) to ensure quality while modernizing the structure, contents and processes of education (2) improving sector sustainability and efficiency (3) reforming governance of education and (4) assuring quality. Overall as a vehicle for organizational change, the IQACs are expected to provide a basis for a long-term strategic framework and the Institutional Development Plan (IDP) for reforming the institutional academic and administrative processes which relevant and responsive to the changing learner and market needs. The four major functions of IQACs for continuous evaluation and improvement process include – 1. Identify the activities and establish processes for improvement and continuous assessment 2. Monitoring the progress of implementation of the decisions 3. Documenting and reviewing the implementation and monitoring the activities 4. Ensuring that the outcome forms the basis for institutional plans and strategies for improvement and setting objectives.

Conclusion :

Everybody agrees Quality is fundamental. Quality is often used to signify relative worth more so in education and different Individuals/ Institutions perceive and address quality concerns differently. Thus Quality of HEIs can be said to be the sum of Identified learner needs+ Learner centric teaching-learning strategies + effective student support + commitment to student's needs + preparing the learner to the market requirements +cost effective + congenial learning environment and many other stakeholder's requirements. Any HEIs mission should therefore have a focus on the stakeholders needs. Overall building a culture of quality and excellence through self assessment, continuous improvement and innovations is what is expected to be the outcome of the HEIs Internal Quality systems.



Calling Community Participation for Water Conservation in Meghalaya



Dr. Minnette Ireen Passah
CRISP State Lead, Meghalaya

Water sustains life on earth and it is unimaginable to envision life without it. In Meghalaya, although there is a dense network of drainage systems, most rivers, waterfalls, and streams have water only during the rainy season. Many of these water bodies dry up or weaken during winter, resulting in water scarcity despite the region's high rainfall and the government's numerous initiatives. This issue is no longer confined to urban areas but is rapidly affecting rural areas as well, as asserted by the village headmen. Hence, achieving Sustainable Development Goal 6, "Clean Water and Sanitation", necessitates proper sustainable management. Any delay in addressing water resource management could significantly hinder progress toward other related SDGs.

'Water' falls under the jurisdiction of the state government according to the Constitution of India. Hence, steps to effectively augment, conserve and manage water resources have remained the primary responsibility of the State. Recognizing this significance, Meghalaya has pioneered numerous initiatives in various water sectors: became one of the first states to come up with a holistic State Water Policy in 2019, ranked second as the most improved State under JJM,



the first state to introduce Payment for Ecosystem Services at the state level, charted a path towards conservation through Mapping and Monitoring, constructed 1,000 harvesting structures supported by ADB, became the first state to have fish sanctuaries with 79 active community-based sanctuaries

Numerous innovative initiatives and models have been implemented to address Meghalaya's water crisis, such as the Problem-Driven Iterative Adaptation (PDIA) Approach (2016); Field Level Leadership Model (FLL)- A Bottom-up, Adaptive, Participatory Approach to create ecosystem champions through the Meghalaya Basin Development Authority (MBDA). As a result, four departments were merged for the implementation of this programme- Soil & Water Conservation, Water Resources, Community & Rural Developments and MBDA. One significant outcome of the State Water Policy through the PDIA approach was the launch of the Climate Change Reversal Project in December 2020. This project is part of Meghalaya's State Capability Enhancement Project (SCEP), designed to foster collaboration among relevant departments through a convergence model. Under this project, natural rural management committees (NRMCS) will be established as subcommittees within the Village Employment Councils (VECs), and the existing Village Water Resource Committees (VWRC) will be strengthened.

Despite the presence of several initiatives, much work remains to be done to provide sustainable solutions to the problem at hand. It is imperative, therefore, to understand sustainable methods for conserving water resources. Recognizing the importance of groundwater and ensuring its sufficient availability is crucial, especially in addressing both development needs and water scarcity situations, particularly for meeting drinking water requirements. It is essential to awaken the community to the ethos of "Catch the rain - where it falls, when it falls", instilling in them the responsibility to conserve every drop of water and ensure water security for future generations.

For water conservation programs to succeed in their objectives, it is imperative that the community and end beneficiaries are actively engaged at various stages, from identifying needs to prioritizing conservation activities, implementing them, and monitoring them thereafter. Collaboration among water-related departments is essential to mobilize efforts and conduct comprehensive need analyses, leading to the formulation of Village Water Security and Safety Plans. Through discussion and deliberation, these departments can ensure the sustainability of water schemes, thereby striving towards achieving water sufficiency at the village level.

Numerous water conservation programs and schemes rely on consistent community participation. These programs should focus on reviving traditional water conservation methods supplemented by modern technology. Many states in India have done commendable work in implementing various water conservation initiatives disseminated through community participation. However, attempts should be made to tap these and replicate them with any necessary customisation. This attempt will help translate the State Water Policy (2019) which states "to achieve sustainable development, management and use of Meghalaya's water resources with community participation to improve health and livelihoods, reduce vulnerability while ensuring good governance for the present and future generations by promoting Integrated Water Resources Management".

In conclusion, it is crucial to transition from large-scale water resource management projects to community-based and participatory water resource management programs. This shift will lead to significant community participation and ownership of various interventions, thereby mitigating the adverse impacts of such projects.



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The CRISP Fellowship provided me with an invaluable opportunity to delve into policy implementation, monitoring, and evaluation through direct intervention with the UP Higher Education Department. Working closely with the department, I gained exposure to identifying critical gaps and spearheading the drafting of new policies and Government Orders (GOs) as needed. This included surveying institutions to assess ongoing implementation and authoring reports that recommended concrete guidelines and a roadmap for the department to achieve impactful change.

I had the privilege of managing four sub-projects under the Project for Excellence in Higher Learning and Education – UP (PEHLE-UP). These projects include fostering innovation and entrepreneurship, integrating technology into education, promoting research within UP Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), and monitoring the implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The exponential growth of publications in Machine Learning (ML) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) underscores the urgent need to align curriculum, pedagogy, learning outcomes, and education policies with the demands of the future. The CRISP fellowship empowered me to champion this vision, working to modernize the department's processes and policies to meet the challenges and opportunities of tomorrow. By supporting innovation, policymakers have the potential to become early adopters and catalysts for change, rather than catching up.

Undoubtedly, the most enriching aspect of the fellowship program is the mentorship of esteemed IAS officers. Their boundless energy and unconventional thinking inspire all fellows to challenge traditional approaches and embrace creative solutions. I honed the crucial skills of problem-solving and maximizing the impact of available resources. This experience has fundamentally reshaped my perspective on bureaucracy, enabling me to recognize it as the vital engine driving progress in all developing economies. Carrying the CRISP legacy forward, I am forever grateful for the opportunity to champion innovation in education throughout my career.

Ashutosh Kumar Singh

Fellow - CRISP Uttar Pradesh Team

Major Developments in CRISP

CRISP Unveils New Cohort of Fellows: Driving Innovation and Impact Across Collaborative States



Abhishek Saini
Madhya Pradesh



Abiya Jose
Andhra Pradesh



Akhil Ravella
Telangana



Anamika Nair
Rajasthan



Chandramani
Uttar Pradesh



Gargee Deka
Bodoland-Assam



Gaurav Nayak
Karnataka



Heera K Anil
Tamil Nadu



Mrigakshi Sarma
Bodoland-Assam



Niharika Yadav
Meghalaya



Pooja Kapoor
Madhya Pradesh



Prakash Palanivel
Tamil Nadu



Rohit Dey
Hyderabad

CRISP (Centre for Research in Schemes & Policies) has proudly announced its latest cohort of fellows, marking a significant milestone in its ongoing mission to catalyze positive change in the social sector through innovation and expertise. Selected from a pool of over 4000 applicants through a rigorous three-stage selection process, these young and dynamic individuals represent a diverse array of talents and backgrounds.

The new cohort of fellows comprises Abhishek Saini, Abiya Jose, Akhil Ravella, Anamika Nair, Chandramani, Gargee Deka, Gaurav Nayak, Heera K Anil, Mrigakshi Sarma, Niharika Yadav, Pooja Kapoor, Prakash Palanivel, and Rohit Dey. Each fellow brings unique insights and expertise in their respective fields, ranging from policy research to technology innovation.

The CRISP Fellowship Programme aims to bring bright young minds into the social sector, nurturing them to become future leaders equipped with the skills and knowledge to drive impactful change. With a focus on learning, doing, and writing, the fellowship program emphasizes strong implementation strategies to translate insights into tangible outcomes. CRISP will deploy these exceptional individuals in various collaborative states to work on projects aimed at positive change in the social sector. Their diverse backgrounds and expertise will enrich CRISP's efforts to facilitate the effective implementation of social sector programs and policies to achieve maximum societal benefit. As CRISP's new cohort of fellows begins their journey, anticipation is high for the innovative solutions and transformative initiatives they will spearhead in collaboration with partner states.

CRISP Collabs with Maharashtra Govt. in Enhancement of Higher Education

CRISP has forged a strategic collaboration with the Maharashtra Government to elevate higher education standards. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed in the presence of Honorable Education Minister Chandrakant Patil, R Subrahmanyam, Secretary CRISP, Sitaram J Kunte, Founding Member of CRISP and Former Chief Secretary of Maharashtra. The MoU is aimed at professionalizing general education across 313 colleges. Under the National Initiative on Skill Integrated Higher Education (NISHE), CRISP will implement an industry-designed curriculum in these colleges, aiming to admit 18,000 students across ten sectors over three years. Additionally, CRISP will introduce a curriculum structure for the Apprenticeship Embedded Degree Program (AEDP), further enhancing skill development and employability. This collaborative effort signifies a significant step towards bridging the gap between academia and industry, ensuring students are equipped with practical skills for the workforce. The partnership between CRISP and the Maharashtra Government underscores their dedication to advancing educational excellence and driving socio-economic growth in the region.



CRISP is Collaborating with the Dept. of Public Health and Medical Education in Madhya Pradesh.

CRISP, in collaboration with the Department of Public Health and Medical Education (DPH&ME) of the Government of Madhya Pradesh (GoMP), has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on March 15, 2024. The purpose of this agreement is to develop a comprehensive action plan for enhancing medical education and health systems in Madhya Pradesh, referred to as the MEHAK-MP initiative. Initially, CRISP will undertake two projects under this initiative. The first project aims to implement IT-enabled paperless processes within medical colleges, associated hospitals, and district hospitals. The second project focuses on emergency care and trauma planning. Within a span of 90 days, CRISP will draft a detailed action plan, subject to approval by the GoMP for subsequent implementation.

CRISP will leverage the expertise of its technical partner, Health Systems Transformation Protocol (HSTP), throughout the design, implementation, and monitoring phases of the action plan. Additionally, CRISP will conduct necessary training and capacity-building programs to support the successful implementation of the plan. The state government will cover the cost of training and capacity-building programs conducted by CRISP.

Economist Prof. Karthik Muralidharan Engages in Productive Discussion at CRISP



Prof. Karthik Muralidharan, esteemed Tata Chancellor's Professor of Economics at UC San Diego and Founder of Centre for Effective Governance of Indian States (CEGIS), visited CRISP's central office for a fruitful dialogue. The discussion centred around enhancing efficiencies in public finance and promoting evidence-based policymaking. Prof. Muralidharan emphasised the value of data-driven approaches in shaping effective governance. He also shared insights from his upcoming book "Accelerating India's Development: A State-Led Roadmap for Effective Governance", underscoring the importance of collaborative efforts to drive impactful change. This exchange highlights CRISP's commitment to leveraging expertise for societal progress.

CRISP's Association with Rajasthan and Karnataka Govts to Revolutionize Higher Education

CRISP's collaboration with the Governments of Rajasthan and Karnataka under the National Initiative on Skill Integrated Higher Education (NISHE) is receiving widespread acclaim, heralding a new era of innovation in the education sector.

In Rajasthan, CRISP, along with seven sector skill councils, is set to transform general degree courses into professional programs in 50 colleges starting from the academic year 2024-25. This initiative, endorsed by Shri Bhajan Lal Sharma, Chief Minister of Rajasthan, promises deep skilling, adherence to global standards, one-year apprenticeships, and guaranteed 100% placements.

Meanwhile, in Karnataka, CRISP's partnership with the government has taken concrete form with a policy statement by Honorable Education Minister Dr. MC Sudhakar. The government aims to convert all degree colleges into professional institutions, offering job-oriented courses. The proposed Apprenticeship Embedded Degree Programme will provide students with a two-year degree and a one-year internship, accompanied by a stipend ranging from Rs 11,000 to Rs 17,000.

These collaborative efforts underscore CRISP's commitment to transforming higher education, equipping students with practical skills and preparing them for the demands of the modern workforce. Stay tuned for further updates as CRISP continues to drive positive change in education across regions.

CRISP in action

Meghalaya

Career Conversation at C-Edge College, Nagaland, by Akho Phira, CRISP Fellow

As part of the Special Lecture series organised by C-Edge College, Dimapur; Nagaland, Akho Phira, CRISP Fellow Meghalaya was invited to deliver a session on the topic - 'A Discourse on Alternative Career: Development Sector' on 26th February 2024. The program was attended by a total of 43 participants from the History Department. The speaker shared his experiences in the Social Sector and emphasised the importance of building skills and capacities through internships and apprenticeships during the course of studies with different organisations and institutions.



SHG Financial Institution

Embarking on a joint pursuit to establish an Apex Financial Institution viz - 'KONG PLA TANGKA CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY (KPTCS)' dedicated to Self-Help Groups in Meghalaya with the vision to strengthen the existing bank linkage platforms and nurture the power-house of SHGs federations by creating an enabling system to amplify their voices and active participation through economic empowerment.

On this note, the first phase of outreach and training was held with 45 Cluster Level Federations (CFLs) in three regions viz - Jaintia Hills, Khasi Hills and Garo Hills on 14th, 15th & 21st March 2024 respectively. The training was collaboratively organised by the Meghalaya State Rural Livelihoods Society (MSRLS) and the Centre for Research in Schemes and Policies (CRISP).

The highlights of the training stressed the scope of strengthening the SHG federation at different levels, creating a conducive platform for addressing women's financial needs, the importance of long-term sustainability for the SHG network, and augmenting livelihood opportunities, among others.

The packed training was well received with a participation of more than 200 participants from all 12 districts of Meghalaya. The open platform enabled a healthy ground for allowing concerns and critical analysis of the proposal to be discussed and clarified which resulted in the conviction of the participants to anticipate for KPTCS to commence for their welfare.



VLDP Training for Hub & Spoke Model Villages

Taking in cognizance of the unique governance of community administration in the villages of Meghalaya, the CRISP team in collaboration with the support of the Block Development Officer (BDO) and Block Officials from the State Rural Employment Society (SRES), Meghalaya State Rural Livelihoods Society (MSRLS), Gram Sewak, Block Technical Assistant (BTA) and other, is curating training and engagement tools with specifics for the Village Level Planning Facilitating Team (VLPFT) for ensuring inclusive participation in community development planning.

The joint effort resulted in the successful organisation of three training sessions on 26th - 27th Feb, 9th & 16th March 2024, with Jarain village, Madan Bitaw village and Mookyniang village respectively.

The training dwelled on the significance of ensuring an inclusive and well-informed audience for community development. Further, extensive practical exercises were conducted to train the participants on identifying gaps and problems and hence prioritising demands/ address of problems based on mutual findings.



Concurrent study on Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)

Accentuating on the pertinent urgency to realise Early Childhood Care & Education (EECE) at Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) in the state of Meghalaya, the CRISP team is closely associating with the Social Welfare Department (SWD) and the Early Childhood Development Mission (ECDM) to bridge the gaps and strengthen the state's pursuit in this mission. It is however firmly believed that a well-functioning AWCs can shape and serve as a nurturing space for children aged 0-6 years addressing their fundamental needs including healthcare, nutrition, education and preschool activities. It is time to realise that an AWCs has the power to shape a child's destiny fostering lifelong development in a positive manner.

To ensure greater push and participation, the CRISP team is undertaking a concurrent study of the ICDS program in the state to identify challenges and opportunities at different levels from the community, AWWs, AWCs, Schools, Lady Supervisors, CDPOs, DPOs, and other stakeholders. To date, the CRISP team has visited 52 AWCs across Meghalaya and is on the constant move to other Centres to get first-hand experience from the field.

The entire exercise is being carried out with the full support of Shri Sampath Kumar, IAS, Principal Secretary and Shri Praveen Bakshi, IAS, Commissioner & Secretary, SWD, which reinforces the state's commitment to address the gaps under the scheme and revitalise the program to achieve its optimum impact for the people of Meghalaya.



Karnataka

CRISP Karnataka Takes the Lead in Rolling Out the Rajiv Gandhi Panchayat Raj Fellowship

The Kalyana Karnataka region (comprising the districts - Bidar, Kalaburagi, Yadgir, Raichur, Koppal, and Ballari) has historically been characterized by various forms of backwardness. Despite concerted efforts to address these issues, significant disparities persist, hindering the region's overall development. Various indices on development (the NITI Aayog Aspirational Districts Index; the Multidimensional Poverty Index; the Human Development Index; the Nanjundappa Committee Indicators framework) point to the fact that these districts lag behind in many of the indicators on health, education, and socio-economic indicators including agriculture, water resources, skills and financial inclusion.

The Rajiv Gandhi Panchayat Raj Fellowship intends to provide educated, trained and motivated young professionals to the taluks of these districts to bring a fresh set of perspectives, ideas and thinking to aid the local administration in tackling the persistent socio-economic issues in the area, strengthening local democracy and, increasing citizen participation in local governance. It aims to develop a set of young public policy professionals who are adept at gathering and acting on field insights and learnings related to local governance and implementation of initiatives, based on in-depth immersion at the District, Taluk and Gram Panchayat levels.

CRISP is handholding the Rural Development and Panchayat Raj department, Government of Karnataka, with the recruitment and selection process for the fellowship programme and the training of the selected fellows. CRISP will also act as a facilitator in planning the Orientation training programme.

Key Accomplishments

As part of the project, during the year 2023-24 and the first quarter of 2024, CRISP undertook the following activities:

1. Preparation of a detailed Concept note and Job Description for the fellows, and Project Monitoring Unit that will oversee the functioning of the fellows placed in the Taluks.
2. Development of the application for the recruitment process which would have otherwise been done manually. A user-friendly platform was developed to streamline the application process which greatly simplified the hiring process, automated tasks, and enhanced efficiency.
3. Shortlisting of candidates based on machine scoring- The system was effectively able to assess candidates against predetermined criteria related to their educational background and work experience, resulting in a streamlined and efficient selection process. The automated machine scoring was able to expedite the candidate selection process by reducing downtime in identifying candidates who meet the

requirements. 174 out of more than 2000 candidates were shortlisted by the machine.

4. The machine-selected 174 candidates underwent another round of manual screening by the team according to a predetermined matrix to ensure that the selected candidates truly meet the required qualifications.
5. Set the question paper for the written essay test (Kannada and English).
6. Physical document verification and the written test were both conducted for the 128 candidates who attended the process on 22nd February 2024 at the Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Rural Energy and Development in Bangalore.
7. A detailed matrix with a checklist was prepared to streamline the process of physical document verification. A matrix outlining the criteria and parameters for scoring the interviews was also prepared.
8. The interviews of all the candidates were conducted by a 5-member panel (Additional Chief Secretary-Panchayat Raj, Commissioner - Panchayat Raj Commissionerate, Director- State Institute of Rural Development, Deputy Secretary-Admin of the Panchayat Raj Commissionerate, and CRISP's State Lead - Karnataka) from 26th Feb to 28th Feb 2024.
9. 51 fellows out of the 127 candidates who attended the interview have been selected. Offer letters were issued to the selected fellows and 49 out of the 51 selected have accepted the offer.
10. CRISP is the coordinating partner responsible for planning and facilitating the fellowship orientation training programme for the selected fellows, scheduled to be held in June 2024 for a period of one month at the State Institute of Rural Development, Mysore.
11. A Draft Orientation training module has been prepared and shared with the department.
12. The recruitment process for the project monitoring unit is completed. Three members have been identified and selected by the department with assistance from CRISP.

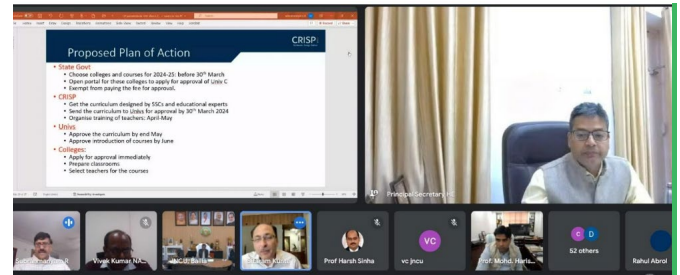
CRISP will design and develop the RGPRF Management Portal, a comprehensive platform to manage all aspects of the fellowship program, enhancing administrative efficiency and communication channels. Additionally, CRISP will prepare HR manuals, terms of reference, and training materials for fellows, collaborating closely with the PMU to provide necessary support throughout the fellowship.

Uttar Pradesh

The focus of the month had been supporting institutions in the preparation of the Institutional Development Plan (IDP) and scaling up the PEHLE-UP Project by conducting capacity-building workshops and research on Government Institutions under the UP Higher Education Department.

Implementation of Apprenticeship Embedded Degree Programmes (AEDPs)

A meeting was held with the Vice-Chancellors of State Universities in Uttar Pradesh to discuss the implementation of Apprenticeship Embedded Degree Programmes (AEDPs) in the academic year 2024-25. This initiative is aimed at promoting “Earn while you Learn” programs, where students can gain work experience alongside their academic studies. It was led by Mr. R. Subrahmanyam (IAS ret'd), Mr. Sitaram Kunte (IAS ret'd.), and PS-UPHED Mr. Aggarwal (IAS).



Capacity Building Workshops

- Kanpur University Workshop (February 28th): A one-day workshop was held at Chhatrapati Shahu Ji Maharaj University, Kanpur, to provide capacity building and support for the development of IDPs. The workshop also presented the status of the Implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in UP HEIs, CRISP-UP's monitoring mechanism for the same, and introduced a quantitative survey for monitoring of NEP Implementation. The team has received 105 responses.
- Vinayak Vidyapeeth Meerut hosted a 1-day Faculty Development Program on March 13th, in Meerut, where the CRISP-UP team was invited as experts. 13 institutions of the Rudra Group of Institutions participated, each bringing its unique specialization to the table. Dr Anuprita Sharma, Principal and Academic Head of Rudra Group of Institutions headed the event. Dean, Principal and IQAC heads along with faculty members were present from all the institutions of Rudra Group of Institutions.
- Divya and Rahul, representing CRISP-UP, led the workshop. Divya delved into crucial aspects and parameters for institutions to consider for enhancing the quality of education, emphasizing their role in shaping the NAAC self-study report (SSR) and Institutional Development Plan. Meanwhile, Rahul shed light on the parameters outlined by NIRF and probable institutional issues and potential. The Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) demonstrated a strong commitment to elevating their current standards and delivering quality education. They expressed appreciation for the workshop and the insightful suggestions provided by the CRISP-UP team, pledging to work on the Institutional Development Plan (IDP) with CRISP.



Andhra Pradesh

The team's focus this month was on initiatives to strengthen Foundation Schools in Andhra Pradesh. The Government of Andhra Pradesh has implemented the 5+3+3+4 school structure as envisioned in the National Education Policy 2020, and created Foundation Schools by co-locating Anganwadi Centres to integrate PP1 and PP2 of AWCs into the Primary Schools. CRISP is actively supporting the government in this transition, and to bring about convergence between the departments of education and women development and child welfare.

As part of this, CRISP is conducting a Time-Use study of Anganwadi workers in 30 centres across the State to document the activities they perform on a day-to-day basis and the time they spend on these. The larger aim of the study is to understand if they can commit 3 hours exclusively to Early Childhood Education activities, and if there are any specific duties that can be offset to other department functionaries, reducing their burden and giving them more focused time for ECE. The data-collection using an adapted version of the Stallings Observation Method is currently underway.

To understand academic convergence on the ground, the team, along with Ms Neha Dhingra from the Central office, undertook fieldwork in Rampachodavaram, Rajahmundry, Tadepalligudem, and Vijayawada and visited 6 Foundation Schools including Urban co-located, Tribal mapped, Tribal co-located, Urban merged and Rural mapped Anganwadi centres. They observed that day-to-day convergence is minimal, with Anganwadi centres and Primary Schools largely functioning in silos, and awaiting government instructions for operationalization. The visits offered valuable insights into the practical realities and challenges teachers encounter regarding convergence, as well as other broader issues. These insights will inform the team's proposals and recommendations in the forthcoming months.

CRISP AP Team also attended a 5-day training workshop by Pratham Education Foundation for 82 Anganwadi workers and Secondary Grade Teachers from 41 Model Foundation Schools, held in Vijayawada. The workshop laid the ground for the concept of Foundation Schools as envisioned in the NEP 2020, highlighting AP's pioneering efforts as the first state to operationalize convergence between the departments of education and women development & child welfare. The sessions covered a wide array of topics including the continuum from PP1 to Grade 2, the significance of Foundational Schools and convergence, understanding the duties and job charts of AWWs and SGTs, ECCE, Brain Development and characteristics, Holistic Development, Community Engagement, School Readiness Mela, Assessment Tools, and Classroom Management. Smt Vetri Selvi, Director of the WD&CW Dept, interacted with the participants, emphasizing the critical importance of AWWs and SGTs' commitment to driving convergence at the field level. She encourages them to share ground-level challenges and provide continual feedback to inform government policy guidelines on convergence.



CRISP Fellows 2024- New Cohort

▼ Abhishek Saini

Abhishek Saini, originally from Ambala district of Haryana, earned his Bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering from Panjab University, Chandigarh in 2018. He then served as the Area Service Manager at IFB Industries Ltd, overseeing the operational aspects of the Chandigarh Branch from 2018 to 2020. Subsequently, Abhishek participated in the Mahatma Gandhi National Fellowship Programme, a collaborative initiative between the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship and the Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore. Here, he undertook a Certificate Programme in Public Policy and Management, further enhancing his knowledge and skills. During his tenure in the fellowship, Abhishek collaborated with the District Administration of Hisar, Haryana, focusing on skill development initiatives. Abhishek actively contributed to policy formulation, designing skill development plans, conducting thorough field assessments, and monitoring governmental scheme implementations.



▼ Abiya Jose

Abiya Jose, a young professional, is deeply committed to effecting positive change within the social sector. Her academic background in Economics and Political Science has cultivated a keen interest in public policy and governance. Throughout her educational journey, Abiya actively engaged in extracurricular pursuits, fostering leadership skills and enhancing her ability to connect with diverse groups of individuals. After graduation, she undertook a role as a Fellow at Teach For India, dedicating herself to educating middle school students in an economically disadvantaged school in Chennai. This experience profoundly enriched her comprehension of real-world challenges and underscored the importance of grassroots engagement. In addition to her professional endeavors, Abiya is deeply passionate about leveraging art and crafts, particularly as a medium to promote environmental sustainability.



▼ Akhil Ravella

Akhil Ravella, with three years of Government Consulting experience, holds a Masters in Urban Policy and Governance from Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. His skill set includes research, stakeholder engagement, financial analysis, project management, report writing, monitoring and evaluation, public policy analysis, and advocacy. He is passionate about Public Policy, Education, Social Welfare, and Gender Development. Notable projects include creating a State Receipts MIS, establishing Social Welfare Sports Schools, contributing to SOP and a Grievance system for the Prevention of Atrocities Act, and tourism destination development under Swadesh Darshan 2.0. Additionally, he's been involved in organizational restructuring, collaborated on Product Development with the National Institute of Design, and coordinated for the Handlooms & Textiles Department at the 'Global Investors Summit 2023' (Andhra Pradesh). Akhil is committed to advocating for marginalized communities and sees CRISP as an opportunity to contribute to social and economic development.



▼ Anamika Nair

Anamika is a passionate social documentarian who focuses on grassroots level, sustainable high-impact interventions in rural livelihoods, education and skills development. She completed her undergraduate education in mass media, specializing in journalism which was enhanced later by multidisciplinary liberal arts training as part of the Young India Fellowship at Ashoka University. She has worked as an overall systems, outreach, documentation and communication in-charge at organisations like Bombay Film factory, CARPE Aurangabad and Citizens for Justice and Peace. Anamika holds a fervent passion for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion (DEI), Leadership, People & Culture Strategy, and Learning & Development (L&D). She brings a strong background in fostering gender diversity as well as developing equitable, practicable and sustainable area-specific solutions within top organisations. As a founding member of WeAce, she has played a pivotal role in shaping the organization's vision and strategy, emphasizing the importance of DEI and L&D in driving institutional success.



▼ Chandramani Singh

Chandramani graduated from Hindu College, University of Delhi, where he served as the Cultural Activities Secretary. He is also a former MGN Fellow who completed his Programme in Public Policy and Management from IIM Bangalore during the two-year fellowship. With previous experience working with government stakeholders and implementing government programs, Chandramani has collaborated with the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, UPSDM, and District Administration to achieve various objectives within the skilling ecosystem. Through this experience, he has gained valuable insights into the challenges of policy formulation and grassroots implementation, noting a significant gap between ambitious scheme goals and actual outcomes. He excels in analyzing complex issues, devising solutions, and providing recommendations. He is passionate about continuing his career in the development sector with a focus on the education system.



▼ Gargee Deka

Gargee Deka, hailing from Assam, joins this community with a rich tapestry of experiences. From studying sociology at Delhi University to delving into development studies at IIT Guwahati, she has collaborated with organizations like UNDP and ASRLM, focusing on livelihood enhancement and gender sensitivity. Passionate about media, Gargee has produced impactful content with Brahmaputra Tele Productions. Recently, she explored memes for her Master's dissertation, blending humor with societal insights. Her broader research interests include gender, cultural studies, and public policy. Beyond work, Gargee loves traveling, collecting souvenirs, and dancing whenever she can.



▼ Gaurav G Nayak

Gaurav is a policy enthusiast with a background in the social sciences. He graduated with a Master's in International Security from the Paris School of International Affairs-Sciences Po, where he specialized in Diplomacy and Human Rights. Before that, he completed his BA in Economics and Political Science from St. Stephen's College, University of Delhi. Passionate about policy-oriented research, he has experience in both quantitative and qualitative methodologies and believes that evidence-based policymaking is important for promoting social welfare. He interned with the Department of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj, Government of Punjab where he documented best practices of self-help groups through field studies. Further, during his internships with non-governmental organizations, he worked on promoting disability rights, and fostering community engagement with refugees in Delhi.



▼ Heera K Anil

Heera K Anil, a commerce graduate from Madras Christian College, initially pursued the UPSC examination with the intent of making a meaningful contribution to the development sector. When the UPSC journey did not materialize as she hoped, she embraced an alternative path to contribute to the development sector by joining the Gandhi Fellowship. Immersed in her fellowship experience in Muzaffarpur district, Bihar, Heera collaborated closely with the district administration, particularly focusing on the digitization of the public health system. This endeavor not only allowed her to analyze the intricacies of the system but also brought to light its inherent gaps. Through this hands-on involvement with the administration and government stakeholders, Heera's latent interest in the inner workings of government machinery, as well as policies and schemes, was kindled. Motivated by this newfound curiosity, she envisions contributing to citizen welfare by being part of policy making in India.



▼ Prakash Palanivel

Prakash Palanivel, a postgraduate in Economics from the Central University of Tamil Nadu, has extensive experience in the NGO sector and government stakeholder management. Originally from Namakkal district in Tamil Nadu, Prakash served as a Gandhi Fellow, focusing on community participation for the Jal Jeevan Mission in Madhya Pradesh. He collaborated on the Gram Panchayat Development Plan and supported water and sanitation programs. Prakash's research includes Soil Health Testing and training farmers on water use efficiency. Proficient in Tamil, English, and Hindi, he is adept at driving positive change.



▼ Mrigakshi Sarma



Born in the land of Assam, Mrigakshi graduated in Political Science from Lady Shri Ram College for Women and has a Master's degree from the University of Delhi. She also holds a Diploma in Conflict Transformation and Peacebuilding from the Aung San Suu Kyi Centre for Peace, Lady Shri Ram College for Women. During this, she was involved in primary research and focused on the intersection of development and conflict. She has worked with I-PAC and was actively involved in the electoral process in Meghalaya and West Bengal. Further, she has interned with NITI Aayog, Assam Legislative Assembly, where she has worked on policies and sustainable development focusing on the North East Region. Her interest lies in politics, policies, gender, development, conflict and NE studies, she has presented and published papers as well in this regard. Mrigakshi wishes to create a career for the larger development of her community, primarily focusing on women and children.

▼ Niharika Baishya Yadav



Niharika Baishya Yadav, a native of Guwahati, Assam, is deeply passionate about the social sector and understanding society. She pursued an Honors degree in Sociology at Delhi University and furthered her studies with a Post Graduation in Sociology and Social Anthropology from Tata Institute of Social Sciences. With a love for music and culture, Niharika's interests are diverse. Her professional journey includes roles at Eight Brothers Social Welfare Society, where she conducted workshops for marginalized women on SHG upliftment and government schemes. Later, as a consultant and researcher at Indian Political Action Committee (I-PAC), she studied the demographics of marginalized communities in Assam, Meghalaya, and West Bengal, designing impactful campaigns reaching over 15 lakh households. Niharika aspires to work with international organizations like the United Nations to drive positive change, particularly in the North Eastern region of India.

▼ Pooja Kapoor



Pooja Kapoor, an architect planner by profession, commenced her academic journey at the School of Architecture, IPS Academy, Indore, from 2012 to 2017. Following her graduation, she ventured into various architecture projects, which exposed her to the realm of urban planning. Intrigued by its complexities, she pursued a Master's in Urban Planning from GNDU Amritsar from 2020-2022. Throughout her studies and professional experiences, Pooja developed a deep fascination for the diverse facets of urban planning. From understanding planning hierarchies to delving into economics, financial management, fiscal developments, governance structures, and policy formulation, she explored every aspect with enthusiasm and dedication. With a keen eye towards the future, Pooja aspires to leverage her passion for urban planning and governance to drive positive change. She aims to contribute to sustainable and inclusive urban and rural development by implementing innovative policies and strategies that enhance the quality of life for communities.

▼ Rohit Dey



Rohit Dey is a public policy professional specializing in Regulations & Institutions and Data Science. He possesses a unique blend of expertise to tackle complex socio-economic challenges and contribute to social science and development. Rohit is adept at navigating institutional complexities and policy challenges. He is passionate about urban development, regulatory affairs, financial policy, education, and the public sector, but he is not restricted to them. Rohit's versatile career includes the academic role of a Course Instructor at Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Hyderabad, teaching a core course, "Introduction to R and Python", for the M.A. in Cities and Governance program and a corporate role of a System Engineer with Tata Consultancy Services, where he helped develop a Recommendation Engine for employee project allocation and led skill development initiatives. He is proficient in Python, Machine Learning, Statistical Modeling, Policy Analysis, Data Visualization, and Report Development, among other technical and functional skills.

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