

CRISP

October 2024 Edition

MAASAM

Monthly Account of Achievements,
Successes and Memories

Content

ExpertSpeak

Building Foundations: Early Childhood Education Practices in Punjab and Haryana

Manisha Koppala CRISP Consultant, School Education, Andhra Pradesh
Neha Ashar CRISP Fellow, Andhra Pradesh

FellowSpeak

Major Developments in CRISP

CRISP in Action



ExpertSpeak

BUILDING FOUNDATIONS: EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PRACTICES IN PUNJAB AND HARYANA

**Manisha Koppala**

CRISP Consultant, School Education, Andhra Pradesh

**Neha Ashar**

CRISP Fellow, Andhra Pradesh

Punjab and Haryana have made significant strides in Early Childhood Education (ECE), with both states prioritizing foundational literacy and numeracy as part of broader educational reforms. Punjab introduced pre-primary classrooms in 2017, while Haryana launched Balvatika classes for 5-6-year-olds in 2023. **Key areas of focus include budget allocation, appointment of dedicated ECE teachers, community engagement, and robust monitoring systems.** Both states demonstrate a commitment to improving early learning outcomes through innovative approaches and partnerships, aiming to universalize quality early childhood education.

In recent years, Punjab and Haryana have made dedicated efforts to reform and strengthen their education systems. This is evident in their performance across national-level rankings, including the PGI (Performance Grading Index (PGI), National Assessment Survey, and Annual Status of Education Report (ASER). Both states have also placed significant focus on Early Childhood Education (ECE). This article provides insights from the CRISP Team's visits to the two states to understand their models of ECE delivery.

Punjab

Pre-primary classrooms started in all 13,000 primary schools in 2017

In 2016, only 22% of Anganwadi Centres had low enrollment. To reach children not attending school and those in private institutions, the government introduced pre-primary classrooms in all 13,000 primary schools across the state in a phased approach. Here are some of the important lessons learned:



1. **Budget Allocation:** In total, 11% of the state budget is allocated to education. Approximately 40 Crore is allocated to the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) PAB (Project Approval Board) for community activities in pre-primary education. Funds are distributed directly to schools to establish pre-primary sections and to organize community activities including Mothers' Workshops, graduation day, and monthly events.
2. **Appointment of Dedicated ECE Teachers:** Volunteer and contractual teachers have been regularized as ECE teachers and provided specific training on ECE twice a year. ECE Teachers have also pursued the Nursery Teacher Training (NTT) distance course from IGNOU.
3. **Convergent and Streamlined process:** Age of entry to Grade 1 is mandated at Age 6. Common guidelines were released by the Department of School Education and Department of Social Security, Women & Child Development regarding the processes and training.
4. **Infrastructure, Curriculum, Assessments, and Community:** Child-friendly and print-rich classrooms with appropriate furniture, Teaching-Learning Materials (TLM), and TVs have been installed in all classrooms. The Early Childhood Education (ECE) curriculum covers subjects across literacy and numeracy, including Punjabi, English, Mathematics, and Life Skills, along with a Teacher Manual and digital learning material. Assessments are conducted three times a year (baseline, midline, endline). The community, including parents and caregivers, is involved in the child's learning through Mothers' Workshops and awareness of The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 (POCSO). Gurudwaras are also actively used to broadcast important messages and campaigns, such as enrollment drives, helping to effectively reach and engage a wider audience.
5. **Administration and Monitoring:** Committed and qualified officials have been deployed to proactively manage programs, continuously monitor and evaluate them on the ground, conduct regular review meetings, update textbooks and teaching/learning materials (TLM), and strive for improvement through achievable targets year on year.



Haryana

Balvatika classes introduced for 5-6 year olds in all 8676 Primary schools in 2023

Following the National Education Policy 2020, the Government of India launched the NIPUN (National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy) Bharat Mission in 2021 to attain foundational literacy and numeracy for all children between preschool to Grade 3. Through the NIPUN Haryana Mission, the state has actively undertaken various academic and governance initiatives to ensure all children become FLN (Foundational Literacy and Numeracy)-competent and has expanded the FLN mission to Grade 5 in 2024. In the academic year 2023-24, the state introduced Balvatika classes for 5-6-year-olds in all 8,676 primary schools, while PP (Pre-Primary) 1 and PP2 classes continue to operate in Anganwadi Centres (AWCs).

Some of the key learnings that stood out to the team were:

1. **Budget Allocation:** Overall, 12% of the state budget is allocated to education. There is less reliance on the Samagra Shiksha allocation.
2. **Appointment of Balvatika Teachers:** Primary School Teachers have been reappointed as dedicated Balvatika teachers to handle the new class of 5-6-year-olds within the primary school.
3. **Infrastructure, Curriculum, and Community:** A vibrant classroom, divided into two spaces: one half with benches and desks, and the other half with a mat for free play. Abundant Teaching-Learning Materials, charts and TVs with embedded digital content are given in every classroom. The Balvatika curriculum covers subjects such as Hindi, English, Numeracy, Activity book, and Teacher Manual. The community is actively involved in the child's learning—an example being holiday homework where parents facilitate the child's activities and assess them on cards.
4. **Administration and Monitoring:** District squads, District FLN coordinators, and Steering Committees have been appointed to constantly review FLN data and outcomes

Both Punjab and Haryana showcase innovative approaches to Early Childhood Care and Education, with a focus on decentralization, dedicated teachers for ECE, community involvement, investment in infrastructure, and leveraging technology. The role of partnerships with NGOs and other organizations is evident in both states, highlighting the importance of technical support in implementing large-scale educational reforms. The visit to Punjab and Haryana offers a wealth of insights to the CRISP Team and deepens the sense of commitment to universalizing quality early childhood education in India.

FellowSpeak



Hashir P.V
Fellow CRISP, Karnataka

Since joining CRISP, I've had the privilege to work closely with the Rural Development and Panchayat Raj department, which deals with Gram Panchayats—the closest form of local governance for rural communities. This role has allowed me to contribute to large-scale government programs that directly impact the most vulnerable and marginalized sections of society, which has been a truly rewarding experience.

Throughout this journey, I've had the chance to closely observe and learn the nuances of administration, understanding the intricate workings of governance at the grassroots level. I have also recognized the importance of data-driven policymaking, understanding how insights from data can shape more effective policies that genuinely address the needs of those at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder.

By sharing critical insights from my field experience, I've contributed to identifying key gaps in policy implementation, which has enabled the government to take necessary corrective measures. This has given me firsthand exposure to how policies formulated at higher levels of government are adapted and refined to meet the real challenges faced at the grassroots level.

I am immensely grateful for the mentorship and professional guidance of Mr. Vijayanand, Mr. Subrahmaniam, and Ms. Lalita. Their guidance has not only enhanced my knowledge but has deeply enriched my overall professional experience. Additionally, my peers have been a constant source of support, contributing valuable insights and collaboration along the way. This journey has not only sharpened my understanding of governance but has also instilled in me the drive to excel in any role within this sector. I am confident that the skills, knowledge, and values I have gained through this experience will be invaluable as I continue to pursue my career in this field.



CRISP Completes Two Transformative Years: A Journey of Innovation and Impact

We are excited to share that the Centre for Research in Schemes and Policies (CRISP) has reached a significant milestone—our two-year anniversary! Over the past two years, CRISP has grown into a trusted partner in shaping policies, designing impactful programs, and driving public sector initiatives across 10 states in India.

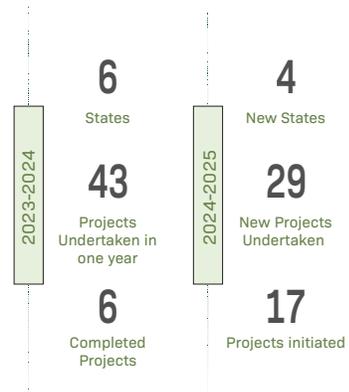
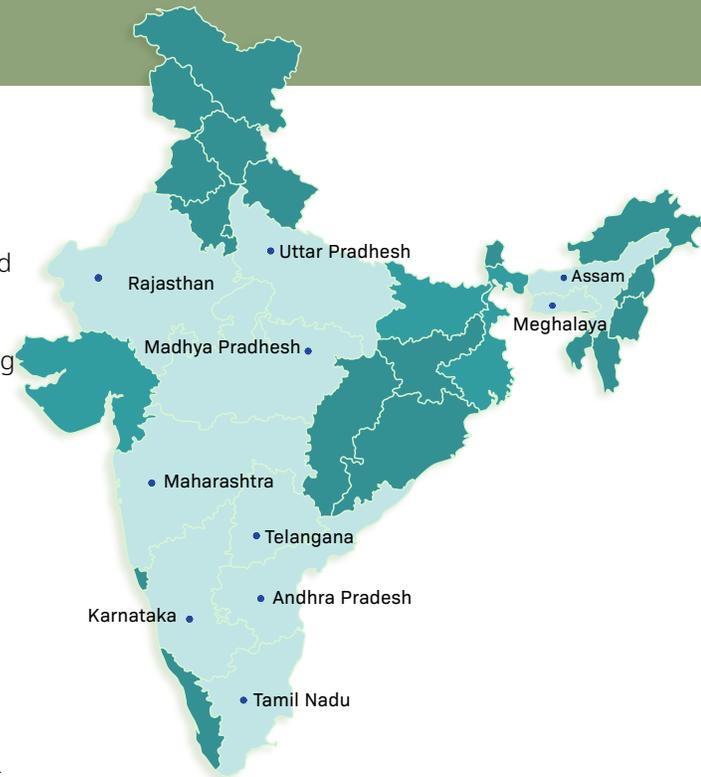
Through our strategic collaborations with state governments and stakeholders, we've focused on advancing key thematic areas:

- **Early Childhood Education:** Enhancing foundational learning and shaping future-ready models.
- **School and Higher Education:** Improving the quality of education while integrating skilling and employability programs.
- **Rural Development:** Empowering communities through grassroots initiatives, governance reforms, and improved sanitation systems.
- **Administrative Enhancement (Capacity Building):** Strengthening institutions and public services through innovative capacity-building models.
- **Healthcare Management:** Addressing challenges in health infrastructure and policy through research-backed solutions.

Our journey has been defined by a commitment to evidence-based research and actionable solutions. Over these two years, CRISP has produced numerous studies, guidelines, and frameworks, contributing to better governance and sustainable development.

As we look back on these achievements, we are more determined than ever to continue this journey. These two years are not the end but a solid foundation for the future. Our commitment remains steadfast—to support the government and society in building a stronger, more resilient nation through research and innovation.

We thank all our partners, stakeholders, and team members for their unwavering support and dedication. Together, we will continue to drive change, strengthen public institutions, and create impactful policies that foster long-term progress.



Major Developments at CRISP

CRISP and LIVING LANDSCAPES Find Common Ground for Collaboration on Grassroots Institution Strengthening

The Centre for Research in Schemes and Policies (CRISP) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with LIVING LANDSCAPES, an NGO focused on fostering collaborative efforts to address the intertwined challenges of rural livelihoods and environmental governance. This MoU marks the beginning of a cooperative effort between both organizations, aligning their visions to advance CRISP's new initiative—Grassroot level Institutions Strengthening & Transformation (GIST).



GIST is aimed at driving policies and strategies that promote ecologically sustainable and inclusive rural development by empowering grassroots institutions. The initiative supports decentralized, community-led governance and will be rolled out in Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Jharkhand, and Odisha. A key aspect of the project involves working alongside State Governments and State Rural Livelihood Missions (SRLMs) to build the capacities of Grama Panchayats and Self-Help Groups (SHGs). These efforts will focus on converging resources and expertise to develop Gram Panchayat Development Plans that help create clean, green, and poverty-free villages.

The MoU was signed by R. Subrahmanyam, Secretary of CRISP, and Mr. Jagdeesh Rao Puppala, Director and Chief Executive Officer of LIVING LANDSCAPES. The agreement sets the foundation for a collaboration that will leverage the strengths of both organizations in addressing rural development and environmental sustainability through grassroots-level interventions.

CRISP Hosts Additional Secretary from Ministry of Women and Child Development for Discussions on Strengthening Early Childhood Education



CRISP recently welcomed Ms. Tripti Gurha, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Women and Child Development, to its central office in Hyderabad. The visit led to a productive discussion on CRISP's ongoing efforts and projects aimed at strengthening pre-primary education and early childhood education across the country.

During the discussions, CRISP reaffirmed its commitment to collaborating with the Ministry to support the adoption and implementation of Aadharshila—the National Curriculum for Early Childhood Care and Education 2024, designed for children aged three to six years. CRISP will also contribute to monitoring the training outcomes of Anganwadi teachers, who are undergoing large-scale training initiatives led by the Ministry. This collaboration aims to enhance the quality of early childhood education through structured curriculum adoption and teacher capacity-building.

The meeting underscored the importance of CRISP's role in supporting national efforts to improve early education, with both parties committed to creating impactful outcomes for the youngest learners. sustainability through grassroots-level interventions.

CRISP in Action

NISHE September 2024 Highlights

Maharashtra: Engaging HEIs in Apprenticeship Programs

Ms. Anamika Nair, Fellow-CRISP Maharashtra, conducted visits to nine Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), including five universities and four colleges across Maharashtra. Her engagement with students and faculty under the NISHE Project aimed at resolving queries and providing clarity on the benefits of Apprenticeship Embedded Degree Programs (AEDPs). Her outreach has helped foster a better understanding of how AEDPs can enhance the learning experience and career prospects for students.

Karnataka: Faculty Training Initiatives

A series of faculty training sessions were held in Karnataka under the NISHE project, focusing on key sectors like Banking, Financial Services, and Insurance (BFSI), Retail, Logistics, and E-Commerce. These sessions took place from the 9th to 14th of September 2024 at the Karnataka State Higher Education Academy (HEA) in Dharwad, benefiting faculty members from over 45 colleges. Ms. Harshitha J, Fellow-CRISP Karnataka, actively participated in these sessions, ensuring the faculty were equipped to support AEDP implementation in their institutions.

Madhya Pradesh: Strengthening AEDP Awareness

BFSI Faculty Training was successfully conducted at Sarojini Naidu Government Girls PG College, Bhopal, from the 10th to 12th of September 2024, involving faculty from 21 colleges. Additionally, CRISP Madhya Pradesh Fellows, Mr. Abhishek Saini and Ms. Pooja Kapoor, visited 20 AEDP colleges to engage with students and faculty, addressing concerns and promoting the benefits of AEDPs. Their efforts are contributing to a growing awareness and interest in skill-based education across the state.

Uttar Pradesh: Fostering AEDP Engagement

Mr. Chandramani Singh, Fellow-CRISP Uttar Pradesh, visited four AEDP colleges across the state in September, where he interacted with students and faculty. He provided valuable insights into the AEDP structure, clearing doubts and highlighting the numerous benefits these programs offer to both learners and educators. His visit is expected to encourage greater participation in skill-integrated higher education across Uttar Pradesh.

About CRISP and NISHE

The Centre for Research in Schemes & Policies (CRISP) is driving the National Initiative for Skill Integrated Higher Education (NISHE), aimed at embedding apprenticeship programs within degree courses through AEDPs. These programs seek to bridge the gap between academic knowledge and practical skills, ensuring students are better prepared for the workforce upon graduation.





CRISP in Action

CRISP Karnataka Fellows Present Papers at the XIX International Public Policy Conference, IIM Bangalore

CRISP-Karnataka Fellows Hashir P.V. and Daksha Jain presented case studies at the 19th International Conference on Public Policy and Management. The conference was organized by the Centre for Public Policy (CPP) at IIM Bangalore from August 27 to 29, 2024.

Hashir P.V.'s case study, titled "Beyond Books: Improving Future Readiness in Students Through NGO Interventions in Rural Libraries," explored how Government-NGO partnerships are enhancing the educational and professional development of rural students in Karnataka. It focused on interventions by three NGOs partnered with the Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Department: Sikshana Foundation, Children's Movement for Civic Awareness (CMCA), and Akanksha Charitable Trust. These initiatives focus on providing digital literacy, civic awareness, and educational and professional support to rural students.

Daksha Jain's case study, titled "Cradles of Hope: Karnataka's Koosina Mane as a Catalyst for Women and Children's Advancement," examined the implementation process of the program emphasising its unique features and the convergence between the departments of Rural Development and Panchayat raj, Women and Child Development, and the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme. It also highlighted some of the best practices and innovations undertaken at the grassroots level by the Gram Panchayats.



▶ RURAL DEVELOPMENT



Karnataka

Towards Strengthening GP-GPLF Partnership in Karnataka

CRISP facilitated a two day writeshop titled 'Gram Panchayat- Self-Help Groups Partnership in Karnataka- The Way Forward' held on September 4th and 5th, 2024 at the Abdul Nazir Sab State Institute of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj in Mysuru. It was attended by Ms. Uma Mahadevan, IAS (Development Commissioner and Additional Chief Secretary), the Commissioner, Panchayat Raj, the Mission Director, National Livelihood Mission, department officials, and representatives from Gram Panchayats (GP) and Gram Panchayat Level Federations (GPLF).



The writeshop, led by Mr. S. M. Vijayanand IAS (Retd.), commenced with his introductory remarks during which he explained the need to improve the partnership between the two institutions. Emphasising on the principle of 'equal partnership' between the two, he encouraged the participants to develop guidelines and a framework that reflects this principle. This was followed by group activities in which participants developed detailed guidelines on themes such as 'What GP and GPLF can do for each other,' 'Policy, Process and Procedures,' 'Capacity Building,' and 'Monitoring and Evaluation.'

Based on the writeshop, the CRISP Karnataka Team prepared a draft government circular which has been submitted to the department. Once finalised and issued, this circular is expected to strengthen the partnership between the two institutions, thereby enhancing local governance.

State-Level Consultation on Karnataka Inclusive Livelihood Program (KILP)

The Government of Karnataka, in partnership with BRAC India and PRADAN, has launched the Karnataka Inclusive Livelihood Program (KILP), also known as NARI – Nurturing Aspiration and Resilience for Inclusion. This initiative aims to support the state's most vulnerable households by fostering self-confidence, social inclusion, and economic prosperity through inclusive livelihood opportunities.



On 3rd September 2024, a State Level Consultation on KILP was held at ARI (IAS Association) in Bengaluru. Mr. S.M. Vijayanand was invited as the Key Note Speaker for the event to share his valuable inputs and insights. In his

address, he emphasized that anti-poverty programs are essential for ensuring the fundamental right to life and dignity. He advocated for empowering the most vulnerable, developing clear poverty indicators, and involving the poor in decision-making processes. Highlighting the psychological and social aspects of poverty, he stressed the need to address the varying needs of the poor and called for a 'caring state' over a 'welfare state.'

The CRISP Karnataka team actively participated in the workshop, contributing to the group discussions on how KILP can transform lives by building resilience and inclusion at the grassroots level.



Tamil Nadu

Educational Institutions for Fostering Rural Development through Unnat Bharat Abhiyan

On 19th September, the CRISP Tamil Nadu team held a strategic meeting to accelerate the implementation of Unnat Bharat Abhiyan (UBA) in Kancheepuram district. The meeting was Chaired by Mr. S.M. Vijayanand IAS (Retd.), President of CRISP, and Prof. B.S. Moorthy, Regional Coordinator for UBA at IIT Madras, the meeting aimed to strengthen UBA's efforts in fostering rural development.



Unnat Bharat Abhiyan encourages higher educational institutions to work alongside rural communities to identify local challenges and develop sustainable solutions at the panchayat level. The meeting focused on reviewing the current status of UBA and called upon all stakeholders to take proactive measures in its implementation.

The meeting was attended by Mrs Arthy, Planning Director of the District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) Kancheepuram, district and block-level officials of line departments, Panchayat representatives, and members of Self-Help Groups. The overarching goal of the initiative is to leverage the expertise of educational institutions to ensure sustainable, community-driven progress in rural development.



CRISP Tamil Nadu Team Collaborates with UNICEF and UNDP for Enhanced Synergy and Impact

On 20th September, the CRISP Tamil Nadu team convened a pivotal meeting with UNICEF and UNDP, chaired by Mr. S.M. Vijayanand IAS (Retd.), President of CRISP, along with Dr. C. Chandramouli, Mentor at CRISP. UNICEF and UNDP Representatives also participated in the discussions. The primary focus of the meeting was to identify synergies between CRISP's initiatives and those of UNDP, both in Tamil Nadu and at the national level, to enhance coherence and maximise impact. Both organisations emphasised the importance

of collaboration, particularly in joint research projects and shared efforts on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The key outcome of the meeting was the agreement to work together in creating beacon villages in Tamil Nadu, marking a significant step in advancing the collective mission of sustainable development at both the state and national levels.



Meghalaya



Study on SHG Bank-Linkage in Meghalaya

As a crucial build-up to the Regional - Financial Inclusion Meetings for Khasi - Jaintia & Garo Hills region, organised by Meghalaya State Rural Livelihoods Society (MSRLS) on 9th and 19th September 2024 at MIIT, Shillong, CRISP was invited to carry out two studies on SHG Bank-Linkage with the aim to better understand the access of

SHGs to banking institutions, utilisation of funds, nature of operations and other nuances of financial management. The studies were carried out in a comprehensive manner by capturing insights from multiple stakeholders viz. Self-Help Groups (SHGs), SHG Cadres, Banks and MSRLS staff to assess the roles and contributions in facilitating financial linkages in the state. Interactions were made by the CRISP Team with SHGs, Cadres and MSRLS staff through field visits to Chokpot, Samanda and Songsak Blocks under South and East Garo Hills. Findings of the studies were presented to MSRLS in the presence of State, District and Block Units whereby key recommendations and suggestions were provided for consideration.

▶ EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION



Meghalaya

Efforts to Universalize Access to Quality Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) in Meghalaya

A key proposal of CRISP is to enhance the quality of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) with the primary aim of optimising the convergence of Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) with schools. In this pursuit, the CRISP Team has initially carried out a comprehensive data collection on a pilot basis and completed it in East Khasi Hills District (EKHD) covering 1300 AWCs. Pursuing a mission mode, the team has facilitated a series of District meetings across the state with District Program Officers (DPOs) and Child Development Project Officers (CDPOs) in the month of September to expedite the process of data collection through Anganwadi Workers (AWs) of 4,862 AWCs. Furthermore, the team is simultaneously coordinating with Meghalaya State Rural Livelihoods Society (MSRLS) to reach out to uncovered villages in the state through Village Organisations (VOs) and Community Gender Health Activists (CGHAs) where AWCs are non-existent.



Special Lectures on International Literacy Day - 2024



Commemorating International Literacy Day-2024 under the theme, "Promoting Multilingual Language: Literacy for Mutual Understanding and Peace", Dr(Miss) Minnette Ireen Passah, State Lead, CRISP Meghalaya, was invited as Resource Person to deliver special lectures at Shillong Commerce College and St. Anthony's College, Shillong on 6th and 9th September 2024, respectively. Organised by the Education Department, the events were attended by 80 students and faculties of the department. Emphasising on holistic human development, the Speaker stressed on the significance of promoting literacy to drive social cohesion,

harmony and peace. Additionally, the principle and culture of volunteerism was accentuated to the participants to progress towards a society of continual learning which is more sound, informed and educated.

▶ SCHOOL EDUCATION

📍 Meghalaya

CRISP holds a meeting with Meghalaya Hon'ble Education Minister, Shri Rakkam. A. Sangma at New Delhi

Led by Shri Radheysham Julaniya, a crucial meeting was held with the Hon'ble Education Minister Shri Rakkam A Sangma, in the presence of Shri Himalaya M Shangpliang, Advisor to Education Department and Shri Ambrose Marak, Secretary Education Department and CRISP Meghalaya Team at Meghalaya House, New Delhi on 23rd September 2024. Iterating on CRISP's commitment to the Government of Meghalaya, RS Julaniya presented a detailed blueprint of the recommendations with draft rules to address bottlenecks faced by School Education through efficient human resource management, rationalisation, improving teachers' competencies, learning outcomes, and overall education quality in the state.



▶ HIGHER EDUCATION

📍 Telangana

Institutional Development Plan (IDP) Preparation Across HEIs

The CRISP-Telangana team, recognizing the importance of the Institutional Development Plan (IDP) for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) as mandated by the UGC, has initiated visits to 30 HEIs across the state. These visits include sessions with Heads of Institutions, HoDs, IQAC teams, faculty, and students, making the initiative uniquely inclusive by involving students in shaping the institution's future. These sessions aim to educate institutional leaders on the significance of IDPs, engaging participants in activities that help define or revisit the HEI's vision, mission, core values, goals, objectives, strategies, and key performance indicators (KPIs), while emphasizing the importance of monitoring and evaluating the IDP.



To date, CRISP-Telangana has visited eight institutions, conducting these sessions in a workshop format. This initiative has been widely praised by the HEIs for its potential positive impact on the higher education landscape in Telangana. As a result, these eight institutions have committed to mentoring at least 40 other HEIs in preparing their IDPs. Overall, CRISP's efforts are expected to result in a significant impact, with an estimated 150 HEIs likely to develop their own Institutional Development Plans.





Understanding the Edtech landscape in Telangana

The CRISP-Telangana team has visited eight institutions to study and understand the inclusion and adoption of EdTech courses, specifically SWAYAM, within their credit and non-credit frameworks. While the integration of EdTech is yet to make a significant impact in these institutions, some HEIs have expressed interest in adopting SWAYAM courses. However, certain limitations are preventing its full incorporation into the credit framework. Based on these field visits, a report on the implementation of SWAYAM, along with an action plan, has been prepared for Telangana State.



Promoting Quality and Excellence in HEIs (NAAC, NIRF)

Two colleges, Bhoj Reddy Engineering College for Women and Keshav Memorial Institute of Commerce and Sciences, both guided by the CRISP-Telangana team, have successfully received accreditation status.

As part of the preparation for NIRF 2025, institutions are being guided through an analysis of their NIRF 2024 performance. The CRISP-Telangana team is identifying gaps in the participating institutions' performance and providing support to enhance their readiness for improved rankings.

CRISP | Centre for Research in
Schemes and Policies

Deliberate. Design. Deliver.

Address: B-38, First floor, Panchsheel Enclave, Malviya Nagar,
New Delhi-110017

Central Office: TSIIC Zonal office Building, Financial District, Nanakramguda,
Gachibowli, Hyderabad-500032

www.crispindia.net