

A CSR Initiative by:

**HDFC
ERGO**

IMPACT ASSESSMENT STUDY

SUPPORT FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF STUDENT RESIDENCE BLOCK R1/R2 IN ASHOKA'S NORTH CAMPUS

APRIL 2022 – MARCH 2024

**IMPLEMENTING PARTNER - INTERNATIONAL
FOUNDATION FOR RESEARCH AND EDUCATION**

 **SoulAce**
Path to Sustainability

SOULACE CONSULTING PVT. LTD.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abbreviations	01
<hr/>	
Executive Summary	02 - 05
Project Background	02
Project Details	03
Key Findings	04
Key Impacts	05
<hr/>	
01. Introduction	06 - 08
Background and Need of the Project	06
Objectives of the Program	07
About HDFC ERGO General Insurance Company Limited	07
About Ashoka University	07
About the International Foundation for Research and Education	08
<hr/>	
02. Research Methodology	09 - 13
<hr/>	
03. Major Findings	14 - 24
<hr/>	
04. OECD Framework	25 - 26
<hr/>	
05. SWOT Analysis	27 - 28
<hr/>	
06. Recommendations	29 - 30
<hr/>	
07. Conclusion	31
<hr/>	



A BBREVIATIONS

CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
KII	Key Informative Interview
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NGT	National Green Tribunal
OECD	The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SWOT	Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities Threats

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Ashoka University, with the support of HDFC ERGO's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) contribution of Rs. 5 crore, has completed the construction of Residential Blocks R1 and R2 at its North Campus. Together, these hostels accommodate nearly 800 students and represent a major step in the university's vision of creating a safe, inclusive, and world-class residential learning environment. The impact assessment study clearly shows that these residences have transformed student life and strengthened Ashoka's academic ecosystem.

Students reported high levels of satisfaction with their living experience. Almost all respondents felt their rooms were comfortable and well-maintained, and a vast majority expressed that dining, laundry, gym, and pantry facilities met their daily needs. Most importantly, every student surveyed confirmed that they feel safe and secure in their residential environment, highlighting the success of Ashoka's strong security and student care measures. The residences also play a critical role in promoting inclusivity: nearly half of Ashoka's students are on financial aid, and over one-fifth study free of cost, ensuring that students from diverse economic backgrounds benefit equally. An overwhelming majority of students agreed that housing fairly represents different social and cultural groups, including those with special needs, making the residences a truly inclusive space.

Beyond comfort and equity, R1 and R2 blocks have enriched community life and academic engagement. Students reported that the residential setting helps them build meaningful peer connections, participate in social and cultural events, and collaborate across disciplines. The integrated campus layout allows students to manage their academic commitments more effectively, while the supportive residential environment contributes to improved learning outcomes, research engagement, and personal growth. Wellness and recreation facilities have also been highly appreciated, with students acknowledging their role in supporting both physical health and emotional well-being.

Sustainability emerged as another strength of the project. A large proportion of students are aware of the eco-friendly features of the new buildings, such as solar panels, water recycling, and rainwater harvesting, and most agreed that Ashoka's sustainability practices are visible and impactful. However, there is scope to increase awareness and student participation in these efforts to maximise their long-term benefits.

In conclusion, the R1 and R2 residential blocks have significantly enhanced Ashoka University's capacity, inclusivity, and student well-being. They have created a safe and supportive environment that nurtures both academic excellence and holistic development, while also advancing sustainability goals. This project demonstrates how CSR partnerships can deliver long-lasting educational and social impact, making the collaboration between Ashoka University and HDFC ERGO a strong model for future investments in higher education infrastructure.

PROJECT DETAILS



Implementation year

FY 2022-2025



Assessment year

FY 2025-26



Beneficiaries

Students, Parents, Trainers and Educators, Management team



Implementing Partner

International Foundation for Research and Education



Locations

Rajiv Gandhi Educational City, Sonipat, Haryana



Total budget

Rs 100+ crores, with Rs 5 crores CSR support from HDFC ERGO



Number of beneficiaries

800 students



SDG Goals



Alignment with National Goals and Policies

National Education Policy (NEP, 2020)

KEY FINDINGS

RESIDENTIAL LIFE AND COMFORT



90.0%

of students strongly agreed that R1/R2 provide clean, well-maintained, and comfortable living spaces with access to gyms, pantries, and study areas.

ADMISSIONS AND INCLUSIVITY



47.0%

of students receive financial aid; 21.0% study entirely free of cost (tuition, housing, and meals).

STUDENT SAFETY



100%

of respondents affirmed feeling safe and secure in the residential environment.

STUDENT COMFORT



90.0%+

satisfaction with room comfort, maintenance, and facilities.

SUSTAINABILITY AWARENESS



80.0%

of students are aware of eco-friendly features (solar, water recycling, energy efficiency).

DINING AND AMENITIES



82.5%

of students said dining options meet their needs; pantries and laundry facilities were widely appreciated.

ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT



87.5%

agreed that living conditions support academic success; 72.5% reported that residences encourage interdisciplinary collaboration.

COMMUNITY AND PEER LEARNING



70.0%

agreed living in R1/R2 helped them build meaningful peer connections; 82.5% actively participate in campus events.

WELL-BEING SUPPORT



85.0%

reported that residences support mental and emotional well-being; 92.5% agreed that wellness facilities support physical health.

EQUITY AND REPRESENTATION



90.0%+

affirmed that students from diverse backgrounds are fairly represented in housing, including those with special needs.

SUSTAINABILITY



75.0%

agreed that sustainable practices (waste management, energy, water) are effective, though many felt awareness could be further strengthened.

PERSONAL GROWTH



Campus living has promoted independence, responsibility, and holistic development among students.

KEY IMPACTS

ENHANCED STUDENT EXPERIENCE



100%

of respondents acknowledged that R1 and R2 have transformed residential life by combining safety, while 57.5% appreciated the comfort, and 92.5% recognized inclusivity, along with 65.0% noting opportunities for learning and collaboration.

COMMUNITY AND INTEGRATION



82.5%

of respondents* demonstrate the role of residences in building a vibrant, inclusive campus culture through strong peer bonding and high participation in social and cultural events.

WELL-BEING AND SAFETY



97.5%

respondents say that the round-the-clock security, healthcare, and counselling services available at R1/ R2 residential blocks ensure physical and emotional support, making students feel secure and cared for.

SUSTAINABILITY LEADERSHIP



100%

water recycling, solar panels and eco-friendly systems. Ashoka sets a benchmark for sustainable campus design, though greater student engagement is needed to maximise impact - 80.0% respondents are aware of sustainable features in residential buildings.

DISCUSSION WITH THE PROJECT TEAM



01. INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND AND NEED OF THE PROJECT

Ashoka University, one of India's leading liberal arts and sciences institutions, has been steadily expanding its academic and residential infrastructure to meet the growing needs of its diverse student community. A central part of this vision is the creation of world-class residential spaces that not only provide housing but also support academic engagement, personal growth and community building. With student strength projected to grow from around 3,000 to nearly 10,000 in the coming years, the need for high-quality and inclusive residential facilities became critical. To address this, the university, with the generous support from various quarters, including Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) support of Rs. 5 crores from HDFC ERGO General Insurance Company Ltd., developed Residential Blocks R1 and R2, which together accommodate nearly 800 students. These residences are designed as safe, sustainable, and student-centric living-learning spaces equipped with modern amenities, wellness and recreational facilities, and accessible infrastructure for students from all backgrounds. This initiative is particularly significant as 47% of Ashoka's students receive financial aid and 21% study entirely free of cost, making it essential to ensure that socio-economic background does not become a barrier to access quality education. In addition, the program reflects Ashoka's strong commitment to sustainability, with features such as 100% water recycling, solar energy use, rainwater harvesting, and composting systems in place. Thus, the residential expansion was both a necessity and an opportunity: a necessity to house the growing student body in a safe and inclusive environment, and an opportunity to create a model of sustainable, equitable, and holistic education that strengthens Ashoka's mission of excellence and inclusivity.

CONSTRUCTION PHASE



OBJECTIVE OF THE PROGRAM

Specific objectives of the program include:



Expand student housing capacity to accommodate nearly 800 additional students as part of Ashoka's plan to scale from 3,000 to 10,000 students in the coming years.



Ensure inclusivity and equity by providing safe, accessible, and affordable residential facilities for students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, including those on financial aid and full scholarships.



Enhance academic engagement by situating residences close to classrooms, labs, and libraries, thereby supporting learning outcomes, research participation, and peer collaboration.



Ensure student well-being through integrated facilities such as a 24/7 infirmary, mental health counselling services, gyms, dining halls, and community spaces.



Providing space to foster community building and interdisciplinary culture by creating opportunities for peer interaction, cultural exchange, and participation in residential events.



Integrate sustainability into campus life by incorporating eco-friendly features such as solar panels, rainwater harvesting, 100% water recycling, and waste composting, while encouraging students to adopt green practices.

ABOUT HDFC ERGO GENERAL INSURANCE COMPANY LIMITED

HDFC ERGO General Insurance Company Limited is one of India's leading private general insurers, offering a wide range of insurance products across health, motor, travel, home, and rural sectors. A joint venture between HDFC Ltd. and ERGO International AG (Munich Re Group, Germany), the Company is known for its customer-centric approach, innovation, and digital-first solutions. Beyond business, HDFC ERGO is deeply committed to CSR, focusing on areas such as education, healthcare, environment, road safety, and community development. Through impactful CSR initiatives, including its partnership with Ashoka University, HDFC ERGO demonstrates its vision of building not just financial security but also social value and inclusive growth for communities across India.

ABOUT ASHOKA UNIVERSITY

Located in Sonapat, Haryana, Ashoka University is a leading liberal arts and sciences institution in India committed to providing world-class, interdisciplinary, and socially impactful education. It offers undergraduate, postgraduate, and doctoral programs across the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, and applied disciplines, with a strong focus on critical thinking, leadership, and problem-solving. Guided by its mission of equity and access, nearly 47% of students receive financial aid and about 21% study entirely free of cost, ensuring that talent from all socio-economic backgrounds can thrive. Ashoka's fully residential campus fosters collaboration, community building, and personal growth, while its emphasis on sustainability, including solar power, rainwater harvesting, and waste recycling, makes it a model for future-ready higher education in India.

ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

International Foundation for Research and Education is a private limited company domiciled in India and incorporated under Section 25 of the Companies Act, 1956 (comparative section 8 of Companies Act, 2013) with the primary objective of providing liberal education on par with the best universities around the world. The Company has set up the "Ashoka University" in the State of Haryana to award degrees, diplomas and doctorates in various streams.

DINING AREA



02

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

HDFC ERGO commissioned SoulAce to conduct an impact assessment study during the fiscal year 2025-26 to evaluate the impact of the construction of Residential Blocks R1 and R2 at its North Campus of Ashoka University, implemented by the International Foundation for Research and Education from 2022 to 2025.

As part of its commitment to educational advancement and inclusive development, HDFC ERGO General Insurance Company Limited, in collaboration with the International Foundation for Research and Education, contributed to an impactful CSR initiative to strengthen student housing and create a holistic residential learning environment at Ashoka University. The project focused on the construction of Residential Blocks R1 and R2, designed to accommodate nearly 800 students and to provide safe, modern, and sustainable living spaces. By integrating state-of-the-art amenities, enhanced safety measures, wellness and recreational facilities, and eco-friendly infrastructure such as solar panels and water recycling systems, the initiative has significantly improved student life on campus. This assessment evaluates the program's relevance, effectiveness, and impact in building a secure, inclusive, and sustainable residential environment that empowers students to thrive both academically and personally.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The primary objective of this study is to assess the impact and effectiveness of HDFC ERGO's CSR initiative in supporting the construction of Residential Blocks R1 and R2 at Ashoka University. The study seeks to provide an evidence-based understanding of how the project has contributed to enhancing student life, promoting inclusivity, and strengthening the overall learning environment.

Specifically, the study aims to:



Evaluate the relevance of the project in addressing critical institutional needs such as student housing, equity in access to higher education, and provision of safe, inclusive, and sustainable residential facilities.



Measure the effectiveness of the new residences in improving student comfort, academic engagement, peer collaboration, community participation, and overall well-being.



Analyse behavioural and cultural change among students, focusing on independence, responsibility, inclusivity, and interdisciplinary collaboration fostered by the residential environment.



Assess the adequacy of student support systems, including safety measures, health services, mental well-being initiatives, and community-building activities integrated within R1 and R2.



Examine student and faculty perceptions and satisfaction, including their views on infrastructure quality, inclusivity, accessibility, and sustainability practices.



Identify challenges, gaps, and lessons learned from the implementation and operation of R1 and R2 to guide continuous improvement of residential life on campus.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The impact assessment adopted a comprehensive mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative techniques to capture a holistic understanding of program outcomes. This approach made it possible to measure both quantifiable indicators (such as student occupancy, satisfaction levels with comfort, dining, safety, inclusivity, and sustainability practices) and contextual insights (such as student experiences, faculty and warden perspectives, and administrative viewpoints). The methodology thus ensured a robust and balanced evaluation of the project's effectiveness, relevance, and sustainability.

APPLICATION OF QUANTITATIVE TECHNIQUES

In the quantitative aspect, the study utilised structured interviews featuring predetermined response options. Closed-ended surveys included specific questions with multiple-choice or Likert-scale options. This approach facilitated the collection of data that could be quantified and statistically analysed, offering a clear and measurable understanding of the project's impact.

APPLICATION OF QUALITATIVE TECHNIQUES

To ensure accuracy and a diverse participant pool, a mix of semi-structured interviews, open-ended interviews, and Focus Group discussions (FGDs) engaged project stakeholders, including students, faculty members, wardens, administrative staff and project team members. These qualitative inputs complemented the quantitative data, providing deeper insights into program effectiveness, significant barriers, challenges, and areas for enhancement.

TRIANGULATION FOR DATA ROBUSTNESS

Findings from both quantitative and qualitative sources were cross-verified through triangulation, enhancing the reliability of conclusions. The alignment of student perceptions, faculty insights, warden observations, and administrative reflections provided a 360-degree understanding of how the residential infrastructure contributed to student comfort, inclusivity, academic outcomes, and sustainability practices.

SAMPLING FRAMEWORK

A stratified random sampling method was used to select students for surveys, ensuring representation across gender, socio-economic backgrounds, and academic disciplines (undergraduate, postgraduate, and fellowship programs). For qualitative interviews and FGDs, purposive sampling was applied to target individuals directly involved in the residential facilities, such as faculty, wardens, administrative staff, and students from different programs. This ensured that insights were collected from those most knowledgeable about the residences and their impact.

STANDARDISED FRAMEWORK FOR EVALUATION

The research study applied the OECD-DAC framework for evaluation, ensuring alignment with globally accepted standards and norms. This framework offered a strong and uniform method to evaluate the project's impact, bolstering the credibility and pertinence of the research findings.



DESIGN SNAPSHOT



Name of the project

Support for the construction of student residence block R1/R2 in Ashoka's North Campus



Implementing agency

International Foundation for Research and Education



Research design used

Descriptive research design



Sampling technique

Purposive and random sampling



Sample size

40

DATA QUALITY CONTROL AND ANALYSIS

To ensure data integrity throughout the study, a centralised monitoring system was employed during fieldwork to facilitate real-time supervision and prompt corrective measures. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics and visual representation to highlight emerging trends, while qualitative inputs were systematically coded and thematically analysed to uncover deeper insights. This integrated approach enabled the generation of evidence-based conclusions regarding the program's effectiveness, community receptiveness, and potential areas for improvement.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Students (Undergraduate, Postgraduate, Fellows)



Faculty Members



Wardens



Administrative staff



Project Team members



STUDY TOOLS

To ensure a comprehensive and context-specific assessment of HDFC ERGO's CSR initiative at Ashoka University, a mixed-methods approach was adopted by combining both quantitative and qualitative tools for data collection and analysis. This enabled the evaluation to capture measurable outcomes such as student satisfaction, occupancy, inclusivity, well-being, and sustainability awareness, along with deeper qualitative insights from students, faculty, wardens, and administrative staff.

QUALITATIVE TOOLS

Semi-Structured Interviews

Conducted with key stakeholders, including faculty members, wardens, administrative staff, and project team members. These interviews explored experiences related to residential planning, student comfort, safety, inclusivity, sustainability features, and academic integration.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

Held separately with groups of undergraduate, postgraduate, and fellowship students to capture perspectives on residential comfort, dining facilities, peer interaction, community events, study spaces, and wellness services. Discussions also examined changes in academic engagement, sense of independence, cultural integration, and overall well-being after moving into R1 and R2.

Testimonial Documentation Templates

Used to record personal narratives and experiences from students, faculty, and wardens, highlighting how the new residences improved student comfort, peer bonding, inclusivity, sustainability awareness, and academic outcomes. These testimonials provided powerful real-life evidence of the project's impact on student growth, safety, and community confidence.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS



INFORMED CONSENT

Participants were fully informed about the study's objectives, procedures, risks, and benefits. They had the opportunity to ask questions and make their decisions voluntarily after understanding the details, ensuring informed consent was obtained.



CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION RESPECT, DIGNITY AND FAIRNESS

Participants' data was securely stored and accessible only to authorised personnel. Anonymisation techniques were used to protect identities, ensuring privacy throughout the study.



VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Participation was entirely voluntary, with no coercion or pressure. Participants had the freedom to withdraw at any time, respecting their autonomy and personal choice.



RESPECT, DIGNITY AND FAIRNESS

Participants' data was securely stored and accessible only to authorised personnel. Anonymisation techniques were used to protect identities, ensuring privacy throughout the study. Participants were treated with respect and fairness. Their well-being was prioritised, and necessary support was provided to ensure a positive experience throughout the study.

INTERACTION WITH THE BENEFICIARIES AT ASHOKA UNIVERSITY



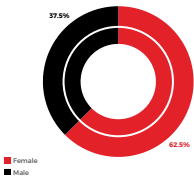
03

MAJOR FINDINGS

This chapter synthesises findings from primary data sources to assess the project's overall impact and efficacy. It incorporates both qualitative and quantitative data collected through comprehensive surveys and in-depth stakeholder interactions.

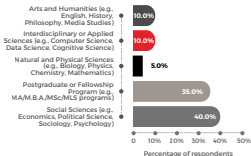
DEMOGRAPHIC

CHART 1: GENDER GENDER-WISE DISTRIBUTION OF THE RESPONDENTS



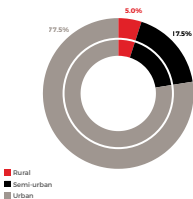
The gender distribution of respondents indicates that a majority were female (62.5%), while male respondents accounted for 37.5% of the total sample. This shows a higher representation of female voices in the survey, suggesting that women were more actively engaged and keen to voice their opinions during the study process. The female-dominant participation also reflects the inclusive nature of the residential infrastructure, where both genders are represented, but with a stronger female presence in this particular dataset.

CHART 2: PRIMARY AREA OF STUDY OF STUDENTS OF ASHOKA UNIVERSITY



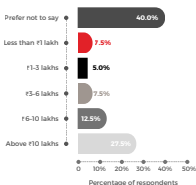
The analysis of respondents' academic areas shows that the largest proportion (40.0%) is enrolled in Social Sciences programs such as Economics, Political Science, Sociology, and Psychology. This indicates that students from these disciplines were most engaged in providing feedback, reflecting the strong presence of social sciences within Ashoka's liberal arts framework. The Postgraduate and Fellowship programs represent the next largest group, with 35.0% of respondents, highlighting that advanced learners and fellows form a significant part of the residential community and are actively utilising the new infrastructure.

In contrast, representation from Arts and Humanities and Interdisciplinary or Applied Sciences is relatively lower, each accounting for 10.0% of responses, while the Natural and Physical Sciences group makes up just 5.0% of the sample.

**CHART 3: CATEGORY OF STUDENTS
NATIVE PLACE**

The majority of respondents (77.5%) reported their native place as urban, while 17.5% came from semi-urban areas and only 5.0% from rural backgrounds. This clearly shows that Ashoka University continues to attract a predominantly urban student population, reflecting its strong appeal among families from metropolitan and larger cities. However, the presence of students from semi-urban and rural backgrounds (22.5% combined) also highlights the institution's efforts to expand accessibility through its merit-based admission system and robust financial aid policies.

From the perspective of residential infrastructure (R1 and R2), these findings underscore the importance of inclusive housing facilities. For students from rural and semi-urban regions, the hostels provide not only accommodation but also a supportive environment that helps bridge gaps in exposure, equity, and access to resources. In this way, the residential facilities contribute directly to Ashoka's mission of equity and social inclusion, creating a space where students from diverse geographies can live, learn, and interact on an equal footing.

**CHART 4: DISTRIBUTION OF FAMILY
APPROXIMATE ANNUAL INCOME**

The income profile of respondents reveals a wide diversity in socio-economic backgrounds. A significant portion, 40.0% of students, preferred not to disclose their family income, which may indicate sensitivity around financial details or reluctance to share such information. Among those who responded, the largest group (27.5%) reported an annual family income above Rs. 10 lakhs, reflecting the presence of students from relatively affluent households.

At the same time, a notable share of students comes from lower- and middle-income families: 7.5% have incomes less than Rs. 1 lakh, 5.0% between Rs. 1-3 lakhs, and another 7.5% between Rs. 3-6 lakhs. This collectively accounts for 20.0% of respondents from economically modest backgrounds, underscoring the critical role of financial aid and scholarships in enabling access to quality education. An additional 12.5% fall in the Rs. 6-10 lakh category, indicating a representation of middle-income households.

From the perspective of residential infrastructure and equity, these findings confirm that Ashoka University is serving a socially and economically diverse student body. The considerable proportion of students from lower-income brackets demonstrates the impact of Ashoka's need-based financial aid policy, which supports tuition, accommodation, and meals for deserving students. Simultaneously, the presence of students from higher-income families points to Ashoka's ability to attract talent across the socio-economic spectrum, thereby fostering a truly inclusive and balanced campus community within residences like R1 and R2.



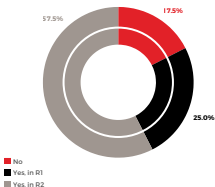
R1 and R2 are not just buildings, they are vibrant learning spaces where students live, learn, and grow together. I have seen students from very different backgrounds form meaningful bonds, support each other, and engage in interdisciplinary discussions right in the common areas. The facilities are thoughtfully designed, from gyms and pantries to study lounges, making life easier and more balanced for students. These residences have elevated the quality of student life on campus.

– Prof. Deepak Asthana, Designation.
Assistant Professor, Ashoka University



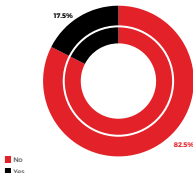
PROJECT INTERVENTION

CHART 5: RESIDENCE IN NEWLY CONSTRUCTED BUILDINGS



R1 and R2 Blocks are accommodating only female students from the current academic year. The analysis shows that a majority of respondents, 57.5% resided in R2 (which also includes 13% male students who resided in R2 block earlier), while in R1, 25% students resided (including 50% male students who resided earlier). The remaining 17.5% are boys who were residing in either R1 or R2 blocks earlier before shifting. The representation of respondents from both R1 and R2 blocks provided unbiased opinions on both facilities.

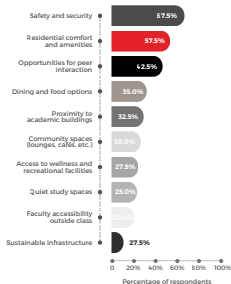
CHART 6: PRIOR EXPOSURE OF SIMILAR RESIDENTIAL CAMPUS



The study reveals that a vast majority of respondents, 82.5%, had not experienced a similar residential or integrated campus environment prior to joining Ashoka University. Only 17.5% reported previous exposure to such a setting. This indicates that for most students, Ashoka provides their first experience of living and learning in a fully residential, integrated academic community.

This insight is significant in the context of the R1 and R2 residential infrastructure, as it highlights the critical role these hostels play in shaping students' transition to campus life. For many first-time residents, particularly those from semi-urban and rural areas, the facilities provide not just housing but also a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment that fosters adjustment, independence, and community building. The infrastructure, therefore, directly contributes to student comfort, retention, and holistic development, making the residential experience a cornerstone of Ashoka's model of liberal education.

CHART 7: CAMPUS FEATURES POSITIVELY IMPACTING STUDENTS' LIVES AT ASHOKA UNIVERSITY



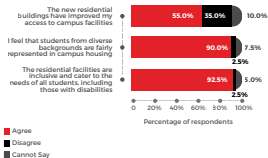
The responses indicate that safety and security (67.5%) emerged as the most valued feature of Ashoka University's campus, especially R1 and R2 Blocks, highlighting students' strong sense of protection and reassurance within the residential environment. This aligns with the university's strict smoke- and alcohol-free policies, gender-sensitive wardens, and 24/7 surveillance, all of which are particularly significant for first-time hostel residents.

The next most cited factor was residential comfort and amenities (57.5%), showing that facilities in R1 and R2, such as air-conditioned rooms, reliable Wi-Fi, pantries, gyms, and well-maintained dining halls, play a direct role in enhancing student satisfaction and day-to-day convenience. Opportunities for peer interaction (42.5%) and dining and food options (35.0%) further emphasise the role of residences and shared spaces in promoting community bonding, inclusivity, and cross-cultural integration among students from diverse backgrounds.

Other features valued by students include proximity to academic buildings (32.5%), community spaces like cafés and lounges (30.0%), and wellness and recreational facilities (27.5%), which together underline the integrated nature of Ashoka's campus design.

While aspects like quiet study spaces (25.0%) and faculty accessibility outside class (20.0%) were less frequently chosen, they still reflect the importance of academic support beyond formal classrooms. Interestingly, only 10.0% highlighted sustainable infrastructure, suggesting that while Ashoka has strong green practices, there may be scope to increase awareness and visibility of sustainability initiatives among students.

CHART 8: STUDENTS PERCEPTION OF ACCESS, REPRESENTATION AND INCLUSIVITY IN CAMPUS HOUSING

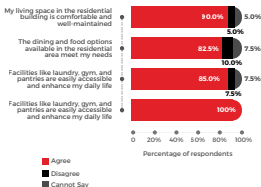


The data highlights overwhelmingly positive perceptions of students about the new residential infrastructure at Ashoka University. More than half of respondents (55.0%) agreed that the new residential buildings have improved their access to campus facilities, though a substantial minority (35.0%) expressed disagreement. This suggests that while proximity and integration have benefited many, there remain some logistical or personal challenges, such as distance from academic blocks or adjustment issues, where students have to walk long distances, particularly in hot weather. However, trolleys are provided to carry their belongings easily, which was appreciated by all the students during discussions.

In contrast, the responses on representation and inclusivity were strikingly positive. A vast majority (90%) agreed that students from diverse backgrounds are fairly represented in campus housing, with only 2.5% disagreeing. Similarly, 92.5% of respondents affirmed that the residential facilities are inclusive and cater to the needs of all students, including those with disabilities, with minimal disagreement (2.5%), and only a small proportion (5%) were unsure.

These findings demonstrate that the R1 and R2 residences have been successful in creating a socially inclusive, equitable, and welcoming environment. The strong agreement around representation and inclusivity reflects Ashoka's commitment to equity, ensuring that students from different socio-economic, cultural, and physical ability backgrounds feel accommodated and supported in their residential experience.

CHART 9: STUDENT LIVING EXPERIENCE



The findings reveal a highly positive perception of the students' living experience in the new residential buildings (R1 and R2). A significant majority (90.0%) agreed that their living spaces are comfortable and well-maintained, indicating that the design, upkeep, and responsiveness of maintenance teams are meeting student expectations. Only a small minority (5.0%) expressed dissatisfaction, suggesting isolated cases rather than systemic issues.

With regard to dining and food options, 82.5% of students agreed that their needs were being met, while 10% disagreed and 7.5% were undecided. This reflects general satisfaction but also indicates room for improvement in terms of variety, dietary inclusivity, or quality consistency.

Access to daily facilities such as laundry, gym, and pantries was also rated highly, with 85.0% of respondents finding them easily accessible and useful in their daily lives. A small portion (7.5%) remained neutral, while 7.5% expressed dissatisfaction, pointing to occasional concerns such as equipment availability or crowding at peak hours.

Most notably, perceptions of safety and security were unanimously positive, with 100% of respondents agreeing that they feel safe and secure in their residential environment. This underscores the effectiveness of Ashoka's robust safety measures, including 24/7 security staff, gender-sensitive wardens, strict no-alcohol/smoking policies, and controlled campus entry systems.

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Moving into R2 has been life-changing for me.

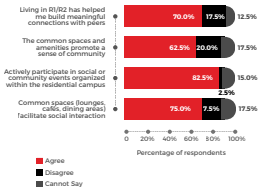
Coming from a small town, I was worried about adjusting to university life, but the safe and comfortable environment here has given me the confidence to focus on my studies and build strong friendships. Having access to wellness services, quiet study spaces, and supportive wardens makes me feel cared for. Most importantly, as a student on full financial aid, I feel included and valued. These residences truly reflect Ashoka's commitment to equity.

- Disha, a student of the one-year YIF program staying in the R1 hostel

”

STUDENTS RESIDING AT RESIDENTIAL BLOCK 1

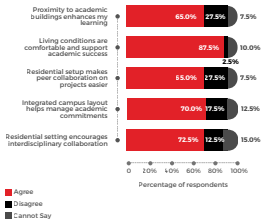


CHART 10: COMMUNITY BUILDING AND SOCIAL INTERACTION


The study revealed that the new residential facilities (R1 and R2) have played a strong role in fostering peer connections and community life. A majority of students (70.0%) agreed that living in R1/R2 has helped them build meaningful connections with peers, although 17.5% disagreed and 12.5% were unsure.

The perception of common spaces and amenities promoting a sense of community was slightly lower, with 62.5% agreeing and 20.0% disagreeing. This indicates that while lounges, cafés, and shared spaces are generally effective, there may be scope to further enhance students' participation to utilise common spaces.

Participation in residential social or community events was rated very positively, with 82.5% of students actively engaging, underscoring the success of peer-led initiatives, fresher's events, and cultural activities in strengthening the sense of belonging. Finally, 75.0% agreed that common spaces like cafés, dining areas, and lounges facilitate social interaction, while a notable 17.5% were neutral, suggesting that not all students equally experience the benefits of these spaces.

CHART 11: ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT AND LEARNING OUTCOMES


The findings highlight the positive impact of Ashoka University's residential setup on academic engagement and learning outcomes. A strong majority (87.5%) of students agreed that their living conditions are comfortable and supportive of academic success, with only 2.5% disagreeing, confirming that the infrastructure directly contributes to focus, study habits, and overall well-being.

The role of proximity to academic buildings was mixed: while 65.0% agreed that it enhances learning, a notable 27.5% disagreed. This suggests that while many students consider easy access to classrooms, labs, and the library, some do face logistical challenges—the long walk to R1 and R2 or those balancing demanding schedules.

Similarly, 65% agreed that the residential setup facilitates peer collaboration on projects, though 27.5% disagreed, indicating that while shared spaces promote group work and informal discussions, few students believe in focused studies.

The integrated campus layout was valued by 70% of students for helping them manage academic commitments, with 17.5% disagreeing and 12.5% unsure, reflecting varying personal experiences with time management and campus navigation. Notably, 72.5% agreed that the residential setting encourages interdisciplinary collaboration, underscoring Ashoka's liberal arts model where informal peer exchanges and common living spaces spark cross-disciplinary dialogue and initiatives.



CASE STUDY 1 **PROMOTING INCLUSIVITY AND EQUITY**

Ritika, a first-year undergraduate student from a rural background, joined Ashoka with the help of a full scholarship covering tuition, housing, and meals. Before coming to Ashoka, she had never lived in a hostel environment. Moving into R2 provided her not only with a safe and secure place to live but also opportunities to interact with peers from diverse cultures and academic disciplines. The residential setting gave her the confidence to participate in community events, take on student leadership roles, and pursue her academic goals without the burden of financial stress. Ritika's journey illustrates how the residences have become a powerful tool for promoting inclusivity and equal opportunity.

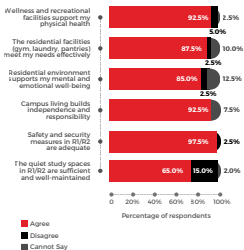


CASE STUDY 2 **BUILDING ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT AND WELL-BEING**

Arjun, a postgraduate student in Cognitive Science, found the integrated residential campus crucial to balancing his demanding academic schedule. Living in R1 gave him quick access to labs and classrooms, saving time and reducing stress. He actively collaborated with peers on research projects, many of which were initiated during informal study sessions in the residence lounges. The availability of a 24/7 infirmary and counselling services also supported his mental and physical well-being. Arjun's experience demonstrates how the residential facilities contribute directly to academic success, peer collaboration, and holistic student development.



RESIDENTIAL ROOMS FOR STUDENTS

CHART 12: WELL-BEING AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT


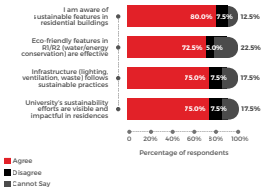
The findings demonstrate that Ashoka University's residential infrastructure (R1 and R2) has made a strong positive contribution to students' well-being and personal development. A vast majority (92.5%) agreed that wellness and recreational facilities support their physical health, showing that gyms, sports areas, and wellness services are being effectively utilised. Similarly, 87.5% of students affirmed that residential facilities such as laundry, gyms, and pantries meet their basic needs, confirming the adequacy of everyday support systems within the hostels.

The mental and emotional well-being dimension was also rated highly, with 85.0% agreeing that the residential environment supports them, although 12.5% were unsure, indicating that mental health services could be made even more visible and accessible. Campus living as a driver of independence and responsibility was highly appreciated, with 92.5% in agreement and none in disagreement, reflecting the transformative role of hostel life in building life skills beyond academics.

The strongest positive perception was around safety and security, with 97.5% respondents in agreement, reaffirming earlier findings that students feel well protected due to robust security systems, supportive wardens, and gender-sensitive policies.

However, satisfaction with quiet study spaces was relatively lower, with 65.0% agreeing, 15.0% disagreeing, and 20.0% uncertain. Although during the discussion, students mentioned that the rooms of R1 and R2 are soundproof and outside noise is minimal.

Overall, the study confirms that the residential infrastructure strongly fosters student well-being, independence, and safety, while pointing to a specific area of improvement in quiet study environments, which are crucial for supporting academic focus and balanced personal development.

CHART 13: SUSTAINABILITY AWARENESS AND PRACTICES


The findings suggest that students are generally positive about sustainability practices in the new residential facilities, though there remains scope for deeper awareness and engagement. A large majority (80.0%) reported being aware of the sustainable features integrated into R1 and R2, and on the campus, such as solar panels, water recycling, and energy-efficient systems. This reflects effective communication of sustainability measures, but also points to the 12.5% who were unsure, suggesting that awareness among students needs to be considered.

When asked about the effectiveness of eco-friendly features like water and energy conservation, 72.5% agreed, but a considerable 22.5% were not sure, indicating that while the systems exist, students' understanding of their effectiveness may be limited. Similarly, 75% agreed that sustainable practices were followed in designing infrastructure such as lighting, ventilation, and waste management, with only a small fraction (7.5%) disagreeing.

On the broader question of whether the university's sustainability efforts are visible and impactful within residences (R1 and R2), 75.0% agreed, while 17.5% could not say. This highlights that although Ashoka has achieved a high green rating through measures like rainwater harvesting, composting, and carbon audits, many students may not be fully aware of these initiatives or their outcomes in daily life.

Overall, the study confirms that sustainability is a strength of the construction of R1 and R2 and the Ashoka University campus, but the perception gap between technical implementation and student awareness suggests a need for greater integration of sustainability into students' lives. More orientation sessions, signage, interactive dashboards, or curriculum-linked sustainability projects could make these green features more visible, relatable, and impactful for the student community.

FGD WITH STUDENTS



OVERALL IMPACT AT VARIOUS LEVELS



INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

On an individual level, the project has transformed students' lives. Students live in a safe, comfortable, and supportive environment that encourages independence, responsibility, and personal growth. Many students from low-income and rural families, supported by Ashoka's financial aid, shared how living in R1 and R2 has given them equal opportunities to learn, collaborate, and participate in campus life. Faculty and wardens also observed improvements in student morale, academic focus, and community bonding, showing that the residences are not just buildings but enablers of holistic development and future leadership.



COMMUNITY LEVEL (CAMPUS AND STUDENT COMMUNITY)

At the community level, the impact is deeply felt by students, wardens, and faculty. More than 90.0% of students reported satisfaction with comfort, amenities, and wellness services, while 100% affirmed feeling safe in the residences. The hostels have promoted peer bonding, inclusivity, and cultural integration, with over 80.0% of students actively participating in residential events. Testimonials reveal how first-time hostel residents, particularly those from modest backgrounds, feel empowered and supported to thrive academically and socially.



INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL (ASHOKA UNIVERSITY)

For Ashoka University, the project has been transformational. It has expanded residential capacity by nearly 800 beds, enabling the university to admit more students while ensuring safety, inclusivity, and sustainability. The residences have created a vibrant living-learning ecosystem that supports academic excellence, peer collaboration, and interdisciplinary culture. They have also strengthened Ashoka's ability to attract diverse cohorts of students—including those from rural, semi-urban, and low-income families—through its robust financial aid program.



NATIONAL LEVEL

At the national level, the Ashoka University Residential Infrastructure Project (R1 and R2) sets a benchmark for inclusive, sustainable, and high-quality student housing in higher education. By demonstrating how CSR investments can directly enhance access to world-class education, the project aligns with India's National Education Policy (NEP, 2020) and supports the country's goal of expanding equitable access to higher education. The initiative provides a replicable model for other universities seeking to strengthen their residential systems in line with global standards.

CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS



Temporary construction delays due to National Green Tribunal (NCT) bans, material shortages, and limited skilled manpower were overcome, and the project was delayed marginally.



Capacity pressure continues despite ~800 new beds; some PhD students still live off-campus.



Design issues reported: low washroom ceilings, AC temperature/fan speed control, pantry seating, and limited quiet study spaces.



Faculty engagement in residences remains informal.



Sustainability features are strong, but student awareness and participation need consideration.



Operational challenges: lack of gym trainers and overcrowding of common facilities at peak times.



A small segment of students felt less engaged in community events and common spaces.

04. EVALUATION BASED ON OECD-DAC FRAMEWORK



Relevance



Coherence



Effectiveness



Efficiency



Impact



Sustainability

The program has been evaluated using the OECD-DAC criteria, which assess its Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact and Sustainability. Each criterion is rated on a scale of 1 (Low) to 5 (High) based on program performance.



RELEVANCE

The program addresses a critical gap in student housing and campus welfare, and aligns with the urgent need for safe, inclusive, and sustainable residential infrastructure in higher education. It directly benefits a rapidly growing student community, particularly those from diverse socio-economic backgrounds who require equitable access to quality residential facilities. The initiative is highly relevant in the context of India's expanding higher education sector, increasing demand for holistic residential campuses, and the national emphasis on inclusivity and equity under NEP 2020.



COHERENCE

The initiative is well-aligned with national priorities such as the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and global frameworks like the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – particularly SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being), SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).



By expanding safe, inclusive, and sustainable residential infrastructure, the project complements government efforts to increase access, equity, and quality in higher education. It also strengthens Ashoka University's systems of student support, well-being, and sustainability without duplication, ensuring that CSR contributions create long-term institutional and social value.



EFFECTIVENESS

The program has met its core objectives, with 100% of students reporting a strong sense of safety, more than 90.0% respondents confirming improved comfort and well-being, and a majority expressing satisfaction with academic support, inclusivity, and community life in the new residences. It has successfully translated the vision of safe, inclusive, and sustainable student housing into measurable improvements in student experience, academic engagement, and holistic development, while also creating a model that can be replicated in other higher education institutions.



EFFICIENCY

The program demonstrates efficient use of resources through well-planned interventions, strong collaboration between Ashoka University and HDFC ERGO, and careful execution of construction within budget and timeline despite external challenges. Expert planning by architects and project teams ensured the integration of student-centric facilities, wellness and safety services, and sustainable features such as solar energy and water recycling. The residences were completed with minimal delays and are now fully functional, reflecting both cost-effectiveness and long-term value creation.



IMPACT

The program has created a transformative impact on students and the campus community, improving the quality of residential life, strengthening inclusivity, and enhancing student well-being. It has boosted students' confidence, independence, and sense of safety, while fostering stronger peer connections, academic collaboration, and community participation. The residences have also shaped student culture by promoting values of equity, sustainability, and holistic development, thereby influencing how young people experience higher education in India.



SUSTAINABILITY

The outcomes appear sustainable, as the new residential facilities continue to provide students with a safe, inclusive, and supportive living environment. Features such as 24/7 security, well-being services, and sustainability systems (solar energy, water recycling, and waste management) ensure long-term benefits. Continued maintenance, student orientation programs, and awareness initiatives on inclusivity and green practices will further strengthen the residences' role in supporting student welfare, academic engagement, and holistic development for years to come.



Relevance



Cohesence



Effectiveness



Efficiency



Impact



Sustainability

05. SWOT ANALYSIS



STRENGTHS

- R1 and R2 residential blocks are fully equipped to house students across courses to ensure an immersive learning environment with a dedicated dining area, multiple cafés and food courts, a well-equipped, air-conditioned student gymnasium, dance and yoga studios, study rooms, a community kitchen and activity rooms.
- Each floor has rooms with amenities such as a pantry and a balcony area.
- Comprehensive student support systems, including 24/7 infirmary, mental health counselling, peer mentorship, and community spaces.
- Sustainability features such as solar energy, water recycling, rainwater harvesting, and waste composting are integrated into the design.



WEAKNESSES

- Capacity pressure remains as student numbers continue to grow, leaving some PhD students and fellows off-campus.
- Design and maintenance issues, including low washroom height, AC controls, AC maintenance, limited pantry seating, and a shortage of quiet study spaces.
- Faculty engagement in residences is still informal; structured mentorship and academic programs are underutilised.



OPPORTUNITIES

- Potential to scale and replicate the inclusive residential model across other Indian universities.
- Potential to integrate learning in designing new upcoming residential blocks to expand Ashoka University's expansion plans.
- Integrate sustainability education more strongly into the curriculum and student life.
- Expand faculty-residence engagement through mentorship programs, academic discussions, and cultural exchange in common spaces.
- Strengthen student leadership and community-building initiatives within residences to ensure holistic growth.

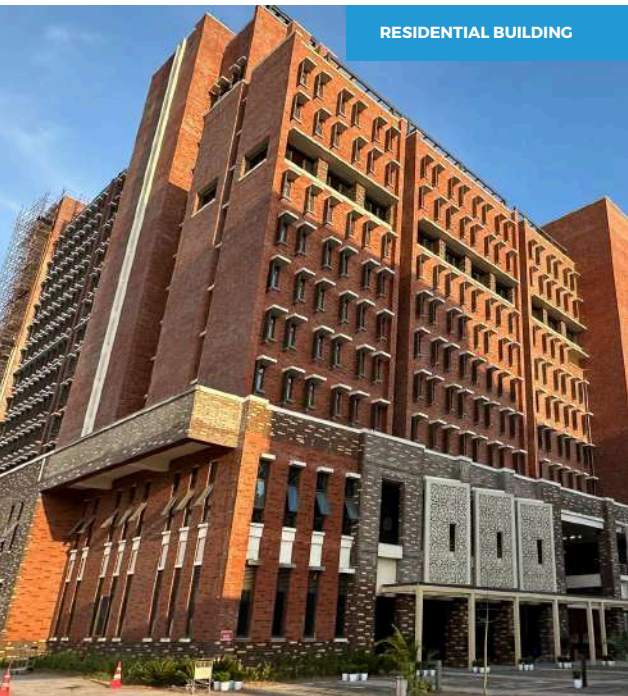


THREATS

- Walking long distances to academic and other blocks in summer is challenging for a few students.
- Inability to control the AC fan and temperature can make living uncomfortable for a few students.

- Low bathroom ceiling gives a claustrophobic experience and sometimes can hurt students as showers are at a lower height.
- Operational risks such as high demand for amenities, lack of gym trainers, or insufficient maintenance may affect satisfaction.
- Sustainability of outcomes depends on continuous upkeep, awareness programs, and resource allocation for long-term quality.

RESIDENTIAL BUILDING



CHAPTER 6

RECOMMENDATIONS

EXPAND RESIDENTIAL CAPACITY



Ashoka University can incorporate learning from R1 and R2 construction while executing an expansion plant to develop additional hostels.

IMPROVE INFRASTRUCTURE AND MAINTENANCE



The university can address design concerns such as washroom ventilation, height of the shower or provision of a hand shower, with suggestions from students.



Some seating arrangements in the pantry can be provided.



Regular servicing of ACs (dripping water issues to be fixed), laundry, and other facilities can ensure reliability and greater student satisfaction.



Housekeeping should have a designated washing area (currently done inside bathrooms).



Can make provision to prevent mosquitoes from entering Windows.



Balconies are for drying clothes, and can be secured.



The pathway can be covered with plantations or shade. The solar panels can be installed on the shades to generate electricity.

STRENGTHEN FACULTY-RESIDENCE ENGAGEMENT



Faculty members can participate in structured mentorship and dialogue programs within residences.



Community spaces can be used for academic discussions, cultural exchanges, and informal learning opportunities.

ENHANCE QUIET STUDY AND ACADEMIC SPACES



More dedicated study zones can be created within residential blocks so that students can focus on academic work, especially during exams.

DEEPEEN SUSTAINABILITY AWARENESS AND ENGAGEMENT



Student-led sustainability clubs can be established to promote awareness of eco-friendly features.



R1 and R2 shall serve as "green learning labs" where students can learn and practice sustainability through projects and activities.

CORRIDOR IN THE RESIDENTIAL BLOCK



CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

The construction of Residential Blocks R1 and R2 at Ashoka University, with the CSR support of HDFC ERGO, has gone far beyond the creation of student housing. It has provided a safe, inclusive, and sustainable residential ecosystem that directly supports student comfort, academic engagement, peer learning, and personal well-being. With 100% of students reporting a sense of safety, over 90.0% confirming comfort and wellness, and a majority highlighting inclusivity and academic support, the residences have become a cornerstone of Ashoka's mission to deliver holistic education. By enabling students from diverse socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, including those on financial aid, to access world-class facilities, the project has advanced the university's vision of equity and excellence.

For HDFC ERGO, this initiative demonstrates how CSR investments in education can create lasting social value. The residential blocks have not only expanded capacity by nearly 800 beds but also fostered a strong culture of community, independence, and interdisciplinary collaboration. With sustainability features like solar power, rainwater harvesting, and water recycling, the project also aligns with India's NEP 2020 and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The success of R1 and R2 sets a benchmark for higher education infrastructure in India, making the Ashoka-HDFC ERGO partnership a model for impactful, replicable, and future-ready CSR initiatives.



LIBRARY AT ASHOKA
UNIVERSITY