



# CONFEDERATION OF INDIAN PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES

Supporting Partner



Host University



Industry Partner



## REPORT

# ACADEMIC - INDUSTRY ROUNDTABLE

on

## CSR-DRIVEN ACADEMIC-INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIPS FOR RESEARCH, INNOVATION & INSTITUTIONAL GROWTH

 10<sup>th</sup> April 2026

 Amity University, Gurugram

## ABOUT THE ROUNDTABLE

The event commenced by the Representative of Amity University and Ms Saloni Galundia as a representative of Confederation of Indian Private Universities (CIPU) with the arrival of esteemed guests, followed by a dynamic informal networking session that set the tone for insightful dialogue among academicians, industry experts and policymakers.



The Academic – Industry National Roundtable Conference successfully organized by CIPU and hosted at Amity University



## EVENT OVERVIEW

The roundtable was graced by distinguished dignitaries including Prof. (Dr.) P. B. Sharma, Prof. (Dr.) Vikas Madhukar, Maj. Gen. J. S. Dhull, Prof. (Dr.) Sanjana Vij Director of Amity Academic Staff College, Mr. R. Kartik Director General CIPU, Mr. Neeraj Narang Senior Director Global sustainability & CSR leader, Chairman ASSOCHAM Karnataka, Prof. Abhishek Ranjan, Prof. (Dr.) Ashok Nagawat Vice Chancellor of Delhi Skill University and Mr. Rusen Kumar Founder India CSR, along with several other eminent personalities.

Setting the context for the discussion, Prof. (Dr.) P. B. Sharma welcomed the gathering and emphasised that excellence must take precedence over mere relevance. He underlined the growing need for synergy between academia and industry, noting that such collaboration can unlock new opportunities, expand outreach and generate sustainable growth. Introducing the concept of “(UNI)\*3-I Power,” he explained how the convergence of universities and industry can drive innovation, profitability and rapid progress. He further connected this vision with *Atma nirbhar Bharat*, highlighting the importance of self-reliant institutions in a data-driven world.



An engaging discussion in progress under the guidance of Prof. (Dr.) Ashok Nagawat Vice Chancellor of Delhi Skill University

## EVENT OVERVIEW

Building on this perspective, Prof. (Dr.) Vikas Madhukar described academic–industry collaboration as a transformative opportunity. He highlighted its potential to deliver high returns on investment while effectively bridging the gap between theory and practice. Referring to initiatives such as Startup India and NITI Aayog, he also drew parallels with global models in the USA and China. Importantly, he pointed out the limitations in current research practices, particularly in PhD programmes, and stressed the urgent need for practical implementation.

Continuing the discussion, Mr. R. Kartik stressed the importance of consensus-building and strengthening private universities in India. He also highlighted the growing relevance of international partnerships in enhancing the quality and global competitiveness of higher education.

Offering an industry perspective, Mr. Neeraj Narang underscored the need to cultivate a strong research and innovation culture in India. He questioned the traditional emphasis on job-oriented education and instead encouraged nurturing creativity and idea generation among students from an early stage, noting that even small encouragements can lead to significant achievements.

The event also featured the felicitation of key dignitaries, including Prof. (Dr.) P. B. Sharma, Prof. (Dr.) Vikas Madhukar, Mr. R. Kartik, Mr. Neeraj Narang, Prof. Abhishek Ranjan and Mr. Rusen Kumar.



An engaging discussion in progress by CSR Head and Academia Delegate

## EVENT OVERVIEW

Expanding the conversation further, Prof. Abhishek Ranjan highlighted the importance of shared values and collaborative partnerships in addressing societal challenges. He noted that India possesses extensive knowledge in sustainability, which can contribute significantly to global practices.

Similarly, Prof. (Dr.) Ashok Nagawat emphasised the need to foster a questioning mindset and promote experiential learning through on-the-job training. He advocated for deeper engagement between academia and industry while encouraging the adoption of emerging skills such as prompt engineering.

Focusing on the role of CSR in education, Mr. Rusen Kumar highlighted the importance of improving India's Gross Enrollment Ratio and stressed that CSR funding can play a crucial role in expanding access to quality education.

The open house discussion, initiated by Prof. (Dr.) P. B. Sharma, brought together diverse perspectives on key themes such as research, long-term partnerships, innovation support, training and community development.



## VISION FOR ACADEMIA-INDUSTRY SYNERGY



Adding to this **Vishal Bhardwaj, Head- Corporate Social Responsibility Shree Cement Ltd.** shared valuable insights on the challenges and practical solutions involved in bridging the gap between academia and industry. He emphasized the need for stronger collaboration and real-world application of academic knowledge. Mr. Abhishek Ranjan further responded by highlighting that there should be a systematic assessment of proposed solutions to ensure their effectiveness and long-term impact.

Building on this, **Mrs. Meenakshi Gujral** worked with marketing and international affairs in **KR Manglam university** stressed that such collaborations should not remain one-time engagements but evolve into long-term partnerships grounded in shared values. She also cited examples of Australian universities leveraging AI-based training for students, to which Mr. Vishal Bhardwaj added that equal focus must be given to both faculty and students for meaningful outcomes



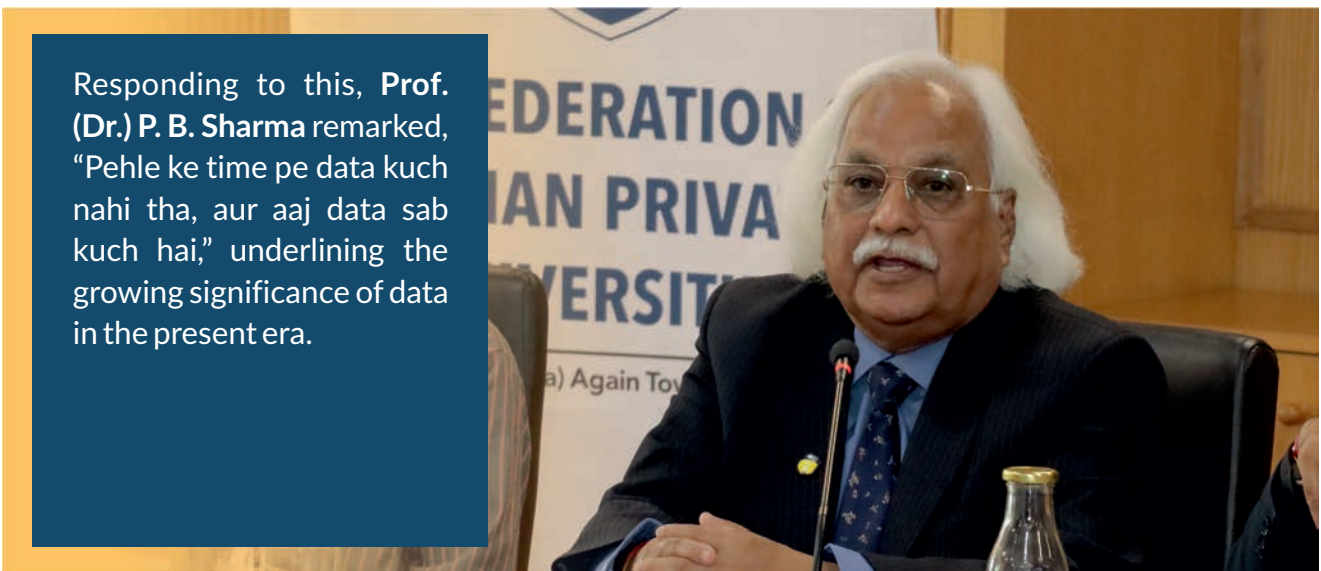
Further contributing to the discussion, **Mr. Arun Arora**, Director in **Chetak foundation** emphasized the importance of reviving the Gurukul parampara and promoting immersive learning experiences to strengthen value-based education. He also reflected on India's growing global position and the need to build stronger collaborative platforms. In a key insight, he redefined AI not as Artificial Intelligence, but as "Academy and Industry," highlighting the importance of deep integration between both sectors for future growth and innovation



## VISION FOR ACADEMIA-INDUSTRY SYNERGY



Further enriching the discussion, **Prof. Sapna Narula from Chaudhary Charan Singh University** emphasized the importance of practical thinking in academia and appreciated that industries today are increasingly supportive and receptive to collaboration. She suggested that industries should actively share relevant and accurate data to strengthen academic research and outcomes.



Responding to this, **Prof. (Dr.) P. B. Sharma** remarked, "Pehle ke time pe data kuch nahi tha, aur aaj data sab kuch hai," underlining the growing significance of data in the present era.



Representing the Registrar of Amity University, **Mr. Ravi Mahuja** highlighted the importance of building a strong culture of research, innovation, and creativity within institutions. In response, **Prof. (Dr.) P. B. Sharma** outlined the three steps of innovation, stating, "Innovation happens, then creating a culture, and making innovation a habit," emphasizing the need to institutionalize innovation for sustained growth.

## VISION FOR ACADEMIA-INDUSTRY SYNERGY



Further contributing to the discussion, **Ms. Tanu S. Ahuja, Corporate Head - ESG and Sustainability Vikas Group** emphasized the need to go beyond the traditional curriculum and focus on solution-oriented approaches. She highlighted that if industry is unable to share data, access can still be facilitated through associates for questionnaires and field-based inputs. She also stressed the importance of establishing Centers of Excellence and nurturing the habit of innovation and continuous learning to strengthen effective academia-industry collaboration

Adding further perspective, **Mr. Onkar Bagaria from Vivekananda Global University** emphasized that institutes must actively focus on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and work towards strengthening it. He also highlighted the importance of developing incubators and foundational support systems, urging industries to come forward, share resources, and contribute meaningfully to nurturing innovation and entrepreneurship within academic institutions.



Adding to these viewpoints, **Ms. Mamta Bhatia of University of Delhi** highlighted the significant gap between industry and academia, noting that CSR initiatives can play a crucial role in bridging this divide. She also suggested adopting models inspired by the United States that emphasize practical training and experiential learning in India, while stressing the need to transform students' mindset to make them more industry-ready and adaptable.



## VISION FOR ACADEMIA-INDUSTRY SYNERGY



Further contributing to the discussion, **Mr. Gaurav Kumar, Head CSR in UNO Minda Group** representing the industry, emphasized the importance of strengthening school-level education through sustainable projects. He also highlighted that excursion programmes at the undergraduate level should incorporate greater innovation to enhance practical exposure and holistic learning among students.

Adding another dimension, **Mr. Anurag Kushava** suggested that academia should develop a strong and structured body that can think from diverse perspectives and address challenges more effectively. During the interaction, Prof. (Dr.) P. B. Sharma also raised critical questions on why the government should support private universities and how CSR funding can be more strategically aligned, encouraging deeper reflection on policy and funding frameworks.



Adding to the discussion **Mr. Devesh Bhatla from Director, Center for Analytics & Data Excellence Chitkara University** highlighted the importance of focusing on key sectors such as health, environment, and education. They emphasized that organizations should come forward with a broader vision and think beyond conventional approaches to create meaningful and sustainable impact.



## VISION FOR ACADEMIA-INDUSTRY SYNERGY



Further adding to the dialogue, **Mr. Jashandeep Singh Professor Chitkara University** emphasized the importance of solution-oriented research, highlighting the need to clearly understand and articulate the real challenges faced by industries. He stressed that academic research should be aligned with practical industry problems to ensure relevance, impact, and effective outcomes.

Adding an important industry perspective, **Dr. Kadambari, AVP ESG, CSR & Sustainability Varun Beverages Limited**, highlighted the need to focus on hybrid varieties and emphasized strengthening laboratory infrastructure within universities. She advocated for greater integration of technology in the agriculture sector, stressing that innovations should be scalable in nature. She also underlined the importance of building strong synergy between industry and academia by aligning industry demands and challenges with academic responses, ensuring more practical and impactful outcomes.



Adding to the discussion, **Mr. B. S. Patil from Dayananda Sagar University** emphasized the importance of practical learning approaches. Citing examples such as gaushala management, he highlighted innovative ways to integrate real-life experiences into education and suggested ideas aimed at building sustainable careers and promoting a sustainable lifestyle among students.



## VISION FOR ACADEMIA-INDUSTRY SYNERGY



Adding to the discussion, **Mr. Sachin Bedi** emphasized the importance of environmental and social governance (ESG) as a key framework for future development. He stressed the need to integrate sustainability principles into research and industry practices to ensure responsible and balanced growth.

Further contributing, **Mrs. Meeta Jain, General Manager in Aprna trust and Arpana research india** highlighted that CSR is not just about funding, but about real-world experience and knowledge exchange that often remains confined within university research papers. She pointed out that despite significant potential, many practical problems remain unaddressed, and stronger industry-academia engagement is needed to translate CSR initiatives and research into meaningful, on-ground impact.



Further contributing to the discussion, **Mr. Mohit Dave** emphasized the funding challenges faced by universities and highlighted the need for stronger industry support and structured collaboration mechanisms to address these financial constraints effectively.



## VISION FOR ACADEMIA-INDUSTRY SYNERGY



Further contributing to the discussion, **Mr. Ashish** emphasized the importance of AI competency and the need for a dedicated platform that can bring together academia and industry. He highlighted that such an integrated ecosystem would create meaningful opportunities for collaboration, innovation, and skill development, ensuring better alignment between technological advancement and academic learning.

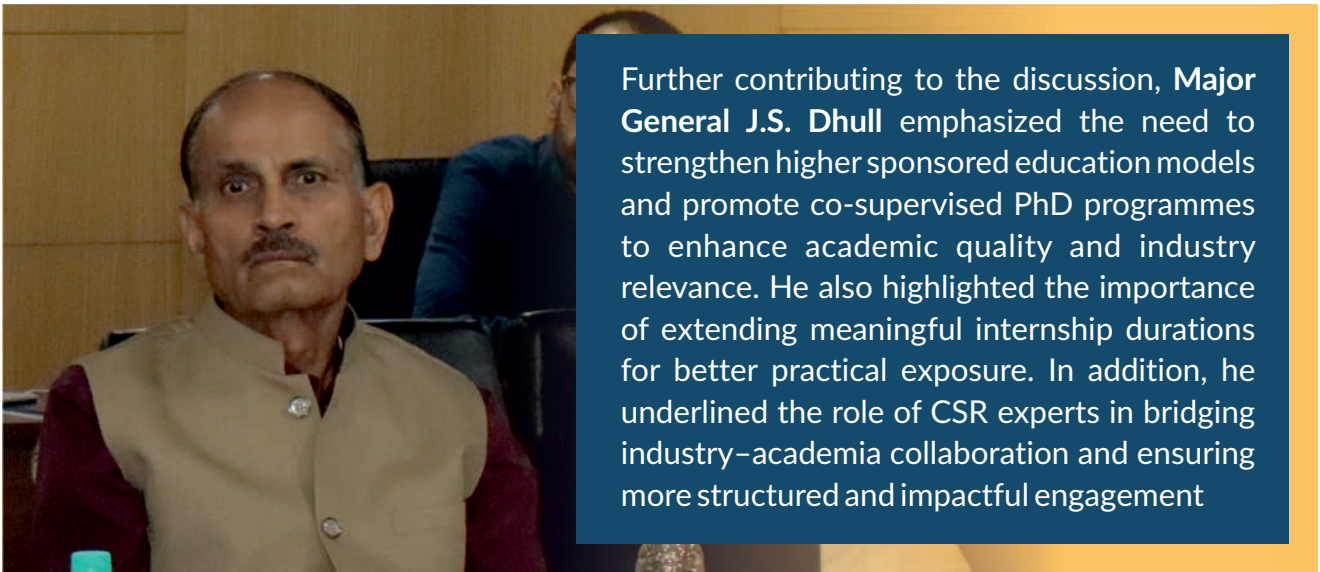
Further contributing to the discussion, **Mr. Siddharth Shankar Tripathi, Director for Centre of Innovation & Entrepreneurship in Bennet University**, highlighted the importance of corporate innovation and demand-driven research. He emphasized the role of social entrepreneurship and CSR in shaping a focused development agenda, ensuring that academic and industry efforts are aligned with real-world needs and impactful outcomes.



Further contributing to the discussion, **Mr. Pawan Kumar Verma, director, HR in Lamrin tech Skill University** highlighted the key challenges being faced by both industry and academia in advancing the collaboration agenda. He pointed out that industries often remain hesitant to fund private universities, which creates a gap in strengthening research, innovation, and long-term institutional partnerships.



## VISION FOR ACADEMIA-INDUSTRY SYNERGY



Further contributing to the discussion, **Major General J.S. Dhull** emphasized the need to strengthen higher sponsored education models and promote co-supervised PhD programmes to enhance academic quality and industry relevance. He also highlighted the importance of extending meaningful internship durations for better practical exposure. In addition, he underlined the role of CSR experts in bridging industry-academia collaboration and ensuring more structured and impactful engagement



A landmark moment as the CIPU CSR initiative is launched by **Mr. R Kartik (Director general, CIPU), Mr. Russen Kumar (Founder, India csr) and other esteemed dignitaries**

A major highlight of the event was the launch of the CIPU CSR initiative for higher education reform by Mr. Russen Kumar, Mr. R Kartik and other dignitaries. Announcement of Mr. Rusen Kumar as a convenor of the CIPU CSR.

The session concluded on a note of appreciation with a vote of thanks delivered by Ms. Saloni Galundia, who expressed sincere gratitude to all dignitaries and participants for their valuable contributions. The event ended with a group photograph followed by lunch, marking the successful culmination of a highly insightful and collaborative roundtable

## EVENT HIGHLIGHTS



## CONTACT

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