

Insight ♦ Dialogue ♦ Impact

Annual Report 2025–2026



*Ashank Desai Centre for Policy Studies (ADCPS)
Indian Institute of Technology Bombay, Powai,
Mumbai – 400076, India*



Executive Summary

*The Ashank Desai Centre for Policy Studies (ADCPS) strengthened its national and international footprint in 2025–2026 through sharper teaching, wider public engagement, and high-impact research. From convening **19 policy talks** to advancing flagship initiatives like **Living Lab Alleppey** and the **DST Centre for STI Policy**, the Centre deepened its influence across academia, policy, and practice.*



Teaching & Learning

Built policy capacity through rigorous classroom engagement and interdisciplinary learning.



Public Dialogue

Convened 19 policy talks with policymakers, academics, and civil society leaders.



Research & Innovation

Advanced Living Lab Alleppey and the DST Centre for STI Policy.



Recognition & Reach

Expanded visibility through publications and recognition across key policy domains.



Next Phase

Launching interdisciplinary clusters in digital governance, climate policy, and global collaboration.



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This annual report provides a comprehensive overview of the Ashank Desai Centre for Policy Studies' activities, achievements, and strategic directions for the 2025-2026 academic year. It highlights our dedication to advancing policy research, fostering academic excellence, and driving meaningful impact.

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Each section details the significant contributions and progress made by our faculty, researchers, and students, underscoring our commitment to insightful dialogue and evidence-based policy solutions.



I. Introduction

The **Ashank Desai Centre for Policy Studies (ADCPS)** at the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay aims to promote evidence-informed and inclusive public policy analysis. Established in **2016**, the Centre was renamed **the Ashank Desai Centre for Policy Studies (ADCPS) in 2021**. ADCPS serves as a platform for bridging the gap between academia, policymakers, and society through interdisciplinary research, policy dialogue, and academic engagement.

With a vision to become a **Centre of Excellence in policy studies**, ADCPS addresses pressing societal challenges through rigorous research, innovative thinking, and collaborative engagement with policymakers, academic institutions, and civil society.

Research at ADCPS spans a wide range of policy domains including:

- Digital society and governance
- Social policy (education, ageing, identity)
- Technology and policy
- Urban policy
- Water, sanitation, energy, and climate change

Through research outputs such as **policy briefs, working papers, reports, and publications**, the Centre contributes to evidence-based policymaking.

New Faculty Members (2025)



Dr Nitin Kareer

IAS (1988), Former Chief Secretary, Government of Maharashtra. Joined as **Visiting Professor** in 2025.



Dr Ishani Mukherjee

Associate Professor, Singapore Management University. Joined as **Visiting Associate Faculty** in 2025.



Dr Sekhar Bonu

IAS (Retd.) & Former DG, NITI Aayog. Offered (Hon.) **Visiting Professor** position.

Social Media Presence

Facebook

1,900+ followers

LinkedIn

3,950+ followers

Twitter (X)

500+ followers

ADCPS at a Glance

9

Core Faculty

19

Associate Faculty

71

Doctoral Students

7th

NPP Batch (2025)

II. Academic Programmes & III. PhD Defended



Academic Programmes

ADCPS offers two academic programmes:

Doctoral Programme in Public Policy

First cohort welcomed in Autumn 2017. Currently **71 doctoral students** enrolled. 9th batch commenced July 2025.

Master of Public Policy (MPP)

Commenced in **July 2019**. 7th batch welcomed in July 2025. Graduates placed in government, research, academia, and international organisations.

ADCPS regularly hosts **policy dialogues, workshops, seminars, and conferences** with participation from policymakers, scholars, practitioners, and industry experts, creating platforms for exploring emerging policy challenges.

PhD Defended in 2025–26

01

Sneha Somshekhar Swami

Sneha Somshekhar Swami (Roll No. 184460002) working under Prof Subodh M. Wagle, defended her thesis titled “Last-Mile Delivery of Electricity Distribution Services: Using the lens of Street-Level Bureaucracy” on March 23, 2026.

02

Devasmita Jha

Devasmita Jha (Roll No. 194468001) working under Prof Shishir Jha, defended her thesis titled “Algorithmic Management, Negotiating Precarity in the Absence of Regulation: Case Study of India’s Ride Hailing industry” on Feb. 26, 2026.

03

Kanthy Swaroop

Kanthy Swaroop (Roll No. 174460005) working under Prof D. Parthasarathy and Prof Satish B. Agnihotri, defended his thesis titled “Restructuring Urban Sewage Work: A Study of Policy Change and Caste in Hyderabad” on Aug. 29, 2025.

04

Neha Durga

Neha Durga (Roll No. 194467001) working under Prof Sarthak Gaurav, defended her thesis titled “Political Economy of Energy Transition in Irrigation in India” on July 23, 2025.

05

Yashas P. R.

Yashas P. R. (Roll No. 194463001) working under Prof Anurag Mehra, defended his thesis titled “Curbing Fake News: Understanding Limitations to Media Literacy, Gatekeeping, and Regulation as Mitigators” on April 10, 2025.

PhD Scholars — Class of 2025–26



Sneha Somshekhar Swami



Devasmita Jha



Kanthy Swaroop



Neha Durga



Yashas P.R.

IV. Events Overview



The Centre organised a rich calendar of academic activities across multiple formats during 2025–26.



Policy Talks / Lectures

19 Policy Talks + 1 Lecture covering AI governance, forest rights, water policy, higher education, and more.



Workshops / Book Discussions

5 Workshops + 1 Book Discussion on impact evaluation, qualitative methods, visual ethnography, and policy writing.



Continuing Education

1 CEP on Governance of Digital Technologies, bringing together government, industry, and academia participants.



Academic & Institutional Events

3 Events including the 9th Foundation Day, Short Film Competition, and 63rd Convocation.



Visitors to ADCPS

4 Visits from U.S. Consulate, University of Maryland, Monash University, and Singapore Management University.



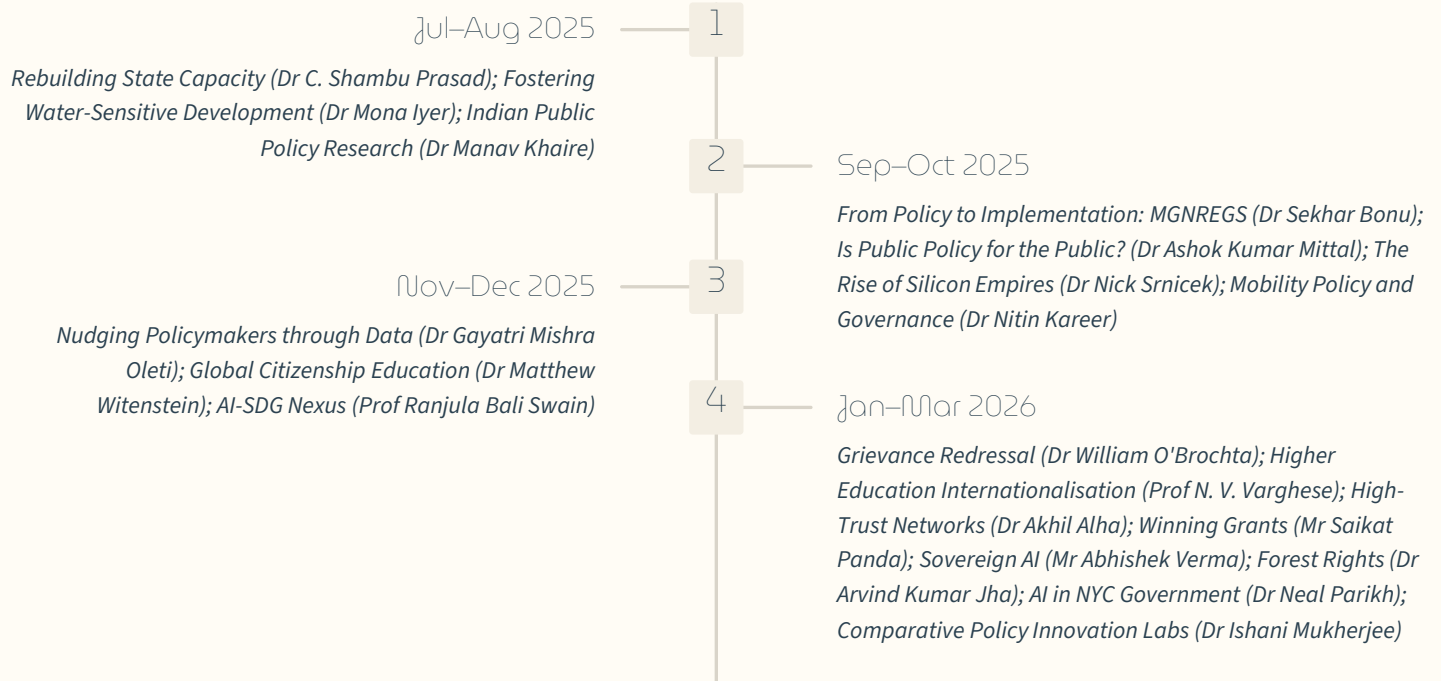
Other Activities

3 Activities including launch of The Polilogue Quarterly, MPP Student Profile, and MPP/PhD Handbooks.



IV-a. Policy Talks & Lectures

ADCPS hosted **19 policy talks and 1 lecture** during 2025–26, featuring distinguished speakers from government, academia, and international institutions. Topics ranged from AI governance and sovereign technology to forest rights, water policy, and public service delivery.



IV-b/c/d/e/f. Workshops, CEP, Institutional Events & Other Activities



Workshops & Book Discussions

→ Evidence-Based Policymaking: Impact Evaluation Methods
Dr Ishani Mukherjee & Ms Aparna Krishnan, J-PAL South Asia (24–27 March 2026)

→ Qualitative Data Analysis with MAXQDA
Ms Sarah Nazamuddin Harniswala, PhD Scholar, ADCPS (09 February 2026)

→ The Practice of Visual Ethnography (Book Discussion)
Prof Deepanshu Mohan, OP Jindal Global University (14 January 2026)

→ Writing and Presenting Public Policy
Dr Ishani Mukherjee, SMU (6–11 October 2025)

→ Menstrual Waste Management: Policy and Implementation
Prof Ajay Deshpande, Adjunct Professor, ADCPS (03 September 2025)

→ Policy Consultation: Climate Resilient Coastal Cities
Prof N. C. Narayanan & Mr Romit Sen, HSBC (13 August 2025)

CEP: Governance of Digital Technologies

A two-day Continuing Education Programme (14–15 February 2026) brought together participants from government, industry, and academia. Key themes included:

- Digital governance frameworks
- AI and policy
- Digital data flows and infrastructure
- Governance of digital health platforms



9th Foundation Day & 63rd Convocation

ADCPS celebrated its **9th Foundation Day** on 27 September 2025 with **Mr Abhishek Verma** (KPMG India) as Chief Guest. The event featured cultural performances, an award presentation, and a Short Film Competition won by **Ms Pragati Swami** for her film "Contract Workers".



The **63rd Convocation** was held on 23 August 2025 with **Shri Bipin Shrivastava, IAS (Retd.)**, Managing Director, MAHAPREIT, as Chief Guest. The ceremony celebrated graduating students from the MPP and PhD programmes.



📄 The **MPP and PhD Handbooks** for 2025–26 were released on July 17, 2025, and the first issue of **The Polilogue Quarterly** newsletter was launched, focusing on the theme of **Circular Economy**.



V. Research & Development Activities

Policy studies is an emerging interdisciplinary field in India, and ADCPS plays a significant role in advancing **evidence-based policy research** through flagship initiatives and collaborative projects.

IITB Living Lab – Alleppey

The IIT Bombay Living Lab in Alleppey is a flagship long-term initiative focused on urban sustainability, decentralised governance, and participatory policy experimentation. Spanning over **eight years**, the Living Lab has enabled:

- Field-based research and experimentation
- Community and local government partnerships
- Student-led experiential learning
- Development of context-specific policy solutions

The launch of the **Living Lab Alleppey website** marks an important milestone, providing real-time field insights, tools for water/waste/sanitation planning, and documentation of institutional collaborations.

[Visit Living Lab Allepp](#)

A **Photo Report** documenting the Living Lab journey (2017–2025) captures its impact across canal restoration, circular waste management, flood-risk assessment, and civic participation.

The initiative demonstrates an innovative pedagogical model where:

- Students act as primary data collectors and problem-solvers
- Communities function as knowledge partners
- Technology is aligned with social and institutional realities



DST Centre for STI Policy Research

ADCPS serves as a key hub for **Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI)** policy research in Western India under the DST initiative. The Centre collaborates with government agencies, research institutions, and academic partners to contribute to policy design and evaluation in emerging technology domains.

- ✔ During the year, ADCPS produced **five policy briefs** addressing critical governance and development challenges under the DST project.

Other Major Research Outputs

Solid Waste Management

A series of policy papers on solid waste management emerging from the Living Lab initiative.

12 City-Level Reports

Published under the HSBC-supported Climate Resilient Coastal Cities project.

5 Policy Briefs

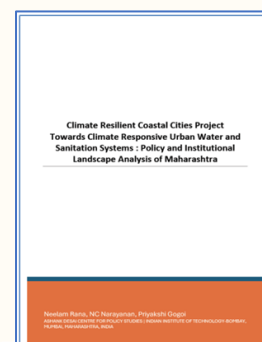
Contributing to governance and policy discourse across digital governance, water, and waste sectors.



Release of policy paper on Solid waste management



Release of HSBC project report



VI. Recognitions



Several faculty members and students of ADCPS received prestigious recognition during 2025–26, reflecting the Centre's growing national and international standing.

Faculty Recognitions



Dr Himanshu Burte

Invited to join the **International Advisory Board of the Manchester Urban Institute**, University of Manchester, UK (27 January 2026).



Dr Ajay Deshpande

Appointed **Chairman of the CSIR Domain Expert Group (DEG)** for evaluation of Fast Track Translational and Commercialization Project Proposals under Ecology, Environment and Sustainability (December 2025).



Dr Himanshu Kulkarni

Received the **International Water Prize**, University of Oklahoma (15 September 2025). First from the Indian subcontinent to receive this award, instituted since 2009.



Dr Sundeep Oberoi

Chaired the **ISO/IEC/JTC1/SC7 International Standards Organisation meeting** in Bangkok (8–13 June 2025).

Student Recognitions



Kiran Mhaske (PhD)

Selected for international workshop on **Migration, Informality and Development**, organised by WFF & Aajeevika Bureau with GIZ Germany support (Jan 2026).



Prithvi Rathod (MPP)

Selected under **PM-YUVA 3.0** with grant to work on book "Policy Entrepreneurs of Modern India" (December 2025). Also received **Institute Academic Prize** for highest CPI.



Trupti Patil (PhD)

Received funding for **Implementation Science Training Programme**, LMU Munich (24–28 November 2025).



Pratik Joshi (PhD)

Received full **International Travel Grant from ICSSR** for Solar World Congress-2025, Fortaleza, Brazil (4–7 November 2025).



Anandi Yadav (PhD)

Selected for **gEneSys Autumn School** on Gender and Intersectional Inequalities in Energy Transition, Venice International University, funded by EU Horizon Europe (6–10 October 2025).



Rakendu (PhD)

Received **Best Oral Presentation Award** at RECYCLE 2025, 5th International Conference on Waste Management, IIT Guwahati (5–6 June 2025).



Manav Khaire (PhD)

Received the **Naik and Rastogi Award for Excellence in PhD Research 2023–2025** (23 August 2025).



T.N. Anjali and Prithvi Rathod (MPP)

Received the **Institute Academic Prize** for securing the highest CPI in the first year (23 August 2025).



VII. Publications

In 2025–26, ADCPS faculty published research in leading journals including *Journal of Policy Modeling*, *Renewable and Sustainable Energy Reviews*, *Cities*, *Discover Public Health*, and *Ecology and Society*, among others.

Journal Papers (Selected)

1. **Narayanan, N. C.** (2026). *Walking the Razor's Edge: Politics of Ecological Governance in Kerala*. *Economic and Political Weekly*. 61(13).
2. **Rabbani, G., Rajesh Raj S.N. and Kathuria, V.** (2026). *Labour Regulation and Firm Transition in Indian Manufacturing*. *International Journal of the Economics of Business*.
3. **Sapkal, R., Chakma, K., and Parmar, D.** (2026). *A Race to Nowhere: Do Longer Working Hours Lead to Increased Productivity?* *Economic and Political Weekly*. 61(6).
4. **Sarath, K. T., Mishra, T., and Banerjee, R.** (2026). *A Multidimensional Urban Transport Equity Assessment Framework: A Case of Mumbai*. *Cities*, 169.
5. **Krishnakutty, Malini and Sundaresan, Jayaraj** (2026). *Is Participatory Local Planning Possible in India?* *Economic and Political Weekly*. 61(6).
6. **Jha, D., Jha, S. K., and Guha, A.** (2025). *A Critical Evaluation of the Indian Ride-Hailing Ecosystem*. *The Indian Journal of Labour Economics*. 68, 263–285.
7. **Joshi, P., Rao, A. B., and Banerjee, R.** (2025). *Review of Solar PV Deployment Trends, Policy Instruments, and Growth Projections*. *Renewable and Sustainable Energy Reviews*. 213.
8. **Patil, T., Jana, A., and Gaurav, S.** (2025). *Determinants of Functional Disability in India*. *Journal of Population Ageing*.
9. **Pillai, S., Luke, M., and Narayanan, N. C.** (2025). *Coping with Conflicts in the Co-production of Solid Waste Management Services*. *Ecology and Society*. 30(3).

Book Chapters

1. **Vimala, R.** (2026). *Sakhi, One-Stop Centre: A Critical Analysis*. In *Reimagining Institutions*. Routledge.
2. **Sundaresan, J., Krishnakutty, M. and Scaria, R.** (2025). *Local Collectivist Capability and the People's Plan for Chittur-Thathamangalam*. In *Decolonizing Planning*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
3. **Rakendu, S., Rana, N., and Narayanan, N. C.** (2025). *Feminization of Labor Force in the Waste Sector*. In *Subverting Social Inequalities*. Apple Academic Press.

Policy Briefs Series (Released December 15, 2025)

01

PBS No. 2025-001

Digital Federalism and Service Delivery: Governance Transformations in India's Rural Water Sector

02

PBS No. 2025-002

Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) Database: From Monitoring to Decision Support Tool

03

PBS No. 2025-003

Transitioning Towards Digital and Data-Driven Decision Support System: JJM in Maharashtra

04

PBS No. 2025-004

Impact of Interface Design on Aadhaar Authentication for 'Non-Dominant' Name Patterns: Lessons from SARAL Policy

05

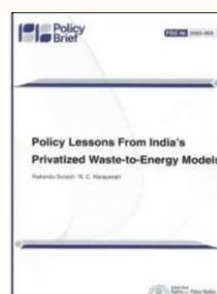
PBS No. 2025-005

Policy Lessons from India's Privatized Waste-to-Energy Models

06

PBS No. 2025-006

Towards Sustainable Menstrual Waste Management in India: Brainstorming Workshop





VIII– Patent, Research Projects & Future Initiatives

VIII. Patent Filed

✔ **PAT/CPS/10001859-1/25-26: Developed Age-Empathy Tool to evoke emotions triggered in older persons when negotiating built areas. (Inter-departmental coordination involving ADCPS, IDC, and Bioscience departments)**

IX. Research Projects Submitted

Technology Solutions for High Water Table Areas

K-DISC – Prof N. C. Narayanan

Climate Resilient Coastal Cities

HSBC – Prof N. C. Narayanan

Smart Cities Mission Studies

MoHUA – Prof N. C. Narayanan

Women's Mobility and Urban Research

VREF – Prof Himanshu Burté

Pandemic, Human Rights and Livelihood

NHRC – Prof Rahul Sapkal

Geographical Indications on Rural Economy

ICSSR – Prof Vinish Kathuria (with Dr Golam Rabbani)

X. Future Programmes & Initiatives



ePQD in Digital Governance

Scheduled to commence **August 2026**. Senate-approved programme for mid-career professionals in Policy, Governance & Technology; Government and Public Sector Officials; Industry Professionals in Digital Transformation, AI, and Data Systems; and Academics in Technology Policy.



DST Project: Future Research Focus

Priority areas include **Governance and auditing of public AI deployments**; Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC); and **Industrial robotics and manufacturing policy**.



Goa-IDC Evaluation Study

Evaluation study on **Governance, Legal, Digital and Institutional Reforms** undertaken by Goa-IDC. Consultancy project awarded on **March 30, 2026**.

"ADCPS is committed to advancing evidence-based, inclusive, and impactful policy research that bridges academia, government, and society."