



Report on

**National Workshop on Strategic Leadership and
Innovation for University Registrars**

Jointly organized by

**Gujarat Technological University and
Association of Indian Universities**

Date: 26th and 27th June, 2025.

Venue: GTU, Chandkheda Campus, Ahmedabad

Introduction:

The National Workshop on Strategic Leadership and Innovation for University Registrars, jointly organized by the Association of Indian Universities (AIU) and Gujarat Technological University (GTU), on 26th and 27th June, 2025. It is a forward-looking initiative aimed at equipping Registrars and senior university administrators with future-ready leadership competencies. Total 46 registrars of different universities from 16 different states of India were actively participated in this workshop.



Inauguration Session:

Dr. Rajul Gajjar Madam, Hon. Vice Chancellor, GTU, Chief Guest, Dr. Sunil Shukla, Director General of EDII, Gandhinagar, Guest of Honour, Dr. Amit Prashant, Professor at IIT Gandhinagar, Dr. K. N. Kher, Registrar, GTU, and Ms. Ranjana Parihar, Joint Secretary, AIU, inaugurated the workshop.



Lamp Lightning:

A traditional **lamp lighting ceremony** was performed to invoke divine blessings and mark the auspicious beginning of the workshop.

This was followed by the soulful rendition of the **GTU Song**, reflecting the university's spirit of innovation, unity, and academic excellence.



Welcome Address:



A formal welcome address was delivered by the Dr. K. N. Kher, Registrar, GTU, Sir had privileged and honored to extend a heartfelt welcome to the gathering on behalf of Gujarat Technological University (GTU), the land of Mahatma Gandhi and a beacon of technological progress. On behalf of GTU, a warm welcome was extended to all dignitaries, invited guests, speakers, and participants.

Special recognition was given to the esteemed presence of Dr. Rajul Gajjar, Hon'ble Vice Chancellor of GTU; Dr. Sunil Shukla, Director General of the Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India (EDII) and Chief Guest of the event; Dr. Amit Prashant, IIT Hyderabad; Ms. Ranjana Parihar, Joint Secretary, AIU; and all distinguished Registrars and academic leaders from across India.

The welcome address emphasized the evolving and strategic role of university Registrars in today's rapidly transforming academic environment. It highlighted the need for adaptive leadership in light of challenges such as regulatory changes, digital transformation, and the implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. It was noted that the Registrar's role now extends beyond administrative functions to include leadership in innovation,

governance, and institutional development. The theme of the workshop was deemed highly relevant, aiming to provide insights and strategies for navigating this transformation effectively.

Acknowledgment was given to AIU for its enduring role in academic collaboration and policy dialogue, and for partnering in organizing this timely workshop. The address also underlined GTU's ongoing efforts toward academic excellence, digital governance, and alignment with national education priorities.

The session concluded with optimism that the two-day workshop would foster knowledge-sharing, build lasting collaborations, and empower university administrators to lead their institutions toward a more dynamic and future-ready higher education system.

Address by Ms. Ranjana Parihar, (Joint Secretary, Association of Indian Universities)

She expressed deep satisfaction at addressing such a distinguished gathering, highlighting that the workshop was conceptualized in direct response to requests from Registrars across the country. The initiative seeks to provide a dedicated platform for **peer interaction, experience-sharing, and capacity building**, specifically for university administrators.



A central theme of the address was the lack of structured professional development opportunities for administrative leaders, in contrast to faculty development programs routinely organized for teaching staff. The evolving responsibilities of Registrars—particularly under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020—were emphasized, with a strong focus on digital transformation, outcome-based administration, and institutional coordination.

She stressed the importance of AI adoption in administration for enhancing efficiency and data-driven decision-making, and encouraged participants to embrace continuous learning and adaptability—described as essential for institutional growth in a rapidly changing education landscape.

As part of the AIU updates, the following initiatives were shared by her:

- AIU is the second-largest university association globally, encompassing equivalence, academics, youth affairs, and sports.
- Under the leadership of Dr. Pankaj Mittal, Academic and Administrative Development Centres (AADC) have been established to strengthen capacity-building across institutions. GTU was acknowledged as an AADC partner.
- AIU's INI Portal (Indian Network for Internationalization of Higher Education) supports NEP 2020 goals by fostering global collaborations and positioning India as a global education hub.

In conclusion, the speaker expressed heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Rajul Gajjar, Hon'ble Vice Chancellor of GTU; Registrar Dr. K. N. Kher; Program Coordinators Dr. Kaushal Bhatt and Dr. Keyur Darji; and the entire GTU team for their unwavering support and coordination.

The address concluded with an inspiring quote by **Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam**:

"If India is to become a global power, education is our strongest pillar."

Participants were encouraged to carry forward the spirit of innovation and collaborative leadership to strengthen the future of Indian higher education.

Inspirational Address by Dr. Amit Prashant:

Reimagining Higher Education through Student Autonomy and Systemic Frameworks

In his keynote address, **Dr. Amit Prashant**, Professor at IIT Gandhinagar, shared pioneering ideas on flexible academic design and student-centered learning. He described a bold model where students could take additional courses beyond the curriculum and choose, at graduation, which ones to include in their degree and CGPA. This allowed them to shape their academic path based on evolving interests.

Dr. Amit also introduced a flexible minor system, where students could claim any minor based on the courses completed, promoting academic autonomy. Addressing scalability



concerns, he emphasized that even large institutions like GTU can adopt such models with the right frameworks. Using the example of India's UPI system, he encouraged registrars to build enabling frameworks—comparable to digital infrastructure—that empower rather than restrict. He also described a radical shift in science labs: traditional formats were replaced with student-led, project-based exploration, where students accessed labs 24/7 and owned their learning process.

Dr. Amit concluded his address with a call to action for registrars and university leaders: become enablers of change, not enforcers of conformity. Build frameworks that respect student autonomy, encourage innovation, and evolve with the needs of learners.

Address by Chief Guest Dr. Sunil Shukla:

Bridging Policy and Practice: Leading with Purpose Toward Viksit Bharat 2047

Delivering a powerful keynote as Chief Guest at the GTU-AIU National Workshop, Dr. Sunil Shukla, Director General of the Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India (EDII), laid out a compelling roadmap for transformational leadership in higher education.



He opened by commending Gujarat Technological University (GTU) and Hon'ble Vice Chancellor Dr. Rajulben Gajjar for organizing a timely and strategically focused workshop for university registrars—those who, he emphasized, are the operational backbone of academic institutions.

Dr. Shukla brought attention to a critical issue in the higher education system: the persistent gap between policy formation and policy execution. *"Policies are drafted with vision, but their impact depends entirely on how they are interpreted and implemented at the ground level. That is where the registrar's role becomes vital,"* he emphasized. He called upon registrars to act as dynamic interpreters of policy—proactively shaping institutional outcomes with clarity, purpose, and a student-first approach.

He highlighted the need for peer learning, cross-institutional collaboration, and sharing of best practices to improve governance outcomes. Drawing from Dr. Edward de Bono's lateral thinking,

he stressed that universities today require individual, visionary, and transformational leadership—not just administrators who execute tasks, but leaders who rethink systems and drive reform from within.

He urged registrars to embrace accountability, innovation, and agility, especially when interpreting policy ambiguities. *“When in doubt, interpret the policy in favor of students and institutional stakeholders. Universities exist to serve them,”* he stated.

Dr. Shukla spoke passionately about the need for impact-driven research, a culture of entrepreneurship across disciplines, and the development of indigenous AI and digital governance tools to address national and regional challenges. He cited India’s post-2014 rise in startups, incubation centers, and unicorns as proof that systemic innovation is not only possible, but scalable—if supported by institutional courage and leadership.

He urged institutions to not just produce degree-holders, but to nurture job creators, innovators, and nation-builders, aligning higher education with the national vision of Viksit Bharat @2047. In a special mention, Dr. Shukla lauded Gujarat’s inclusive and progressive academic environment, saying:

“The hospitality, collaboration, and openness you see at GTU is a reflection of Gujarat’s educational spirit. This warmth and academic seriousness is present across the state, creating a fertile ground for innovation and reform.”

He closed his address with a strong message to the gathered registrars:

“Leadership is not defined by hierarchy but by vision and impact. As registrars, you are not just custodians of rules—you are the architects of implementation. You stand at the intersection of policy and transformation.”

Visionary Address by Dr. Rajul Gajjar – On Strategic Leadership and the Role of Registrars in Academic Transformation

Hon'ble Vice Chancellor of GTU, Dr. Rajul K. Gajjar, Hon'ble Vice Chancellor of GTU, delivered an inspiring keynote at the inaugural session of the GTU-AIU National Workshop on Strategic Leadership and Innovation for University Registrars.

She emphasized that strategic leadership is not limited to Vice Chancellors or policymakers, but equally applies to Registrars—whom she described as the operational backbone of every university.



Recognizing the silent but impactful work of Registrars, Dr. Gajjar reaffirmed the principle of “Student First”, applauding the behind-the-scenes precision and discipline that ensure smooth functioning in areas like admissions, examinations, and certification. She acknowledged the disconnect often felt by Registrars in affiliating systems, yet celebrated their capacity for independent, innovative problem-solving.

Highlighting GTU's innovation efforts, she invited participants to explore GTU Ventures, where work in ed-tech, digital transformation, and startup incubation is reshaping the higher education landscape. Innovation, she noted, includes reforms in examinations, AI-driven assessments, and flexible curricula—not just entrepreneurship. Dr. Gajjar also highlighted GTU's work on open-access education platforms and its global collaborations with leading scientists and CEOs of Indian origin—transformations once thought unimaginable.

She concluded with a powerful quote from Chanakya, linking education to humility, worthiness, and national well-being, and commended AIU and Dr. Pankaj Mittal for envisioning this much-needed workshop. She encouraged continued engagement, calling for follow-up programs to ensure sustained impact and implementation. Her address set a visionary and inclusive tone, celebrating Registrars as essential leaders in the transformation of Indian higher education.

Vote of thanks by Dr. Keyur Darji, (Deputy Registrar, Gujarat Technological University)

On behalf of Gujarat Technological University at the conclusion of this inaugural session of the National Workshop on Strategic Leadership and Innovation for University Registrars.

Dr. Keyur extend our sincere gratitude to our Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, Dr. Rajul Gajjar madam, for her visionary leadership and constant encouragement in organizing such impactful academic and administrative programs. He extends our sincere gratitude to Dr Pankaj Mittal Madam to inspire all of us



at GTU. He delivers our heartfelt thanks to our Chief Guest, Dr. Sunil Shukla, Director General of EDII, Gandhinagar, for gracing the occasion with his presence and sharing his valuable insights on entrepreneurship and institutional innovation.

He equally honored the presence of our Guest of Honour, Dr. Amit Prashant, Professor at IIT Gandhinagar, whose thoughtful address on administrative innovation and student-centric policy making was both practical and thought-provoking.

He deeply provided thanks to Ms. Ranjana Parihar, Joint Secretary, AIU, for her motivating words, for her constant support, and for outlining the national vision of AIU in driving academic and administrative excellence. Her leadership has been instrumental in conceptualizing this workshop and making it a reality. He delivered special note of thanks to our respected resource person, Dr. Abhay Kumar Thakur, and to all our distinguished speakers and panelists who have agreed to contribute their expertise in the sessions to follow.

Lastly he appreciates to the entire GTU organizing team—Registrar Dr. K. N. Kher, Program Coordinators Dr. Kaushal Bhatt, and GTU Team who have worked tirelessly behind the scenes to make this workshop possible.

As part of the concluding session of the GTU-AIU National Workshop on *Strategic Leadership and Innovation for University Registrars*, the event culminated with the ceremonial singing of the **National Anthem of India**, "Jana Gana Mana." All participants stood in solemn respect, showcasing unity, patriotism, and reverence for the nation.

Expert Session 1 by Dr. Abhay Kumar Thakur, IRS

Theme: Good Governance Practices & Financial Management

Dr. Abhay Kumar began his address by expressing gratitude to AIU and GTU for conceptualizing a platform tailored to university registrars and academic administrators—an area long overlooked. He praised the meticulous organization and hospitality by GTU, citing it as an example of effective governance.

“Innovation is a by-product of good governance and visionary leadership. Where governance is sound, innovation is inevitable.” – *Dr. Abhay Kumar*



His address underscored that strong governance and visionary leadership are more critical to the success of higher education institutions than infrastructure or faculty alone. Drawing inspiration from ancient Indian universities like Nalanda and Taxila, it called for distributed leadership, institutional transparency, and greater stakeholder inclusion—urging universities to publish audited reports and engage students and alumni in governance processes. Within the framework of **NEP 2020**, the speaker emphasized the concept of "light but tight" regulation, advocating for increased autonomy coupled with structured accountability. He stressed the urgent need for real-time financial and administrative transparency using digital platforms, noting that many institutions still lack basic public disclosures despite being publicly funded.

On financial management, he highlighted that even top-tier institutions self-finance only about 25% of their operational costs. Citing experiences from BHU, he recommended shifting from passive savings to strategic investment practices, including corpus funds, FDs, mutual funds, and leveraging university assets. Universities were urged to evolve into sustainable knowledge enterprises, diversifying revenue through tuition (including international students), consultancies, incubators, publications, and alumni support.

Responding to concerns around **GST and taxation**, the speaker explained current exemptions and liabilities under Notifications 11 and 12, especially for outsourced services like exams. He encouraged forming a collective academic forum to negotiate with the government for clearer and fairer policies.

He also pointed out structural challenges such as over-centralization, lack of student and alumni representation in decision-making, and outdated curricula. Institutions with stakeholder-driven reforms and active incubation ecosystems were highlighted as models of progress. The competitive entry of foreign universities was flagged as a policy imbalance, calling for the expansion of the Institution of Eminence (IoE) scheme from 20 to at least 100 institutions to ensure fair competition.

The speaker advocated for student-centric models, including "Earn While You Learn" schemes, active alumni involvement in curriculum design and fundraising, and broader community engagement—especially for universities with social service roles like BHU's hospitals.

In closing, participants were encouraged to strengthen governance, improve financial planning, foster inclusive leadership, and build mechanisms for internal policy analysis. The speaker concluded with a powerful message:

“Autonomy and accountability must walk hand in hand. Without governance reform, the dream of becoming a Vishwaguru remains incomplete.”

Expert Session 2 by Dr. Monica Garg, IAS

Theme: Strategic Role of AI & Generative AI in Academic Governance & Public Policy

Dr. Monica Garg began with a foundational understanding of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Generative AI (GenAI), comparing their significance to the invention of the smartphone and internet. She highlighted how GenAI tools, including ChatGPT, Gemini, and others, are revolutionizing user interaction by enabling content creation and advanced data manipulation. She used familiar tools like Google Maps to explain the integration of real-time and historical data through crowdsourcing, showing how AI algorithms assist in navigation and time-saving decision-making. In digital marketing. She emphasized how AI learns user preferences and automates targeted advertising strategies.



Key topics of her session:

Implications for Academia: She advocated for embedding AI literacy into educational curriculums. According to her, the paradigm must shift from the 'Right to Education' to 'Right Education' that empowers students with skills in emerging technologies.

Administrative Applications: AI can optimize recruitment, admission processes, and academic record management. She also spoke about manuscript preparation, thesis summarization, and automating routine administrative tasks like attendance and performance tracking.

Concerns and Cautions: Dr. Garg raised issues related to data bias and overdependence on AI. She pointed out how AI can misdiagnose skin conditions in non-Western populations due to biased training data. She advocated for robust AI usage policies and ethical oversight in academia.

Case Study on Inclusive Education: She shared the story of a visually impaired student who cleared IIT and secured a scholarship to Stanford using AI-enabled assistive technologies. This example was used to highlight the need for institutional policies that support differently-abled students.

Final Thoughts: AI will not replace humans, but those who do not understand AI may be replaced. She urged registrars and academic leaders to ensure secure digital infrastructure and Indian data sovereignty by using cloud systems hosted within the country.

Expert Session 3 by Dr. Shreya Chattopadhyaya,

Theme: Use of AI in Administration

Dr. Shreya tailored her session to practical challenges faced by registrars, including document drafting, translation, reporting, and automation of administrative workflows using AI. She provided hands-on demonstrations of Chat GPT, Claude AI, Perplexity, Gemini, and Gamma App for varied tasks like circular writing, policy drafting, data visualization, and summarizing documents and videos.



Key topics of her session:

Prompt Engineering Insights: She explained the importance of crafting specific prompts containing instructions, context, input data, and desired output format. Examples illustrated how the quality of prompts directly affects AI output accuracy.

Hands-on Examples: Live demonstrations included generation of Republic Day circulars, audit emails, thesis submission notices, dashboards using sales data, and policy documents—all generated through prompt-based AI tools.

Emphasis on Domain Expertise: She repeatedly emphasized that AI should complement domain expertise, not replace it. Final validation and contextual relevance must be ensured by human experts.

Critical Reflections: She warned about risks associated with uploading sensitive or institutional data on public cloud platforms. Highlighted the importance of ethical AI use and transparency.

Takeaways for Academic Offices: AI can significantly reduce workload in academic administration, allowing registrars to focus on strategic and policy-driven tasks. With cautious adoption and appropriate governance, AI tools can be transformative.

Visit Report: GIFT City – A Model of Sustainable Urban Innovation

Location: GIFT City, Gandhinagar, Gujarat



Introduction

Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City), envisioned by Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi during his tenure as Chief Minister of Gujarat, represents India's first operational smart city and international financial services center. This futuristic city integrates cutting-edge technology, sustainable development, and global best practices to create a model urban environment for the 21st century.



Key Highlights of the Visit

Smart Infrastructure: Tunnel Utility Corridor

One of the most revolutionary features of GIFT City is the world's first underground utility tunnel in a smart city. This 9 km long tunnel runs beneath the city without the need for repeated digging for utility repairs or upgrades. It houses:

- Power lines
- Water supply and sewage pipelines
- Automated Waste Collection System (AWCS)
- ICT network and gas pipelines

This approach reduces carbon emissions, ensures zero surface disruption, and represents a major leap towards smart urban management.

Automated Waste Collection System (AWCS)

GIFT City has implemented an automated pneumatic waste collection system, the first of its kind in India. Key features include:

- Waste is transported through underground pipelines using air pressure.
- No open garbage dumps or waste collection vehicles within city limits.
- Waste is segregated and compacted automatically at a centralized plant.
- Maintains hygiene and reduces urban carbon footprint drastically.

This system ensures efficiency, hygiene, odor-free environment, and sustainability in solid waste management.

Green Infrastructure & Cooling Systems

GIFT City is designed as a green city with:

- District Cooling System (DCS): A nature-integrated system providing chilled water through pipelines for air conditioning needs, reducing heat emissions and energy consumption.
- Large green spaces, vertical gardens, and tree-lined roads.
- Buildings are constructed following Green Building Certification norms (LEED/IGBC standards).
- Zero discharge sewage system and advanced water recycling.

These efforts embody the vision of a nature-loving, low-emission urban ecosystem.

Technological & Educational Integration

GIFT City is also evolving into an educational and innovation hub:

- INFS (International Financial Services Centres Authority) has collaborated with institutions like Daiken University and several Indian universities to launch industry-relevant courses aligned with the city's finance and tech ecosystem.
- Credit-linked programs allow students to study and intern within GIFT City, gaining real-time industry exposure.

Cultural & Artistic Expression

The city showcases global pieces of art and sculpture installations, symbolizing peace, innovation, and harmony. These installations:

- Beautify public spaces
- Promote cultural integration
- Enhance the city's global appeal

Strategic Impact and National Replication

The success of GIFT City is now influencing similar smart urban development models in other Indian states. Inspired by this pilot:

- Multiple states are exploring underground utility tunnels.
- Urban cooling and waste systems are being proposed in upcoming smart cities.
- GIFT has become a national benchmark for integrated, future-ready urban planning.

Conclusion

The visit to GIFT City was a profound experience, showcasing how visionary leadership can transform an idea into a world-class reality. The combination of smart planning, sustainable infrastructure, and global integration underlines GIFT City's role as a flagship for India's urban future. It exemplifies the "New India" vision, where growth is harmonized with environment, efficiency, and global standards.

GTU acknowledge its sincere gratitude to the GIFT City Authority for facilitating this visit and for their continued efforts in making India proud on the global stage.

Expert Session 4 by Shri Shreenibas Chandra Prusty

Theme: Regulatory Framework and Conflict Resolution

Introduction

On the second day the workshop, the first session of Regulatory Framework and Conflict Resolution was delivered by the Shri Shreenibas Chandra Prusty, Registrar, Indian Law Institute (ILI), New Delhi. An esteemed academic administrator and finance professional with over 35 years of distinguished service in India's higher education system. Currently serving as Registrar of the Indian Law Institute, New Delhi, Shri Prusty brings a wealth of knowledge from his leadership roles at premier institutions including the Central University of Odisha, Tezpur University, IITDM Jabalpur, NIT Rourkela, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University, and Bikaner Technical University.



Session Overview

This session focused on two crucial areas: **Regulatory Frameworks** and **Conflict Resolution** in university systems. The expert navigated the participants through the complex yet essential landscape of institutional governance, with an emphasis on legal and procedural robustness.

Core Topics Covered:

- Institutional alignment with UGC, MHRD, and other statutory frameworks
- Legal frameworks guiding university operations
- Conflict resolution mechanisms through preventive and remedial strategies
- Role of the Registrar in compliance, mediation, and ethical leadership
- Strengthening transparency and institutional documentation for legal defense

Through compelling real-life examples, Shri Prusty demonstrated how proactive legal understanding, accurate documentation, and well-established SOPs can help institutions preempt and resolve internal conflicts, while simultaneously aligning with national education reforms.

Highlights from Expert Presentation

- **Six Pillars of Regulation in Higher Education:** UGC, AICTE, NCTE, MCI, PCI, and the Bar Council form the core regulatory framework. Institutions must map their internal processes to these bodies and ensure consistent AQAR (Annual Quality Assurance Reports) and NIRF compliance.
- **Digital Governance and Automation:** To reduce bureaucratic delays and increase accuracy, Shri Prusty emphasized digitization of routine operations—faculty records, exam results, NAAC documentation, and interdepartmental communication.
- **Holistic Student Support Models:** He proposed adoption of integrated student life-cycle monitoring systems—linking attendance, hostel presence, and mess usage to detect mental health vulnerabilities. IIT Chennai’s model was cited as a best practice.
- **Decentralization and Emotional Intelligence in Decision-Making:** Administrative decentralization should be balanced with emotionally intelligent leadership. He emphasized that effective academic administration is as much about building trust as enforcing rules.
- **Indigenous and Regionally Relevant Curriculum:** In line with NEP 2020, he advocated for universities, especially in remote and tribal areas, to introduce localized, employment-oriented academic programs rooted in indigenous knowledge.

Conclusion

The session delivered by Shri Shreenibas Chandra Prusty offered a comprehensive and visionary framework for university registrars. He redefined the Registrar's role—not just as an administrative gatekeeper, but as a **strategic leader, legal custodian, and institutional innovator**. With a strong emphasis on governance, empathy, and innovation, this session empowered participants to reimagine their role in steering academic institutions through the challenges of the 21st century.

Expert Session 5 by Shri Shreenibas Chandra Prusty

Theme: Legal and Regulatory Frameworks in University Administration

The second session on Legal and Regulatory Frameworks in University Administration was also delivered by the Shri Shreenibas Chandra Prusty, Registrar, Indian Law Institute (ILI), New Delhi. He emphasized the **scientific and accountable design of administrative workflows** by integrating statutory, regulatory, and institutional frameworks.

He emphasized the legal hierarchy in university governance, noting that approved university statutes take precedence over ministry guidelines. For multidisciplinary institutions facing conflicting regulations from bodies like UGC, AICTE, and PCI, he advised developing university-specific policies approved by statutory authorities. Statutory rules framed under legislation were clarified to override executive advisories.

To improve transparency in recruitment and promotions, he stressed publishing shortlisting criteria, automating UPARs, and institutionalizing regular Departmental Promotion Committees (DPCs). For financial governance, he encouraged use of the Government e-Marketplace (GeM), adherence to integrity pacts, and robust internal audits that go beyond finance to cover procurement, legal compliance, and establishment matters.

Shri Prusty advocated strengthening legal cells to conduct awareness workshops, maintain compliance checklists, and provide real-time access to legal databases. He promoted informal dispute resolution through internal mediation. Regarding gender justice, he clarified that ICC findings must be followed by administrative inquiries to uphold natural justice. He also highlighted the need for mental health support while ensuring privacy under constitutional rights.

Academic reforms discussed included creating clear moderation policies to avoid grade inflation, and requiring originality declarations for dissertations. Finally, he reminded Registrars of their responsibility in maintaining accurate records of statutory body proceedings, emphasizing that lawful, transparent actions rooted in logic and fairness will withstand legal scrutiny.

In conclusion, Shri Prusty urged universities to adopt a **preventive legal culture**, supported by training, digital systems, and procedural integrity across all administrative functions.

Expert Session 6 by Dr. A. K. Ganatra,

Theme: RTI Act and Its Practical Relevance in University Governance

Introduction:

Dr. A. K. Ganatra has over 34 years of experience in governance and RTI implementation. He is the author of landmark publications such as RTI 370 .Compiling over 470 judicial pronouncements on RTI. He has trained more than 60,000 government officials, significantly contributing to public transparency and administrative reforms.



The session focused on the constitutional and legal foundations of the Right to Information (RTI), emphasizing that it is not just a statutory right under the RTI Act but a fundamental right under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution and is also recognized as a human right. Dr. Ganatra highlighted the importance of suo moto disclosure under Section 4 of the RTI Act, noting that 70% of RTI queries relate to information that should already be available online. Universities were urged to audit their websites for proactive transparency.

Detailed clarifications were provided on Sections 2(f) and 2(j), which define the scope of information accessible under RTI—covering not just documents but also emails, contracts, scanned files, and digital media. For voluminous data requests, the use of Section 7(9) was advised, allowing denial if the request disproportionately diverts resources; applicants can instead be invited for physical inspection of records.

On personal and third-party information, Section 8(1)(j) was explained, allowing denial if the information has no public interest or invades privacy. Common records like degrees and salary slips are generally classified as personal unless public interest is demonstrated. Key judgments were cited, including the Supreme Court's 2019 ruling in *Subhash Chandra Agarwal*, which categorized personal information, and the Delhi High Court's 2024 verdict, which clarified that deemed universities are not automatically under RTI unless significantly funded or controlled by the government.

Conclusion:

Dr. Ganatra's session delivered legal clarity, practical strategies, and case law integration for handling RTI in academic institutions. It emphasized the dual responsibility of universities to ensure:

- **Transparent administration**
- **Protection of individual privacy rights**

With India's higher education entering an era of digital governance and participatory transparency, the session equipped university registrars with both the statutory knowledge and operational strategies to address complex RTI scenarios scientifically, ethically, and legally.

Valedictory Session:

Date: 27 June 2025

Venue: Gujarat Technological University (GTU), Chandkheda, Ahmedabad

The two-day national workshop, jointly organized by the Gujarat Technological University (GTU) and the Association of Indian Universities (AIU), concluded with a reflective and spirited valedictory session. The workshop brought together 46 registrars and senior administrative officials from 16 states across India. Its primary aim was to foster institutional leadership, regulatory clarity, and digital transformation in higher education governance.

Closing Remarks by Ms. Ranjana Parihar (AIU)

Ms. Ranjana Parihar provided a well-structured summary of the entire workshop, categorizing **ten critical takeaways**:

1. **Peer Learning:** Informal and formal sessions offered resolution to shared institutional issues.
2. **Financial Governance:** Reinforcement of prudent financial management practices.
3. **Policy Framing:** Emphasis on “Student First” principle in policy design.
4. **AI in Administration:** Call to adopt AI for disclosure, record keeping, and grievance redressal.
5. **Legal Training:** Registrars must develop legal reasoning, documentation skills, and RTI sensitivity.
6. **Conflict Resolution:** Empathy, emotional intelligence, and communication are key tools.
7. **Continuous Learning:** Regular updates on government regulations, UGC/AICTE notices, and institutional rules is vital.
8. **RTI Act Management:** Only public-interest RTIs need exhaustive responses; others can be addressed with care and brevity.
9. **Future-Ready Roles:** Registrars need to be trained in governance, data analytics, and institutional development planning.
10. **Cultural & Emotional Integration:** Gujarat offered a conducive, peaceful, and learning-oriented environment.

Dr. Rajul Gajjar, opened the valedictory remarks by appreciating the summing-up by Dr. Vandana, who beautifully captured the emotional and intellectual intensity of the workshop. She acknowledged the emotional intelligence of the participants, emphasizing that meaningful participation arises from deep emotional and cognitive engagement. She emphasized the power of human connection and suggested that all academic conferences and workshops must include structured interactions such as participant movement during sessions to promote active networking and familiarity.

Dr. Rajul Gajjar, drew from her rich experience in academic governance and laid out foundational principles for effective administration. She advised registrars to always trust their integrity when dealing with rules and governance. Even if a regulation appears ambiguous, honesty and commitment to institutional welfare ensure support. She advocated a clear student-centric approach. She highlighted the dangers of leaving interpretation of policies to clerical levels. She expressed deep respect for the cohort of registrars, acknowledging their crucial role in creating academic ecosystems based on justice, empathy, and efficiency. She also extended gratitude to key resource persons like Dr. Bucha and Dr. Antona for supporting collective administrative understanding.

A major focus of her message was on **digital transformation**, open governance, and leveraging technology for administrative efficiency:

- **All administrative processes must be digitized.**
- **Put systems in the public domain for transparency.**
- **Automate to reduce human errors and delay.**

She also offered support to institutions interested in learning GTU's end-to-end digitization practices. Dr. Gajjar encouraged registrars to overcome fear when adopting new technologies and administrative reforms. She concluded her address with an inspirational note for all participants:

Conclusion

Dr. Rajul Gajjar's valedictory address was a visionary and empowering articulation of leadership values for academic administrators. By combining administrative wisdom, technological foresight, and emotional intelligence, she provided a roadmap for registrars to evolve as ethical, student-centric, and digitally empowered leaders. Her address beautifully aligned with the workshop's theme of strategic innovation and institutional leadership.

Certificate Distribution:

As a mark of appreciation and participation, certificates were distributed to all eminent participants during the valedictory session of the GTU-AIU National Workshop on Strategic Leadership and Innovation for University Registrars. The distribution ceremony was gracefully led by Dr. Rajul Gajjar, Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, GTU, Dr. K. N. Kher, Registrar, GTU and Ms. Ranjana Parihar, Joint Secretary, Association of Indian Universities (AIU). A certificate of honour was presented to Dr. Pankaj Mittal by Dr. Rajul Gajjar, Vice Chancellor, Gujarat.



Vote of Thanks by Dr. Kaushal Bhatt, Associate Professor, GTU-SMS

On behalf of Gujarat Technological university, Dr. Kaushal Bhatt deliver the Vote of Thanks at the conclusion of this landmark National Workshop on **Strategic Leadership and Innovation for University Registrars**, jointly organized by Gujarat Technological University (GTU) and the Association of Indian Universities (AIU).



At the outset, he express his heartfelt gratitude to Hon'ble **Vice Chancellor, Dr. Rajul K. Gajjar** and Dr Pankaj Mittal for her unwavering guidance and constant encouragement throughout the planning and execution of this workshop. Her strategic foresight and commitment to academic excellence have been instrumental in making this event a grand success. he also thanks all the dignitaries from AIU, GTU leadership, and senior officials for their gracious presence and meaningful participation.

He also thanks to all 49 distinguished Registrar participants from 16 states, thank you for your enthusiastic engagement, peer learning spirit, and insightful contributions. Your presence has truly made this workshop a pan-India academic confluence.

He specially appreciates all the committee coordinators and members, for their meticulous planning and tireless efforts. From logistics and hospitality to report preparation and media handling — every detail was handled with utmost professionalism. A dedicated appreciation was also provided the technical team, support staff, and all contributors behind the scenes who ensured the smooth conduct of every session.

In conclusion, this workshop has not only enabled knowledge exchange but also built a robust network of university leaders committed to transformational change. Let us carry forward the learnings and sustain the momentum toward realizing the vision of NEP 2020 and Atma nirbhar Bharat.

GTU Ventures Visit

After successful valedictory all the delegation of 49 University Registrars and Senior Administrative Officials from across India visited **GTU Ventures** in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. This visit, part of a national workshop, aimed to explore GTU's integrated innovation ecosystem.



The delegation toured key facilities, including Ideal Labs for early-stage ideation and prototyping, and the Atal Incubation Center (AIC-GISC), a NITI Aayog-funded hub with biotech and robotics labs. They also visited the GTU Innovation Center (GISC), which integrates SSIP Labs, Design Innovation Centre (DIC), and the Intellectual Property Facilitation Cell (IPFC). highlighted GTU Ventures' governance, incubation workflows, and funding channels.

The visit underscored GTU Ventures' success in blending academic innovation with entrepreneurship, leveraging state and national policies. Its model, supporting over 750 startups across 400+ affiliated institutions, was deemed highly replicable. Recommendations included establishing hub-and-spoke innovation models, initiating mentorship and IP clinics, and defining clear impact metrics for other universities to adopt this nationally relevant model.

Glimpse of the Event







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