

Chief Secretary reviews Higher Education Sector and Follow-up to Ladakh Education Conclave

Leh, August 22, 2026: Chief Secretary, Union Territory of Ladakh, Ashish Kundra, chaired a meeting to review the higher education scenario in Ladakh and assess the follow-up to key recommendations emerging from the Ladakh Education Conclave 2024, with discussions focusing on enrolment, academic programmes, student aspirations, admissions, employability and strengthening the quality of higher education institutions.

At the outset, Secretary, School Education Department, Bhanu Prabha, presented an overview of the current higher education landscape, covering student enrolment, courses offered, skill development initiatives, academic credits and other areas requiring focused attention. Faculty members and academic representatives also shared their observations and suggestions on the prevailing situation in colleges, including instances where students have been unable to secure admission in preferred programmes due to limited seats, course availability and other admission-related factors.

The Chief Secretary emphasised the need for stronger academic coordination and regular interaction among colleges and universities in Ladakh. He called for greater faculty-level exchange, brainstorming and sharing of best practices to collectively address academic challenges and improve opportunities available to students within the UT.

The meeting also examined the reasons for students pursuing higher education outside Ladakh despite the availability of colleges and institutions within the UT. The Chief Secretary called for a systematic assessment of enrolment trends, vacant seats, admission patterns, course preferences and the factors influencing students to seek education outside the region. He stressed that the assessment should provide a clear understanding of whether the reasons relate to course availability, academic quality, professional opportunities, institutional capacity or other student preferences.

Reviewing the existing undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, the Chief Secretary called for an assessment of courses in terms of their relevance, demand and employment potential. He emphasised the need to consider professionally oriented and emerging disciplines while strengthening programmes suited to Ladakh's specific requirements and opportunities, including agriculture, horticulture, food technology, climate studies and other relevant fields.

The meeting also reviewed the admission process in colleges and the University of Ladakh, including the role of CUET and merit-based admissions. The Chief Secretary directed the concerned institutions to compile reliable data on admissions, enrolment and vacant seats and examine the reasons behind gaps between available capacity and actual admissions.

He further called for developing a comprehensive database to understand the academic journey of students after completing Class XII in Ladakh, including the degree or professional programmes they choose, institutions they join, reasons for studying outside the UT and their subsequent academic or employment outcomes. Such information, he said, would help institutions better align academic offerings with students' aspirations and emerging employment opportunities.

The Chief Secretary stressed the importance of career counselling, mentorship, entrepreneurship and exposure programmes in colleges. He called for regular lecture series and interaction with successful professionals, entrepreneurs, alumni, local achievers and subject experts to help students make informed academic and career choices.

The role of alumni was also discussed, with emphasis on maintaining meaningful engagement with former students and documenting the progress of outstanding students pursuing higher studies or careers outside Ladakh.

The Chief Secretary said that such feedback could provide valuable inputs for improving academic programmes and institutional planning.

Emphasising continuous improvement in teaching and learning, the Chief Secretary called for periodic academic review and greater faculty participation in curriculum development. He stressed that colleges should examine how courses are being delivered, whether teaching approaches are meeting contemporary requirements and how technology and emerging fields can be integrated into academic programmes.

The meeting also discussed the potential for developing specialised programmes in areas where Ladakh has distinctive advantages. In this regard, climate studies emerged as an area of potential academic and research interest, considering Ladakh's unique geographical and environmental conditions and the growing interest in the region among researchers and students. He emphasised that the findings should be used to identify gaps and formulate practical measures for making higher education in Ladakh more accessible, relevant and responsive to the aspirations of its students.

The meeting was attended by Secretary, School Education Department, Bhanu Prabha; principals, assistant professors and faculty members of colleges; Vice Chancellor and faculty members of the University of Ladakh, besides other concerned officials.

Representatives and faculty members from Kargil, Drass and other districts participated virtually.

