KERALA STATE HIGHER EDUCATION COUNCIL PUBLICATION

Volume #1
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HIGHER EDUCATION MATTERS

magazine

A GATEWAY TO HIGHER LEARNING INITIATIVES

Mastering the Cognitive Domain

Outcome Based Education - Part V

Edu-Apps for Children

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HE MATTERS **Volume 1-Issue 5: June 2025: 60 pages**

Our aim is to serve students, teachers, administrators and other stakeholders by providing valuable insights into the educational scenario, innovations in teaching and learning, policy changes, and career opportunities. Whether you're navigating the challenges of administration, teaching the next generation, preparing for your future career, or thinking of transforming your educational landscape, this magazine is your first hand information and expert perspectives for your journey.

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Opening Note | Editor in Chief

Dear Readers,

As the contours of higher education shift dramatically, this edition of Higher Education Matters captures a moment of both reflection and reinvention. From digital learning tools to demographic transitions, institutional reform to gender equity, the decisions we make today will shape the futures we create.

We include an article that examine the hidden complexities of educational apps. While they often promise quick results and flashy interfaces, true learning value demands a deeper look. Parents and educators must move beyond ratings and marketing to ask: What actually fosters understanding, curiosity, and growth?

Kerala's forward-thinking approach to research and development—the Kerala Margam—takes inspiration from New Zealand's focused R&D model. It offers a clear, contextual roadmap for aligning academic inquiry with real-world impact. Alongside this, included features on Institutional Development Plan and the Kerala Knowledge Consortium, announcing a bold commitment to inclusive and innovative higher education.

Despite Kerala's impressive literacy statistics, significant disparities in women participation in research remain. The pioneering journeys of Dr. Janaki Ammal and Dr. Tessy Thomas remind us that representation is not symbolic but foundational to progress.

Finally, we witness the rise of AI in student writing. While it challenges long-held academic norms, it also opens up prospects of opportunity. Instead of resistance, we must indulge in a deeper probing of our didactic priorities such as critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and intellectual curiosity at the core.

In this time of transformation, may this edition not only offer insights, but provoke the right questions.

Warmly,
The Editor-in-Chief

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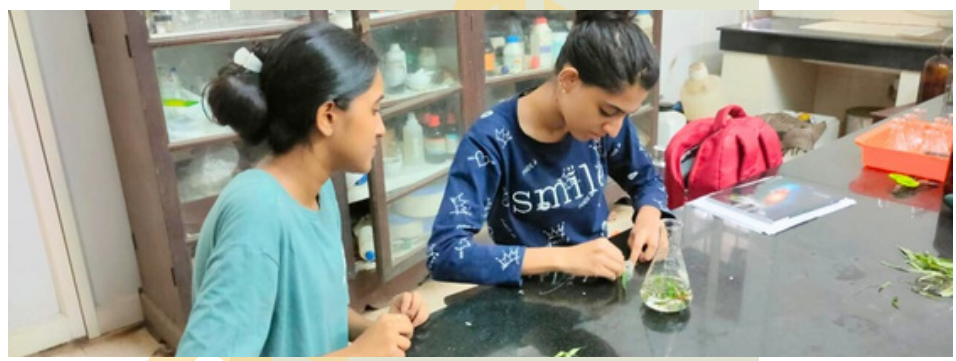

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HE MATTERS

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UPCOMING EVENTS

India Higher Education Research Conference (IHERC)

21-22 November 2025 New Delhi

Organized by the India Higher Education Research Network at IIT Delhi's R&I Park, this flagship conference will address themes like access, employability, policy, financing, sustainability, internationalization, and research excellence in Indian higher education. Participants will include researchers, policymakers, and education leaders

India Higher Education Research Network (IHERN) is organizing the flagship higher education research conference. The India Higher Education Research Conference (IHERC) will be conducted on 21-22 November, 2025 at IIT Delhi. The conference will serve as a platform for presenting high-quality research of relevance to Indian higher education, and also for discussing practice and policy issues relating to Indian higher education. The conference will enable and promote research in the scholarly field of higher education, and linking the same with the practice and policy of higher education in India.

IHERC 2025 will be at the intersection of various scholarly fields, including but not limited to higher education studies, the empirical context of higher education in India, and the practice and policy of higher education in India. The conference expects to have participation from the global scholarly community, with interests in Indian higher education.

Higher education research is a growing field that explores how universities and colleges function, evolve, and impact society. It draws from disciplines like sociology, economics, public policy, and education studies to understand how students learn, how institutions are governed, how policies are shaped, and how teaching and research can be made more inclusive, equitable, and effective.

Andhra University Centenary Celebrations – Academic Lectures & Seminar Series

8 to 9 August 2025 at Bangalore

As part of its 100th anniversary, Andhra University is organizing several high-impact academic engagements throughout September 2025. Notably, the university will host endowment lectures in the departments of Chemistry (September 4) and Electrical Engineering (September 15), delivered by eminent scholars and industry professionals. These lectures aim to reflect on the evolution of academic excellence at Andhra University while introducing students and faculty to cutting-edge research and emerging global trends. These sessions are expected to serve as a platform for cross-generational academic dialogue and inspiration for aspiring researchers.

In parallel, the Department of Civil Engineering will host a national seminar on "Special Concrete for Infrastructure Needs" on September 7, highlighting innovations in material science, structural durability, and eco-friendly concrete technologies. This gathering will bring together professionals from industry, academia, and government to discuss India's infrastructure goals and sustainable construction methods. The event underscores the university's intent to promote interdisciplinary research aligned with national development priorities.

NIPER Chandigarh – Training on Pharmaceutical GMP Audits (Sep 15–26)

The National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research (NIPER), Chandigarh, will host a short-term professional training on "Pharmaceutical GMP Audits and Self-Inspections" from September 15 to 26, 2025. This training program, supported by the Ministry of External Affairs under the ITEC initiative, targets pharmaceutical professionals and researchers from India and abroad. The curriculum covers best practices in Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP), quality audits, regulatory compliance, and pharmaceutical risk assessment. Hands-on workshops, mock audits, and interactive lectures will guide participants through real-world applications of GMP systems. This training is especially valuable for professionals working in pharma R&D, production, and quality assurance.

Khelo India University Games –

November 2025

Scheduled for November, Rajasthan will host the fifth edition of India's premier university-level multi-sport competition. About 6,000 athletes will compete across 25 disciplines, including athletics, archery, boxing, and swimming. Poornima University and Rajasthan University co-host the event, which features competitions at prominent venues such as the Sawai Mansingh Stadium and Jagatpura Shooting Range. A talent hunt program akin to the Target Olympic Podium Scheme will also be launched to nurture budding athletes.

Traditional Knowledge Systems–Training

Starting September 2025 IIT Mandi & IIT Gandhinagar –

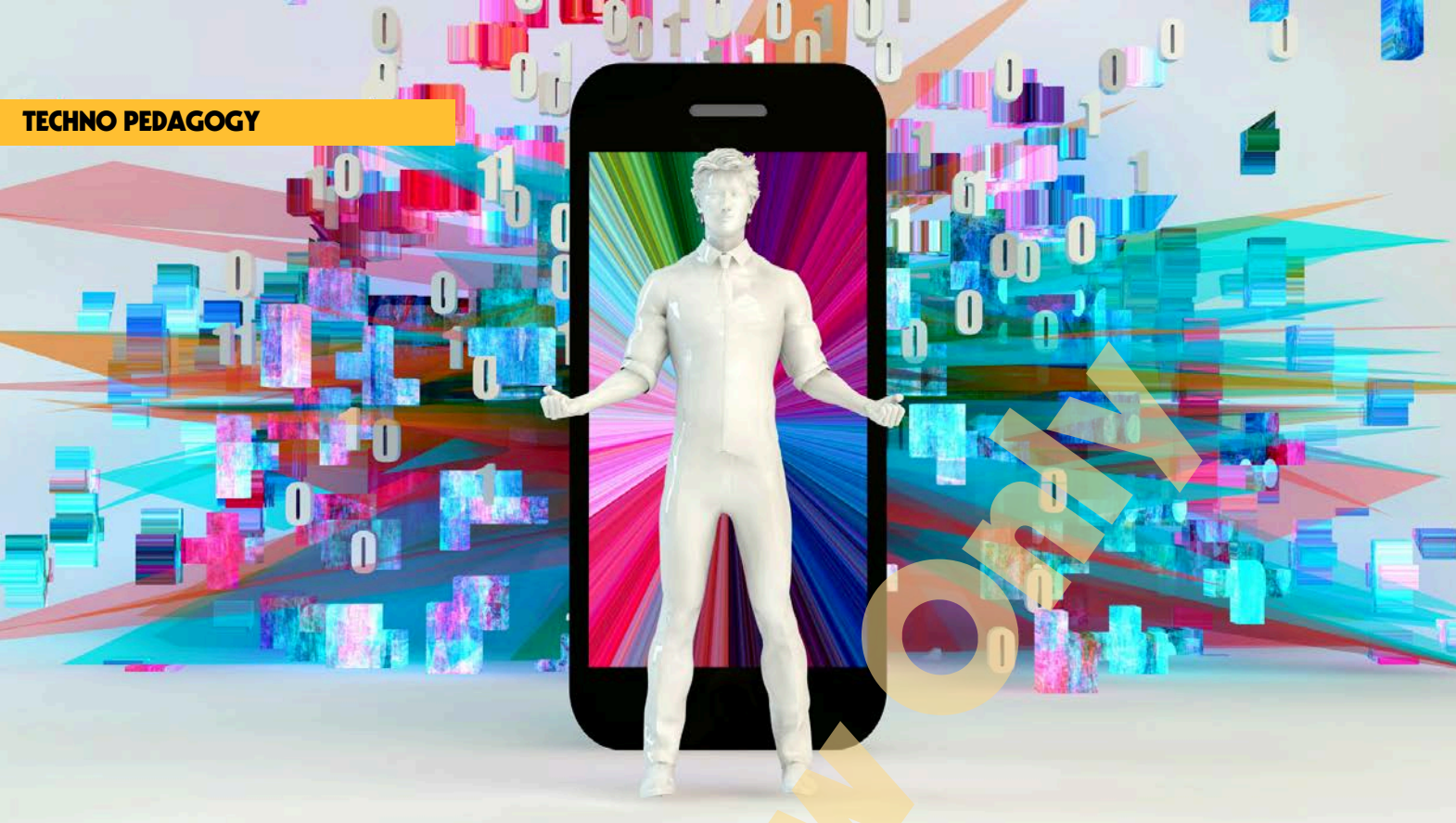
IIT Mandi and IIT Gandhinagar are collaboratively launching an ambitious training programme on Traditional Knowledge Systems (TKS), aimed at college teachers across India. Beginning in September 2025, this initiative seeks to reintroduce and integrate India's rich heritage—including Indian philosophy, Sanskrit, Ayurveda, classical sciences, yoga, Vedic literature, and Upanishads—into modern education through a series of intensive 5–7 day workshops. Designed for small batches of five teachers per session, the first phase of the programme will train 50 handpicked graduates and postgraduates. This effort is part of a broader cultural revitalization push under the Government of India's New Education Policy (NEP 2020) and is intended to infuse holistic, context-rich learning into higher education by reconnecting educators with India's intellectual and spiritual traditions. The programme not only emphasizes academic integration but also aims to foster a sense of cultural pride, critical inquiry, and ethical grounding among both teachers and students.

MOOC on Indian Knowledge System: Concepts and Application

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has launched an online MOOC titled "Indian Knowledge System: Concepts and Application" on the SWAYAM platform, aiming to integrate India's traditional knowledge into modern education as envisioned by the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. This course is open and free for all and targets educators across disciplines—engineering, science and technology, humanities, and social sciences. It is structured using four instructional quadrants: recorded video lectures, downloadable study materials, self-assessment quizzes, and discussion forums for peer learning. The curriculum explores a wide range of themes such as ancient Indian mathematics, astronomy, measurement systems, linguistic traditions, psychology, wellness practices like Ayurveda and yoga, architectural heritage, and philosophical foundations. The UGC's broader goal is to train 1.5 million college teachers in Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) by 2025 through such digital learning initiatives. This MOOC serves both as a scholarly introduction to India's intellectual legacy and as a tool for educators to contextualize modern curricula in culturally rooted frameworks.

International Ranking for Universities in Kerala

In June 2025, Kerala's institutions marked significant international standing: Mahatma Gandhi University rose as a top national contender—securing 4th place among Indian universities in the THE Asia Rankings and earning a global spot in the 401–500 band of THE World Rankings; University of Kerala maintained its global visibility with a QS Asia rank of 339 and emerged in EduRank's 2025 global ranking at ~2141, while CUSAT continued to hold positions in both world and Asian tiers. Together, these reflect Kerala's growing visibility on the international academic stage.



Educational apps for children: What parents and educators should look for and ignore

Authors
Emma Liptrot &
Adam Kenneth Dubé

Educators and parents buy educational apps (EduApps) to help children learn, bringing in billions of dollars for the mobile app industry, a significant portion of which goes into the pockets of leading app stores.

But when people visit app stores, they are overwhelmed with hundreds of thousands of options. Children can learn from well-designed EduApps, but choosing bad apps wastes schools' and families' time and money.

When choosing EduApps, our research from the Technology Learning and Cognition lab at McGill University's Faculty of Education shows educators and parents rely heavily on others' judgements, like star ratings.

But app stores are not designed to showcase the information consumers need to judge an app's educational quality. For example, Apple says it offers "a highly curated App Store where every app is reviewed by experts and an editorial team helps users discover new apps every day," yet guidelines do not include educational quality standards.

What to ignore

We advise educators and parents to ignore information unrelated to educational quality, like:

1. User ratings & reviews:
Popular EduApps in Apple's and Google's app stores typically have very positive ratings (above four stars). Yet, experts still raise concerns about their quality and expert-approved apps do not necessarily receive the highest star ratings. Written reviews are rarely more informative. Research shows most reviews simply praise apps rather than explaining specific features.

Even if reviews mention educational aspects, few reviewers have the background to make informed judgements of quality. Anyone can review an app — even children, who like apps that allow them to have fun while they learn but may not know what learning features are necessary to help them learn best.

2. Apple or Google rankings
Educators and parents may visit an app store's "top charts" lists to find EduApps. Yet, how Apple's and Google's algorithms determine which apps "top the charts" is unclear. Plus, rankings are not related to educational quality, making them unreliable for choosing high-quality apps.

3. Recommendations from app review websites
Educators and parents might look to external app review websites like Common Sense Media for recommendations. But research shows many of the apps recommended by these websites still need substantial improvement — and only a fraction of apps get reviewed. Avoid relying only on recommendations from these websites.

Even if reviews mention educational aspects, few reviewers have the background to make informed judgements of quality. Anyone can review an app — even children, who like apps that allow them to have fun while they learn but may not know what learning features are necessary to help them learn best.

What to look for

We propose looking for five educational benchmarks of quality that can be found in an app's written description, where developers describe the app and its features.

1. Curriculum: What apps teach
At the bare minimum, EduApps must include content that is covered in an established learning program. Yet, many EduApps are what researchers call "educational misfits" because they are only weakly related to education, if at all. Look for apps that clearly state which curriculum their content is based on (for example, a particular provincial curriculum, a supplemental curriculum for learning an Indigenous language) or detail the content (suitable for grades 1–3 math). Don't bother with an app that doesn't tell you what it covers.

2. Learning theory: How apps teach
An app developer's ideas about learning — their learning theory — impacts what tasks children are asked to do and what kinds of learning can happen. An app that uses repetition to help children memorize facts promotes different learning outcomes and meets different needs than an app that encourages experimentation and discovery. Look for apps that describe how they teach. Choose ones using approaches that align with your needs.
If an app doesn't tell you how it helps children learn, it's not worth your time.

3. Scaffolding: How apps support learning
EduApps should include supports that help children build their understanding and accomplish learning goals. These supports (called scaffolding) can include hints or instructions when children get stuck and breaking down complex tasks into smaller chunks or adapting difficulty to match children's abilities. Look for apps with supports that help guide and structure children's learning.

4. Feedback: How apps correct learning
If we want children to learn from their mistakes, feedback is essential. Look for apps that give children informative feedback so they know where they went wrong and why.

5. Educational expertise: Who made the app

Many app developers are not education experts, and their priorities may not align with those of educators and parents. Look for apps that consult educational experts like teachers or researchers so they are designed with children's learning needs and abilities in mind.

Other considerations

Our five educational benchmarks focus on the potential educational value of apps. However, other considerations related to children's safety are also important, like how apps manage children's privacy and data and how children are exposed to advertising.

Working together to choose better apps.

The current state of app stores makes finding a good EduApp like searching for a drop in the ocean. To aid their search, educators and parents can look for educational benchmarks, and watch our video on YouTube, "How to find an educational app."

We conducted research that showed this helped parents identify quality educational apps via the benchmarks discussed above.

Finding a good EduApp shouldn't be so hard. These profitable app stores have a duty to help ensure families' and schools' resources are not wasted on bad apps. We call on Apple and Google to redesign their app stores to bring educational benchmarks to the surface. Such a redesign would make it easier to find good apps among a sea of possibilities.

With so many apps available, app store owners, researchers, educators and parents must work together to get the best EduApps into kids' hands.

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Adam Kenneth Dubé,
Associate Professor of Learning Sciences, Faculty of Education, McGill University

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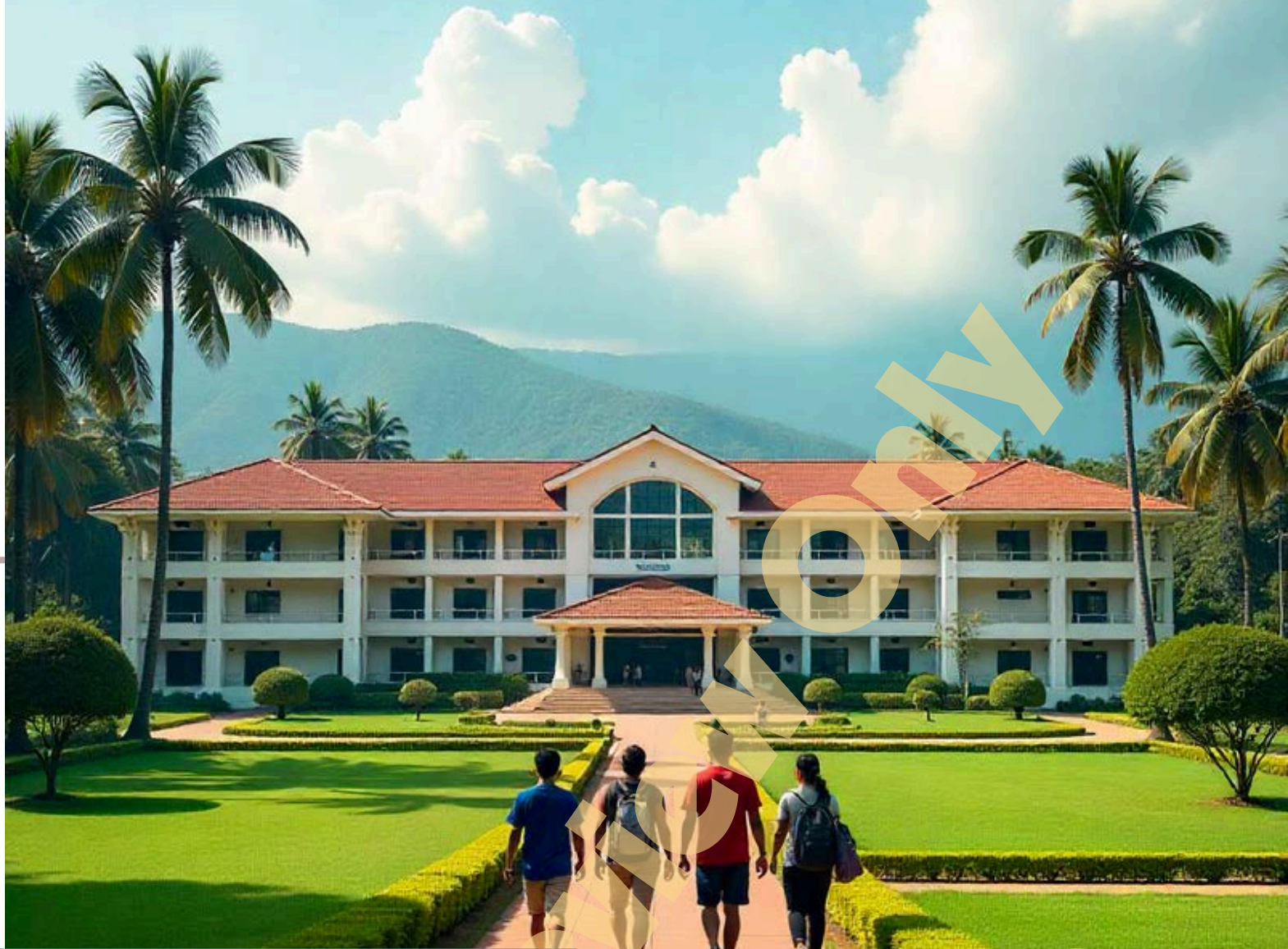


The Kerala Margam

Gangan Prathap

ChatGPT
https://chatgpt.com/share/682c0703-2044-8012-a985-ae2032006a38

1. Introduction:
From the Kerala Model to a Kerala Margam

It is time to leave the clichéd Kerala Model behind and chart out a new Kerala pathway so that it can be a pioneer in aligning research with real-world needs. I have found no exemplar which is better than what New Zealand has charted out over the years. So, how do we go about justifying this?

2. The Full Time Equivalent Researcher (FTER) and Gross Expenditure on Research and Development (GERD) indicators

Derek de la Solla Price was a preeminent historian and scientometrician who pointed out that the composite ratio (GERD/GDP)/(FTER/Population) is a meaningful number when it comes to assessing how well equipped a country is to translate science and technological leadership to global economic success. Here, GERD is the Gross Expenditure on Research and Development and GDP is the Gross Domestic Product. Thus (GERD/GDP) is a ratio of what fraction of economic activity is directed to purely scientific and innovative aims. Similarly, the ratio (FTER/Population) is the proportion of the population that is engaged in pursuing R&D activities. FTER, or Full Time Equivalent Researchers, takes into account the fact that all designated science and engineering personnel do not devote 100% of their time to research. Thus, the composite ratio is a ratio of ratios and is a sort of Leverage term.

Let us look at how these ratios vary for some comparator countries. This is shown in Table 1. The higher the ratio, the more GERD is being spent per researcher, relative to GDP per capita. India's high value (~25) reflects low researcher density relative to even modest GERD — meaning each researcher is, in a sense, carrying a large "share" of national R&D expenditure. South Korea's low value (~5.3) reflects a dense research ecosystem where GERD is efficiently distributed over many researchers. This "leverage" metric (as Derek de Solla Price hinted) functions like a stress index:

Low ratios (5–8): Balanced systems.
High ratios (15–30): Understaffed systems or top-heavy expenditure.

It's a powerful diagnostic for understanding the structural balance between funding and manpower in national R&D. Kerala, will be like India with a very high ratio indicating an understaffed system (too few researchers), i.e., low researcher density for their level of R&D spending.

It's a powerful diagnostic for understanding the structural balance between funding and manpower in national R&D. Kerala, will be like India with a very high ratio indicating an understaffed system (too few researchers), i.e., low researcher density for their level of R&D spending.

3. The New Zealand Model

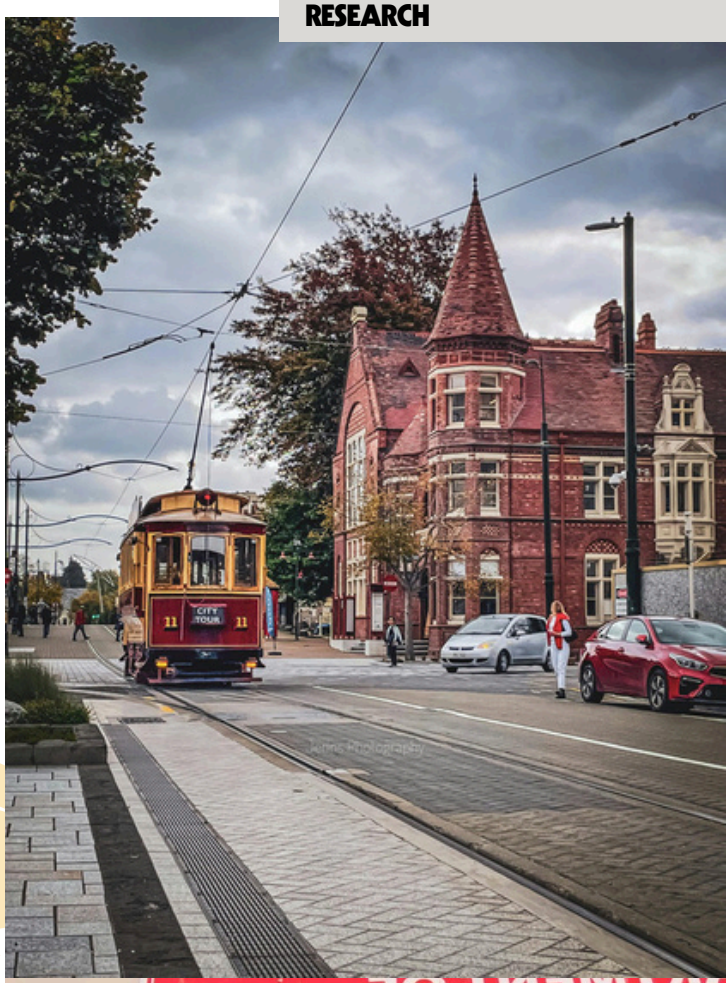
My earlier studies in this area suggested that New Zealand was one of the best leveraged countries. If I remember correctly, the composite ratio was something like 3. ChatGPT, with its ability to access a much vaster base of information, says that it is 3.5. NZ has a GERD allocation which is 1.47% of GDP (2022), and an FTER/Population of 0.42 (4,207 researchers per million inhabitants in 2005.)

Such a low composite ratio suggests that New Zealand's R&D expenditure is well-aligned with its researcher density, indicating an efficient utilization of research funds relative to its economic output and research workforce. This further suggests that its R&D is strategically aligned with its economic priorities. It has historically prioritized agricultural research, including animal husbandry, pasture science, dairy innovation, and biosecurity — sectors where it has comparative economic advantage. It has maintained a compact, targeted research infrastructure (e.g., AgResearch, Plant & Food Research, Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research) that tightly links scientific output to economic returns. It has fostered public-private partnerships and mission-driven research funding, with a focus on export-driven industries like dairy, meat, wool, and kiwifruit.

4. The Kerala Margam

What lessons can Kerala learn from New Zealand?
It has a small population (~35 million), high literacy, and strong health indicators. Its dominant sectors are: agriculture, fisheries, plantation economy, public health, and tourism. It has successfully experimented with a long tradition of decentralized planning and public engagement. It has the right scale, social infrastructure, and policy ethos to emulate the focused, sector-aligned, mission-driven R&D model that New Zealand has pioneered.

Kerala has the right scale, social infrastructure, and policy ethos to emulate the focused, sector-aligned, mission-driven R&D model that New Zealand has pioneered.



First, Kerala must identify core economic sectors for R&D Focus. Table 2 shows some of the core areas in which Kerala can concentrate R&D resources. This does not happen right now. Just like New Zealand has its Crown Research Institutes (CRIs), Kerala could set up 5–6 sectoral research clusters with:

- Small, agile labs co-located with universities or Krishi Vigyan Kendras
- Industry partners (e.g., seafood exporters, plantation boards)
- District-level application pilots
- Clear mandates: solve local problems, not just publish papers
- It must integrate Public–Private and Civil Society Partnerships, and encourage co-funding models with:
- Exporters of seafood/spices
- Health-tech startups
- Cooperatives (e.g., Kudumbashree)

It should then design R&D feedback loops via panchayats, farmer cooperatives, or health workers so that research becomes grounded and user-facing. Like NZ, it must track impact beyond publications, with an impact accounting framework, reporting outcomes and not just outputs, for example:

- "How many coastal farmers benefited from our salt-tolerant rice?"
- "Did our fish spoilage sensor reduce waste by 20%?"
- "How many ayurvedic products reached clinical pilot stage?"

Kerala must set a target of 1,500–2,000 full-time equivalent researchers per million population, meaning, about 50,000-70,000 FTERs. My estimate is that this is 6x the prevailing situation.

Country	Composite Ratio
India	24.8
China	16.4
Israel	7.55
USA	7.26
Germany	5.75
South Korea	5.3

Table 1. The Composite Ratio, (GERD/GDP)/(FTER/Population) for some prominent actors in global R&D.

5. Is Kerala ready?

It already has an institutional base, with existing universities and CSIR and ICAR laboratories. It has a well-educated population (35M with high HDI), strong agri-health-tourism sectors, a history of decentralized planning, and a healthy co-ops sector.

Kerala must set a target of 1,500–2,000 full-time equivalent researchers per million population, meaning, about 50,000-70,000 FTERs. My estimate is that this is 6x the prevailing situation. The GERD/GDP ratio will then automatically follow, by assuming a target composite ratio of say 5. All this is doable.

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Sector	Why It Matters	Sample Research Focus
Fisheries & Marine	Long coastline, livelihoods	Aquaculture, marine biotechnology
Agroforestry & Spices	Core exports: pepper, cardamom, coffee	Disease-resistant crops, value addition
Public Health	Ageing population, lifestyle diseases	Community health models, herbal medicine
Climate Resilience	Floods, coastal erosion, salinity issues	Flood prediction, salt-tolerant varieties
Tourism & Culture	High employment and income impact	Eco-tourism innovation, cultural tech

Table 2. Areas in which Kerala can concentrate R&D resources

UNESCO GEM Report 2025

Transforming Higher Education in a Changing World

The UNESCO Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report 2025 named as "Higher Education in a Changing World", is a landmark study offering a comprehensive analysis of global higher education trends. Published annually by UNESCO, the GEM report serves as a critical resource for policymakers, academics, and international organizations, providing evidence-based insights on enrollment, equity, quality, and the evolving role of universities in society. It emphasizes the transformative potential of higher education in the context of rapid technological change, digital learning innovations, and global mobility, while highlighting persistent challenges in access, funding, and inclusion.

Global Overview

The 2025 GEM Report identifies several key global trends reshaping higher education. First, enrollment continues to grow worldwide, driven by population expansion in developing regions and rising demand for knowledge-based skills. By 2025, global higher education enrollment is projected to exceed 260 million students, with the fastest growth occurring in Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. However, access remains uneven; low-income countries still struggle to provide opportunities for marginalized groups, particularly women and rural populations.

Second, digital transformation is accelerating. The report highlights how artificial intelligence, online learning platforms, and hybrid educational models are redefining teaching, research, and administrative processes. These technologies have enhanced flexibility and accessibility but also underscore the digital divide, particularly in resource-constrained countries

Third, international student mobility is shifting. Traditionally, North America and Europe were the dominant destinations for international students, but the report notes a growing trend toward Asian countries, including India, China, and Singapore. This reflects both the expanding capacity of universities in these regions and their strategic efforts to attract foreign talent.

Key Global Findings

- Global higher education enrollment grew by approximately 5% annually over the past decade.
- Digital and hybrid learning models are being adopted by 65% of higher education institutions worldwide.
- Gender parity has improved globally, but women remain underrepresented in STEM and leadership positions.
- International student mobility increased by 12% compared to 2020, with Asia emerging as a major hub.

> Report says that the quality and equity are uneven, especially in rural areas and among marginalized populations. Faculty shortages, infrastructure gaps, and limited research output in certain universities continue to constrain India's global competitiveness

India-Specific Insights (Brief)

India's higher education sector is rapidly expanding, with over 45 million students enrolled, driven by initiatives like the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. Growth is notable in STEM, vocational programs, and digital learning, supporting the country's technological and economic priorities.

Challenges remain, including uneven quality and access, especially in rural areas, faculty shortages, and limited research output. India is emerging as both a source and destination for international students, attracting learners from neighboring countries and Africa due to affordable, high-quality programs.

The report emphasizes India's potential to foster innovation, economic growth, and social inclusion, highlighting the need for investments in digital infrastructure, faculty development, and equitable access.

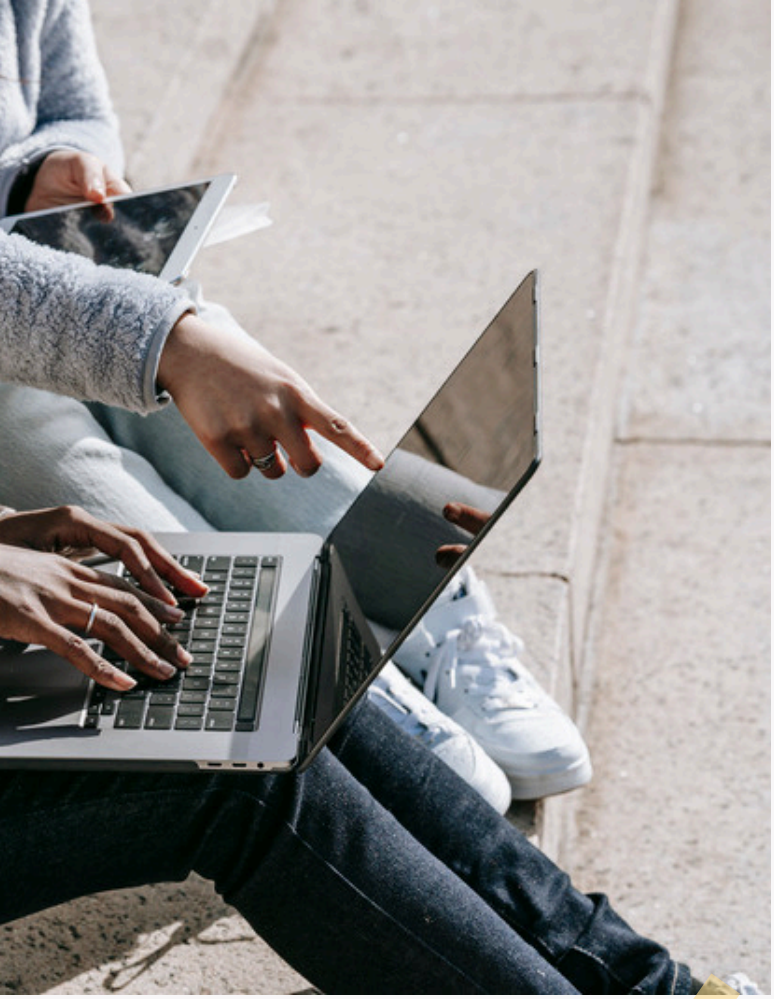
The Rise and Fall of the **UGC-CARE List**

From promise to controversy: how UGC's CARE List sought to safeguard Indian academia yet collapsed under flaws, criticism, and reform

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has long played a pivotal role in shaping the standards of higher education in India. One of its more ambitious initiatives was the UGC-CARE List, introduced to safeguard academic publishing from the growing menace of predatory journals. While the list began with promise, structural flaws eventually led to its discontinuation, marking the end of an important but troubled chapter in India's academic policy.

Origins and Purpose

The UGC-CARE initiative was conceived in 2018, at a time when predatory journals were flooding the academic landscape. A study had revealed that nearly nine out of ten journals in the older UGC-approved list were potentially unethical, lacking peer review or transparent editorial practices. To restore credibility, the UGC launched the CARE List on June 14, 2019, in collaboration with the Consortium for Academic and Research Ethics.



The CARE List was divided into two groups:

- Group I contained journals vetted by UGC protocols, which included checks on peer review and publication ethics.
- Group II automatically included journals indexed in international databases like Scopus and Web of Science.

The intent was to provide a trusted reference point for researchers, faculty, and institutions in evaluating scholarly publications.

Problems and Criticism

Despite its noble goals, the CARE List faced a series of setbacks. Frequent updates meant that journals were sometimes removed after scholars had already published in them, putting academic careers at risk. Many researchers criticized the process as opaque, with little clarity on why certain journals were excluded.

Allegations also surfaced regarding biases and corrupt practices, with accusations that some legitimate journals—particularly those published in Indian languages—were unfairly sidelined. This eroded confidence in the list's reliability and fairness, undermining the very trust it was meant to build.

The UGC-CARE List (2019–2025) sought to curb predatory journals but faced opacity, bias, and criticism. Discontinued in 2025, responsibility now shifts to universities, balancing academic autonomy with integrity risks

Discontinuation

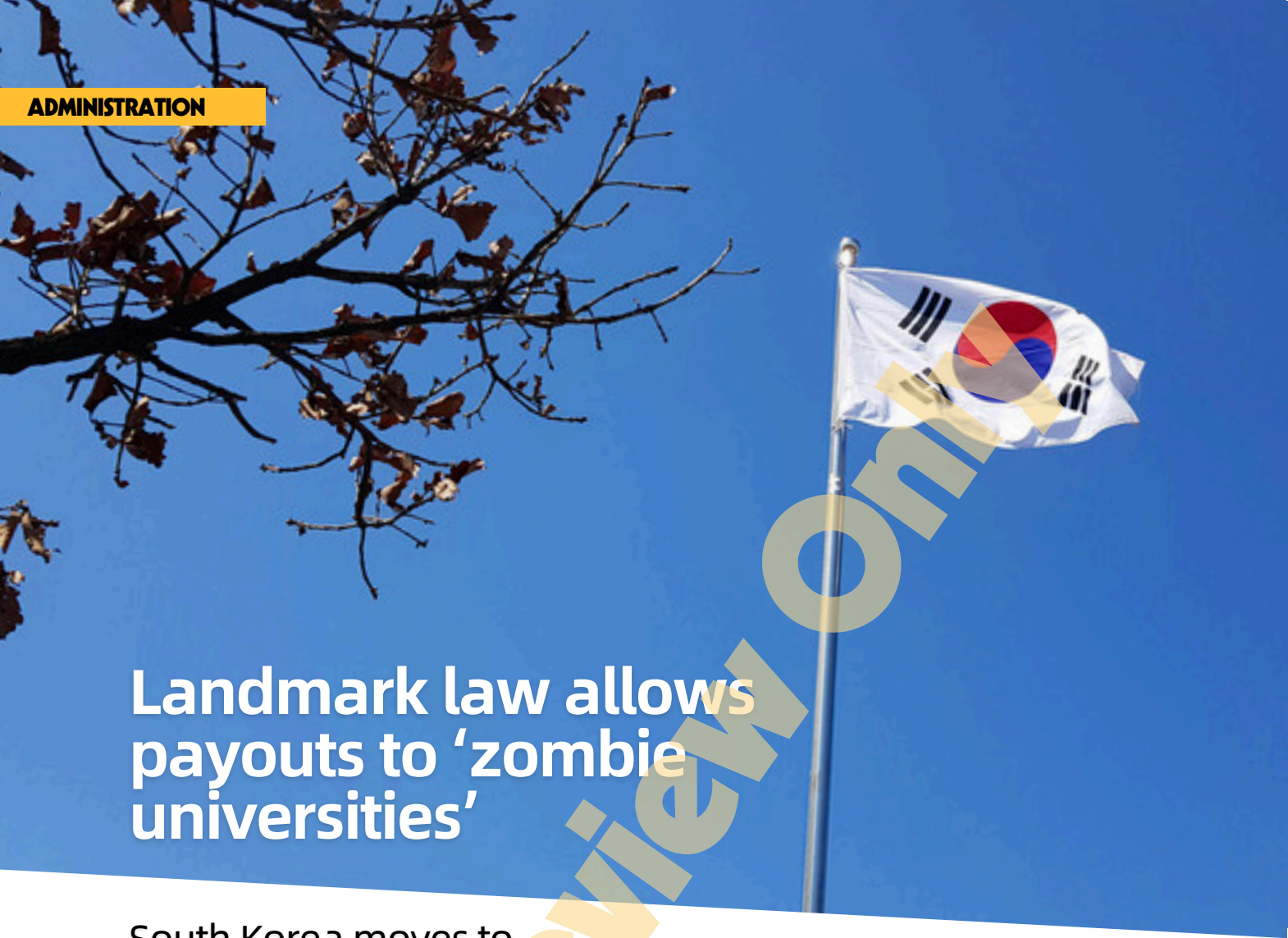
After years of controversy, an expert committee was set up to review the CARE framework. Based on its recommendations, the UGC in its 584th meeting on October 3, 2024, resolved to discontinue the list altogether. The official discontinuation was announced on February 11, 2025.

Instead of maintaining a centralized registry, the UGC issued suggestive evaluation parameters for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). These include guidelines on ethical publishing, transparent peer review, impact assessments, and safeguards against AI-generated or manipulated content. Responsibility for journal selection and validation now rests with individual universities and research institutions.

Implications

The discontinuation of the CARE List reflects a shift from central control to decentralized academic autonomy. While this empowers institutions to frame their own publication standards, it also places a heavier burden on them to ensure transparency and integrity. Without strong institutional frameworks, the risk of predatory publishing could persist.

The UGC-CARE List began as a bold attempt to reform academic publishing in India. Its demise underscores the complexities of regulating research in a rapidly expanding higher education system. Going forward, the challenge lies in balancing autonomy with accountability—ensuring that Indian scholarship retains both global relevance and ethical credibility.



Landmark law allows payouts to 'zombie universities'

South Korea moves to shut down 'zombie universities,' granting new powers to close financially struggling private institutions amid falling student numbers

Yumi Jeung

South Korea's National Assembly last month passed the long-delayed Private University Structural Improvement Support Act, ending 15 years of parliamentary stalemate to allow the government to shut down so-called 'zombie universities' that have faced financial difficulties for years, in part due to the country's declining population.

The law passed on 23 July grants the government new powers to order compulsory closure of financially distressed private universities and, controversially, to pay their founding bodies up to 15% of any remaining assets as a "dissolution settlement fee".

Private universities in South Korea receive substantial government funding, and their remaining assets are normally returned to the state on closure. The new legislation, which comes into force in July 2026, stipulates that even if a university shuts down due to financial difficulties, its founding corporation will be able to retain up to 15% of what remains after liquidation.

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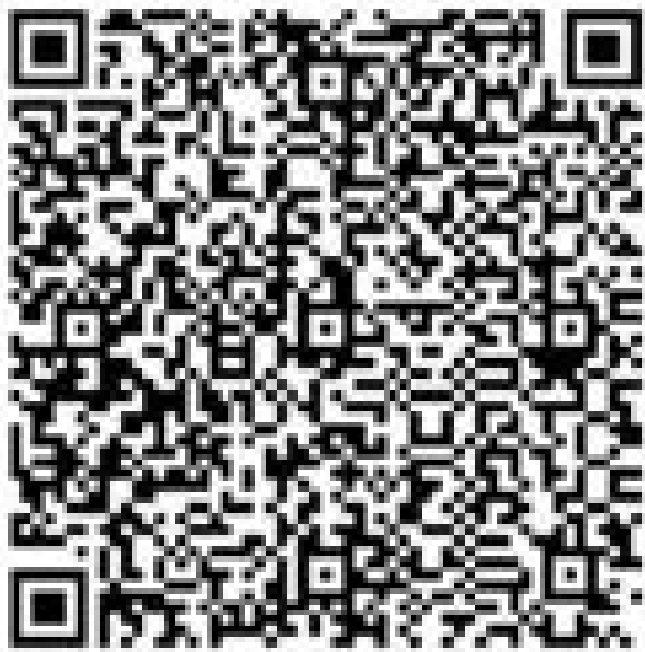

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