

# International Conference on **GRASSROOTS & FRUGAL INNOVATION IN EMERGING ECONOMIES**

12–14 March 2026

Organized Jointly By

**B-HIVE—Birla Hub for Innovation,  
Venturing, and Entrepreneurship  
Birla School of Management  
Birla Global University, India**

[www.bgu.ac.in](http://www.bgu.ac.in)

**Earl V. Snyder Innovation Management Center  
Whitman School of Management  
Syracuse University, USA**  
<https://snyder.syracuse.edu/>

&  
**Mid-West University  
Surkhet, Nepal**

[www.mu.edu.np](http://www.mu.edu.np)



**Venue:**

Birla Global University, IDCO Plot No. 02, Institutional Area,  
Gothapatna, Bhubaneswar, PIN: 751029, Odisha, India  
Tel: +91 674-7103001-10; Conference Website : <https://gfi.bgu.ac.in/>

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## International Conference on Grassroots & Frugal Innovation in Emerging Economies

Grassroots and frugal innovation represent two complementary pathways toward sustainable development—one arising from community ingenuity and local problem-solving, and the other from systematic efforts to “do more with less.” Together, they offer transformative potential for addressing persistent challenges in health, education, agriculture, energy, water, mobility, and livelihoods across emerging economies. These innovations redefine affordability, resilience, and inclusivity by blending indigenous wisdom with frontier technologies, bridging gaps between informal creativity and structured enterprise systems.

Yet, scaling these innovations remains a complex challenge. Translating promising prototypes into viable solutions demands an enabling ecosystem—strong policy support, public digital infrastructure, inclusive and pragmatic financing mechanisms, and robust market linkages that ensure last-mile access. When these components align, innovation becomes not only affordable but also accountable, measurable, and worth investing—creating shared value for communities, enterprises, and governments alike.

In this context, emerging economies serve as the ideal base for such convergence. Rapid urbanization, fast changing demographic profiles, and growing Tier-2/3/4 markets represent fresh avenues for cost-effective and climate-smart solutions. India’s advance in the Global Innovation Index (from 81st in 2015 to 39th in 2024) shows how grassroots ingenuity and institutional innovation can intersect to drive inclusive growth. Regions endowed with rich artisanal heritage, agrobiodiversity, and cooperative enterprise networks—such as Eastern and Northeastern India—can serve as demonstration hubs for frugal innovations adaptable across other emerging economies.

This international conference will endeavour to bring together academia, policymakers, entrepreneurs, industry leaders, financiers, and development practitioners to explore how grassroots and frugal innovation can catalyze sustainable transitions. The forum aims to enable dialogue across multiple sectors, find scalable models, and explore actionable frameworks through scholarly presentations, keynotes, panels, workshops, and innovation showcases. The outcome will be consolidated into an SDG-aligned post-conference action note, outlining pathways for investment, policy recommendations, and collaboration across borders.

## Invited Distinguished Speakers

The invitees comprise industry and academic experts, innovation practitioners, and representatives from regulatory and development institutions—together forming an ideal platform for knowledge exchange and shared learning with stakeholders from grassroots communities, climate-smart agroeconomy, MSMEs, regional clusters, cooperatives, FPOs, and SHGs across emerging economies

## Conference Tracks

We welcome original contributions from scholars, practitioners, and thought leaders in the disciplines represented across the conference tracks, as well as from associated business functions related to these domains—including marketing, human resources, finance, operations, IT, strategy, and governance.

### | **Inclusive Innovation**

Affordable solutions and business models in healthcare, education, water, energy, mobility, and other social infrastructure.

### | **Digital Infrastructure for Public Value**

Innovation in public digital infrastructure, AI/GenAI, IoT, blockchain, FinTech, and digital aggregators.

### | **Climate-Smart Agroeconomy**

Research and practices in agrotech, post-harvest systems, market access, nutrition security, regenerative farming, fisheries, timber, and non-timber forest produce (NTFPs), and bioeconomy solutions.

### | **Creative & Cluster-Based Enterprises**

Initiatives for cluster upgradation, artisan ecosystem strengthening, manufacturing modernization, export readiness, and value-added innovation through cooperatives, FPOs, SHGs, social enterprises, and community-based producer networks.

### | **Sustainable Infrastructure**

Solutions in affordable housing, WASH (water, sanitation & hygiene), energy production and distribution, mobility, waste-to-value systems, and resilient city—village linkages promoting circular and inclusive development.

### | **Policies & Partnerships**

Deliberations on policy design, public procurement & delivery standards, regulations, catalytic/blended finance, impact measurement, cross-border collaborations, and cross-border partnerships.

## Submission Types and Guidelines

Submissions in the following categories are invited in the aforementioned tracks. For detailed submission guidelines, please visit: <https://gfi.bgu.ac.in/>

### | Category 1: Unpublished Manuscript

Unpublished Manuscripts—original, unpublished research (empirical studies, field experiments, case/practice notes, value-driven decision frameworks, patents, policy ideas, and promising prototypes).

**Who Can Submit:** Academics, researchers, doctoral scholars, industry professionals, policymakers, and practitioners engaged in innovation, entrepreneurship, sustainability, and development studies.

### | Category 2: Published Article

- Participants may submit a PDF version of a previously published article under this category. These submissions are intended for knowledge sharing and best-practice dissemination to encourage high-quality scholarly publishing. Only a select number of papers will be chosen for presentation within the designated tracks at the conference.
- Please note that these papers will not be part of the official conference proceedings.

### | Category 3: Poster Presentation

Poster Presentations showcase early-stage ideas, prototypes, field insights, or design-led solutions.

**Who Can Submit:** Early-stage researchers, students, innovators, and practitioners working on ideation, prototypes, field experiments, conceptual models, or design-led solutions aligned with the conference theme.

### Category 4: High-Fidelity Prototype / Product Demonstration (As entries for B-HIVE Grassroots & Frugal Innovation Awards)

#### Who Can Participate

Innovators, startups, incubators, student teams, research labs, and enterprises developing high-fidelity prototypes, minimum viable products (MVPs), or market-ready solutions aligned with the conference theme and sub-themes.

#### Demonstration Format

- Accepted teams/ entry will be invited for on-site demonstration sessions during the conference.
- Each team/ entry will have 12–15 minutes for live demonstration and interaction.
- Kiosk space will be provided, equipped with one table, two chairs, and provision for a display.
- Basic infrastructure support, including power supply and internet access, will also be made available.

## Evaluation Criteria

Demonstrations will be assessed on novelty, functionality, user impact, frugality and sustainability, design quality, and potential for scalability and commercialization.

## Submission Portal

All submissions should be uploaded via the conference submission portal:

<https://easychair.org/conferences/?conf=gfi2026> :

To know more about the conference visit <https://gfi.bgu.ac.in/>

## Awards & Recognitions

Sl. No.	Award & Recognition	Submission Category	Description
1	Best Paper Award	Unpublished Manuscripts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>One outstanding paper will be selected for this award in each track.</li><li>The award recognizes exceptional research quality, originality, and relevance to the conference theme and the subthemes.</li><li>Winners will receive a Certificate of Appreciation and a cash prize of ₹15,000.</li></ul>
2	Scholarly Impact Showcase	Published Articles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The award highlights previously published research that advances understanding in innovation, sustainability, and development.</li><li>Outstanding presenters will receive a Certificate of Special Appreciation and a cash prize of ₹ 5000.</li></ul>
3	Best Poster Awards	Poster Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Two outstanding posters will be selected based on creativity, research relevance, visual presentation, and clarity of communication.</li><li>The awardees will receive Certificates of Appreciation along with the following prizes:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Best Poster (Overall): ₹10,000</li><li>Runner-Up Poster: ₹5,000</li></ul></li></ul>

#### 4. B-HIVE Grassroots & Frugal Innovation Awards

Award Categories	Who Can Apply	Recognition & Opportunities
Best Innovation Award		
Emerging Innovator Award	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Startups &amp; early-stage ventures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognition during the conference.</li> </ul>
Grassroots Innovator Award	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students (UG/PG/PhD)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluation by distinguished jury (industry leaders, investors, domain experts)</li> </ul>
Women Innovator Award	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MSMEs &amp; industry innovators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opportunities for mentorship &amp; incubation</li> </ul>
Social Impact Innovation Award	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social enterprises &amp; NGOs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shortlisting for pilot collaboration</li> </ul>
Frugal Tech Excellence Award	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grassroots/community innovators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential investors connect (seed/angel)</li> </ul>
Sustainability & Circular Innovation Award	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incubated ventures &amp; TBIs (technology Business Incubators)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feature in conference highlights</li> </ul>

##### Note:

- The B-HIVE Grassroots & Frugal Innovation Awards are open exclusively to registered Innovation Showcase Exhibitors who submit their nominations during the registration process.
- Participants may nominate their innovation for up to two award categories at no additional registration fees. The jury's decision will be final and binding.

Visit the <https://gfi.bgu.ac.in/> for detailed information on abstract/paper submissions, awards & recognitions, and the call for nominations for Innovation awards guidelines.

## Important Dates

- Submission opens: November 15, 2025**
- Submission deadline: January 16, 2026**
- Notification of review decisions: January 31, 2026**
- Last date of registration: February 15, 2026**
- Pre-conference workshop: March 11, 2026**
- Conference Dates: March 12—14, 2026**

## Conference Schedule

Day & Date	Pre-Noon	Post-Noon	Evening
<b>Day 1</b> (12.03.2026) (Thursday)	Inaugural Ceremony Keynote Address Panel Discussion	Parallel Tracks – I & II	Cultural Evening & Dinner at Birla Global University
<b>Day 2</b> (13.03.2026) (Friday)	Parallel Tracks – III & IV	Panel Discussion Valedictory Session	High Tea
<b>Day 3</b> (14.03.2026) (Saturday)	Nature trip to Chilika Lake / Puri	Lunch at Chilika Lake / Puri	Return to Birla Global University

### Preconference workshop

A hands-on, editor-led pre-conference workshop on “Crafting High-Quality Publications—From Idea to Indexed Journal” will be held on Wednesday, 11th March 2026 for all the participants, especially young researchers/ doctoral and post—doctoral scholars, faculty members, and other interested delegates.

## Conference Registration Fee (For Individual)

Category	India	Abroad	Coverage
Presenters from Industry / Corporate / Startup / Govt / PSU	₹ 5,000	\$ 200	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to all sessions, including the pre-conference workshop</li> <li>Presentation slot (paper or poster, as applicable)</li> <li>Conference kit, certificates, and complimentary lunches, dinner, and tea/coffee</li> <li>Complimentary Chilika Lake / Puri visit</li> </ul>
Presenters from NGO, Incubatee	₹ 3,000	\$ 100	
Faculty & Post-Doctoral Researchers – Presenter	Early bird: ₹ 3,000 Regular: ₹ 4,000	\$ 100	
Research Scholars & Students – Presenter	Early bird: ₹ 1,500 Regular: ₹ 2,000	\$ 100	
Poster Presentation (Limited Slots available)	Early bird: ₹ 1,500 Regular: ₹ 2,000	\$ 100	Poster slot; access to all sessions; conference kit; lunches, dinner, tea/coffee; and certificates.
Participation (no presentation)	₹1,500	\$ 100	Access to all sessions; conference kit; lunches, dinner, tea/coffee; and certificates.

## | Innovation Showcase Exhibitors (Individual/ Group/ Institutional)

**Scope:** Prototype Demonstration (High-Fidelity); Products Demonstrating Grassroots and Frugal Innovations in practice etc. Exhibitors in this category may apply for the B-HIVE Innovation Awards.

Who Can participate	Registration Fees	Coverage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Startups &amp; Early-Stage Entrepreneurs; Incubated Ventures &amp; TBIs (Technology Business Incubators);</li> <li>MSMEs &amp; Industry Innovators;</li> <li>Social Enterprises &amp; Impact Innovators</li> <li>Student Innovators &amp; Research Teams</li> <li>Grassroots Innovators &amp; Community-Based Solution Developers</li> </ul>	<p><b>India</b>            Early Bird: ₹10,000            Regular: ₹15,000</p> <p><b>Abroad</b>            Early Bird: \$300            Regular: \$350</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Registration-cum-Conference Kit (Maximum two per registration)</li> <li>Kiosks (8'X 8') with one table, chair and banner provision</li> <li>Complimentary Chilika Lake / Puri visit</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Startups &amp; Early-Stage Entrepreneurs; Incubated Ventures</li> <li>Student Innovators &amp; Research Teams</li> <li>Grassroots Innovators &amp; Community-Based Solution Developers</li> </ul>	<p><b>Type 2:</b>  <b>India</b>            Early Bird: ₹3,000            Regular: ₹5,000</p> <p><b>Abroad</b>            Early Bird: \$150            Regular: \$200</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Registration-cum-Conference Kit (Maximum two per registration)</li> <li>Table, chair and banner provision</li> <li>Complimentary Chilika Lake / Puri visit</li> </ul>

NOTE: The registration fee excludes 18% GST & platform fees (as applicable). Birla Global University will facilitate lodging arrangements for all conference participants on a payment basis during the conference dates in select hotels in Bhubaneswar if a request is received.

## Conference Committee

### | Chief Patrons

- Prof. Kulbhushan Balooni, Vice Chancellor, Birla Global University, Bhubaneswar, India
- Prof. S. P. Raj, Center Director – Earl V. Snyder Innovation Management Center, Syracuse University, USA
- Prof. Dhruba Kumar Gautam, Vice Chancellor, Mid-West University, Surkhet, Nepal

### | Patrons

- Prof. B. K. Das, Registrar, Birla Global University
- Prof. Shobhakhar Kandel, Registrar, Mid-West University
- Prof P. Nayak, Dean, Birla School of Management, Birla Global University
- Dr. Yadu Prasad Gyawali, Executive Director, Directorate of International Relations, Mid-West University, Nepal
- Prof. Archana Choudhary, Dean R&D, Birla Global University
- Dr. Sanjay Kr Kuanar, Dean, Birla School of Engineering & Technology, Birla Global University

## | Organizing Committee

### Conference Chair

- Dr. Suvendu Kr Pratihari, Birla Global University

### Conference Conveners

- Dr. Vivek Mishra, Birla Global University
- Dr. Indrajeet Kumar, Birla Global University
- Dr. Parimal Kumar, Birla Global University
- Dr. Purnendu Kumar Patra, Birla Global University
- Dr. Piyush Gupta, Birla Global University
- Dr. Tasneem Ahmad, Birla Global University

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## About B-Hive—Birla Hub for Innovations, Venturing, and Entrepreneurship

The B-HIVE—Birla Hub for Innovation, Venturing, and Entrepreneurship at Birla Global University fosters a startup-ready ecosystem that supports entrepreneurs across the venture lifecycle—from ideation and validation to incubation, acceleration, and early scale-up. B-HIVE enables impactful grassroots and frugal innovations to scale, with a strong focus on women-led and socially relevant enterprises. Aligned with Make in India, Startup India, and Startup Odisha, B-HIVE seeks to strengthen Odisha's and India's innovation ecosystem by building an inclusive and resilient entrepreneurial hub that empowers innovators, supports venture creation, and expands collaborative networks across academia, industry, policymakers, and grassroots communities.

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## About Birla School of Management

The Birla School of Management (BSoM) at Birla Global University, Bhubaneswar, is built on a rigorous academic foundation and strong industry linkages. Guided by its vision to pursue excellence in management education and foster innovation and entrepreneurship while nurturing socially responsible leaders, BSoM advances its mission through international collaborations, high-quality teaching and research, social responsibility, diversity and inclusion, and the development of an entrepreneurial mindset. Through labs, live projects, and corporate mentorship, the School prepares undergraduate and postgraduate students to lead, innovate, and create measurable value for industry and society. BSoM currently offers a two-year full-time MBA (Dual Specialization), an MBA in Business Analytics co-delivered with KPMG, and a four-year BBA, in alignment with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

## About Birla Global University

Birla Global University (BGU), established in 2015 under the Birla Global University Odisha Act, is governed by a Board of Governors chaired by Smt. Jayashree Mohta, with the Honorable Governor of Odisha as its Chancellor. Guided by its vision to create and disseminate knowledge globally through excellence, innovation, and inclusiveness, BGU delivers high-quality, future-ready education supported by strong faculty, modern infrastructure, and industry linkages.

The University emphasizes ethical leadership, global competence, interdisciplinary learning, social responsibility, and an inclusive academic culture. With its focus on research, experiential learning, and innovation-driven education, BGU prepares students to contribute meaningfully to society while strengthening Odisha's presence in the national higher-education landscape. BGU comprises seven schools—Management, Communication, Commerce, Economics, Law, Applied Sciences, and Engineering & Technology, advancing its commitment to academic excellence and holistic development.

## About Earl V. Snyder Innovation Management Center, Whitman School of Management, Syracuse University, USA

The Earl V. Snyder Innovation Management Center advances research and practice in market-focused, customer-driven innovation at Syracuse University's Martin J. Whitman School of Management. Endowed in 1993 through a bequest by alumna Josephine Snyder ('29) in honor of her husband, Earl, the Center is housed in Whitman's Marketing area and supports scholarship, executive engagement, and student learning around marketing innovation, digital transformation, new product development, and innovation in emerging economies such as India. The Center's mission aligns with Whitman's emphasis on rigor with relevance, translating cutting-edge insights into tools that improve innovation performance in technology, industrial, and consumer markets. Website: <https://snyder.syracuse.edu/>



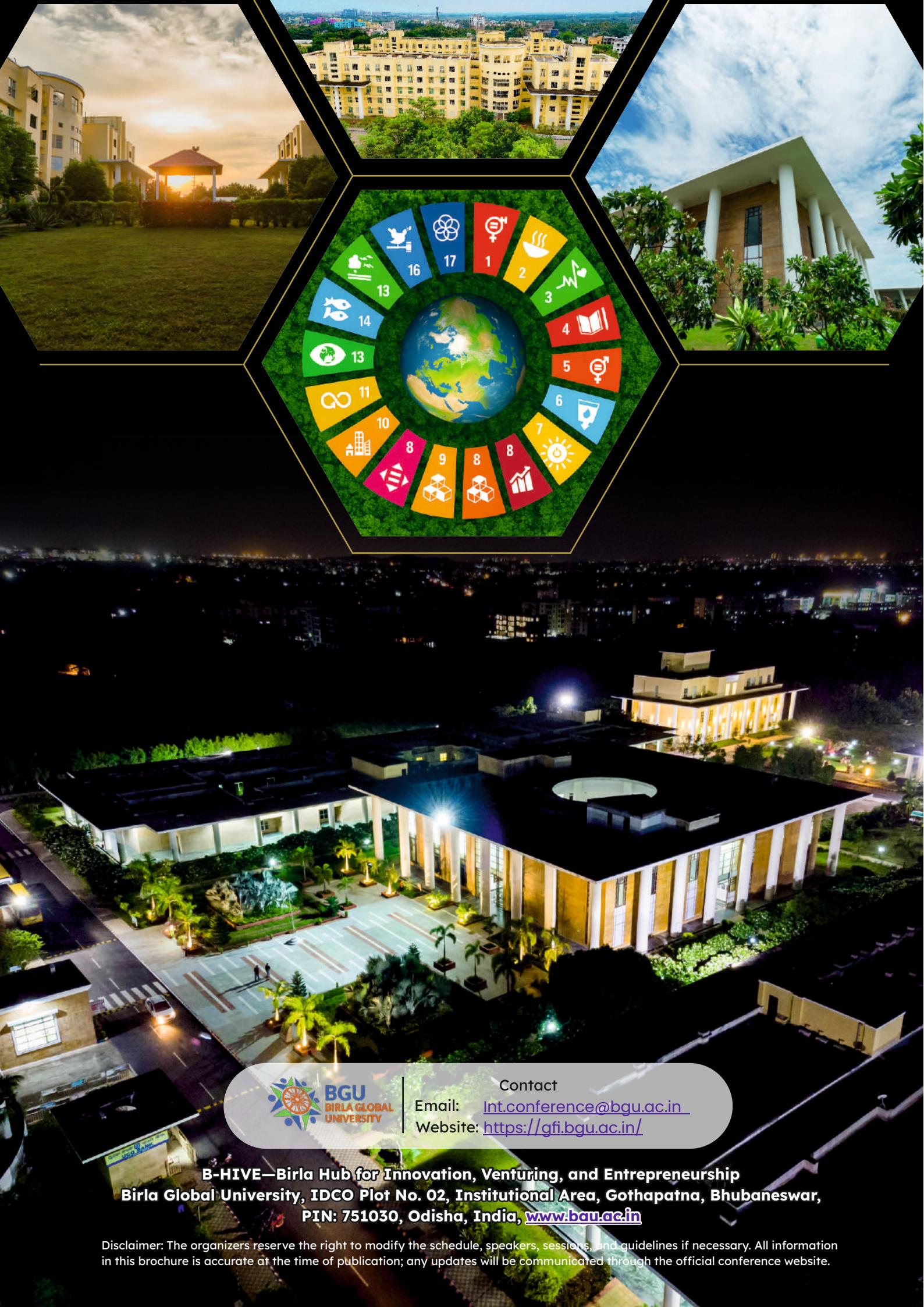
## About Mid-West University

Mid-West University (MU) is a public, autonomous institution of higher education situated in Birendranagar, Surkhet, the administrative hub of Karnali Province, Nepal. The university plays a crucial role in advancing educational opportunities and fostering socio-economic development. MU comprises seven faculties (Management, Humanities and Social Sciences, Education, Science and Technology, Engineering, Law, and Agriculture and Forestry), offering programs from undergraduate to doctoral levels. With academic units distributed across Karnali, Lumbini, and Bagmati Provinces, the university demonstrates a steadfast commitment to expanding access to higher education, particularly for rural, vulnerable, and minority communities. Guided by its vision to become a center of academic excellence in teaching and research, MU endeavors to extend the reach and impact of quality higher education. Its mission underscores the importance of fostering transformation, innovation, and sustainable development for both the regional community and the global society. Website: [www.mu.edu.np](http://www.mu.edu.np)



## Places to Visit near Bhubaneswar

Place	Highlights and Approx Distance from Bhubaneswar	
Puri	Shri Jagannath Temple, Gundicha Temple, Puri Seabeach	60 km
Konark	Sun Temple (World Heritage), architectural marvel, and Chandrabhaga Seabeach	65 km
Chilika	Sun Temple (World Heritage), architectural marvel, and Chandrabhaga Seabeach	65 km
Raghurajpur	Heritage arts village (Pattachitra Painting and crafts)	55 km
Dhauli	The edicts & rock—Ashokan site, peace pagoda, scenic river views	10 km



Contact  
Email: [Int.conference@bgu.ac.in](mailto:Int.conference@bgu.ac.in)  
Website: <https://gfi.bgu.ac.in/>

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Disclaimer: The organizers reserve the right to modify the schedule, speakers, sessions, and guidelines if necessary. All information in this brochure is accurate at the time of publication; any updates will be communicated through the official conference website.