University-Industry Collaboration

Why in news?

Recently, the University Grants Commission (UGC) approved the draft guidelines on 'Sustainable and Vibrant University-Industry (UI) Linkage System for Indian Universities'.

What are the benefits of proposed UI linkage?

- **Address the local issues** - Universities and industries can *collaborate at State and central level* to address the technological needs of that region.
- **Benefit students** – It will offer industry exposure and *make students globally competent and improve their employability*.
- **Single window opportunity** - One industry can cater to many universities through the IRC, and one university to address the needs of many universities through the URC.
- **Improves business productivity** – *Through URC, MSMEs can benefit* from faculty knowledge and student skills to improve the overall productivity of their businesses.
- **Advances research and innovation** – *IRC can help universities obtaining funding for R&D* besides offering students opportunities to interact with industry practitioners.

What are the hurdles in collaborating?

- **Different goals** – Higher education institutions *(HEIs) are service motive* that predominantly seek to educate students while *industries are profit-driven*.
- **Different focus** - HEIs focus on creating *theoretical knowledge* and conducting research while industries pursue *practical applications* of knowledge to enhance productivity and innovation.
- **Funding basis** – Unlike HEIs, an industrial company might be sceptical about *funding a research project* if it believes that the outcomes do not translate into prompt saleable applications.
- **Cultural differences** - HEI needs more academic rigour and theoretical profoundness while the company will focus more on practical outcomes.
- **Lack of recognition** – Industry recognizes the product development which is mostly a team effort but *academia recognises only the individual effort* based on number of publications the individual has.

What is the way forward?

- **Evolve shared goals** - The two parties must engage in an *open dialogue, develop a flexible attitude*, and find common ground where theoretical knowledge and practical applications can coexist.

- **Bridge the cultural gap** - HEI researchers could *refine their findings into practical recommendations* that the industrial partner can implement, while the industrial partner could provide more context to the data.
- **Establish communication** – Indian HEIs must establish good communication channels with the industry to work out a *mutually agreeable IP arrangement and non-disclosure agreements*.
- **Facility oriented collaboration** - Universities with minimal research facilities can focus on short-term collaborations with local companies that lack technical expertise.
- Universities with good research facilities can focus on long-term research collaborations with industry that aim to develop cutting-edge technologies.

References

1. Times of India| UGC guidelines for Sustainable UI Linkage
2. The Hindu| Hurdles in UI Linkage

SHANKAR IAS PARLIAMENT
Information is Empowering