SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 1
NO POVERTY
Indicator 1.3.1 | Bottom Financial Quintile Admission Target

Centurion University of Technology and Management, Andhra Pradesh (CUTM AP) stands in Tekkali village, Nellimarla Mandal, in Vizianagaram, one of India's aspirational districts. Many of the young people who join its four schools come from farming, labouring and tribal families in Vizianagaram and the neighbouring districts of north coastal Andhra Pradesh, and for many of them a university degree once seemed out of reach. The University's admission approach begins from this reality: it **aims to admit students from the poorest 20% of households in the country**, and it backs that aim with reserved seats, fee concessions and a scholarship system that takes cost out of the decision to study.

The University measures success by how many of these students stay and graduate, not only by how many enrol. **Between 2022–23 and 2024–25, the number of students receiving financial aid more than tripled, from 143 to 467**, as the campus grew from 361 to 1,947 students. In 2024–25, **almost one in four students received financial assistance**, and the overall **pass percentage reached 82% in 2025**.

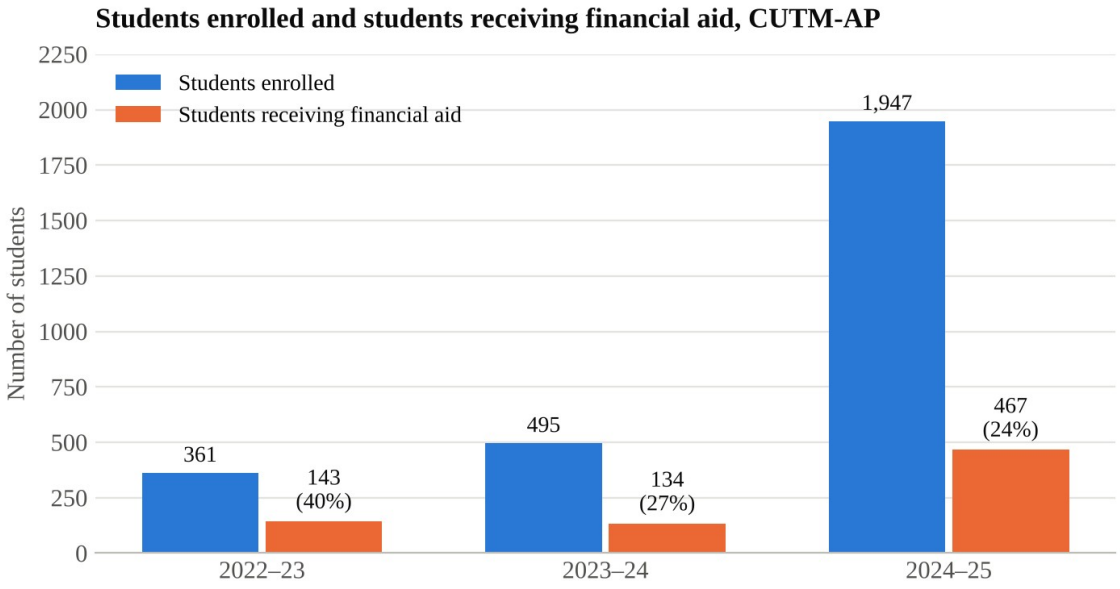


Figure 1: Students enrolled and students receiving financial aid at CUTM AP, 2022–23 to 2024–25

1. Policy and Governance Framework

CUTM AP's admission targets rest on two University policies, the **Equal Opportunity Policy (2024)** and the **Poverty Reduction Policy (2024)**. Together they name Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups as a priority for admission across all schools and commit the University to tracking how many such students it admits each year. The policies treat income, caste, geography and gender as connected sides of the same disadvantage, rather than looking at income alone.

To put these policies into practice, the Registrar's office constituted an **Equal Opportunity Cell** for 2025–26 on 16 July 2025. The cell has dedicated nodal officers for SC, ST, OBC students and students with disabilities, so that every disadvantaged group has a named person to turn to.

Table 1: Equal Opportunity Cell, CUTM AP, 2025–26

Member	Role in the cell
Dr. P. Pallavi, Registrar	Chairperson
Dr. D. Srinivasa Rao, Dean, School of Engineering and Technology	Convener
Dr. P. S. V. Ramana Rao	Nodal Officer, OBC
Dr. K. Vijaya Babu, Dean R&D	Nodal Officer, SC
Mr. Budu Sabar	Nodal Officer, ST
Mr. K. V. Kalyan Chakravarthy	Nodal Officer, Persons with Disabilities
Dr. P. A. Sunny Dayal	Member
Dr. R. S. Varma	Member
Mr. K. Pavan Kumar, HR	Member

The University follows the constitutionally mandated reservation of seats, which is closely linked to economic disadvantage:

Table 2: Reservation quotas and their link to economic disadvantage

Category	Quota	Socio-economic relevance
Scheduled Castes (SC)	15%	Communities that have faced long-term economic and social exclusion
Scheduled Tribes (ST)	7.5%	Mostly rural and forest-dwelling communities in the lowest income groups
Other Backward Classes (OBC)	27%	Socially and educationally backward groups with persistent income gaps

Together, these categories make up **49.5% of seats**. Households from these communities are heavily concentrated in the bottom income groups of the country, so the reservation system is itself one of the main routes by which the poorest students reach the campus.

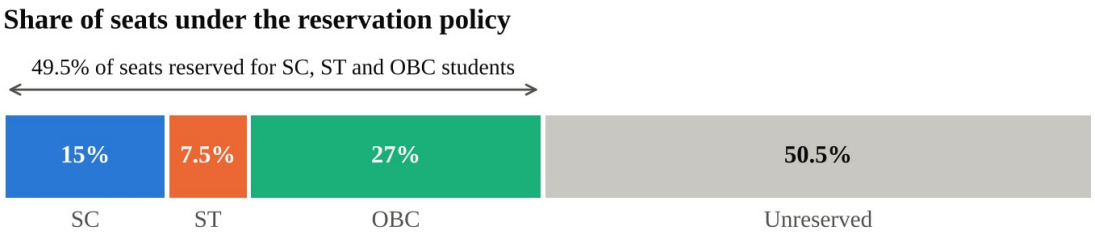


Figure 2: Share of seats reserved for SC, ST and OBC students

2. Serving an Aspirational District

Vizianagaram has been identified by the Government of India as an aspirational district because of its lower levels of income, health and education. The campus therefore sits close to the communities that most need higher education. Students from rural and tribal areas can study within reach of home, which lowers the cost of travel and living that often stops poor families from sending their children to university. Of the **499 students admitted in 2024–25, 352 (70.5%) came from the six districts of north coastal Andhra Pradesh**, with Vizianagaram alone sending 171. They include students from the tribal districts of Parvathipuram Manyam and Alluri Sitarama Raju.

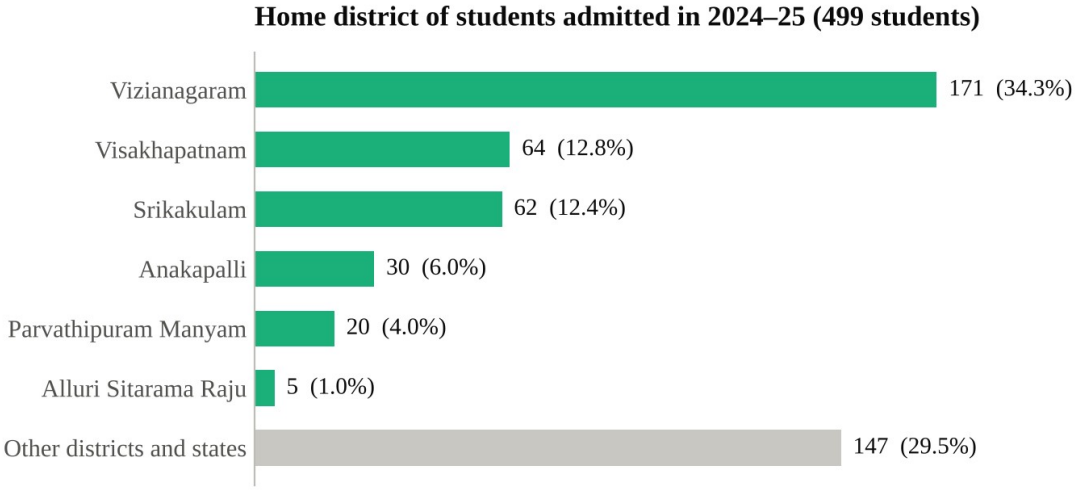


Figure 3: Home district of students admitted in 2024–25 (student register)

3. Financial Support and Admission Incentives

The University combines targeted admission with several layers of financial support, so that family income decides neither whether a student can enrol nor whether they can stay.

3.1 Scholarship Support

Table 3: Financial assistance to students at CUTM AP, 2022–23 to 2024–25

Academic year	Students enrolled	Students receiving aid	Share of students	Amount disbursed	Average per aided student
2022–23	361	143	40%	₹2,13,51,250	₹1,49,309
2023–24	495	134	27%	₹2,11,48,050	₹1,57,821
2024–25	1,947	467	24%	₹78,84,250*	₹16,883

*University scholarships paid in 2024–25 (scholarship ledger); government fee reimbursement is in addition.

- **Government scholarships:** Post-Matric Scholarships for SC, ST and OBC students through the National Scholarship Portal, and the Central Sector Scheme of Scholarships for meritorious students from low-income families. University staff help students apply and complete their documents.
- **Institutional scholarships:** need-based and merit-cum-means scholarships that cover tuition and other essential costs.
- **Philanthropic support:** students who score 90% or above in Intermediate (10+2) receive **₹25,000 a year**, sponsored by the Aditham Lakshmana Rao and Seshamma Memorial Trust.

3.2 Government Fee Reimbursement

The University registers students from low-income families for the Government of Andhra Pradesh's fee reimbursement on the **Jnanabhumi** portal and follows each application through verification. Of the 2024–25 intake, **172 students applied and 169 (98%) were verified as eligible** under the State's six-step validation, which checks household income, land, vehicles, government employment, income-tax status, electricity use and property. For these families, admission to CUTM AP comes with the tuition fee paid by the State.

3.3 Fee Waivers and Flexible Payment

Tuition fees are waived for students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, and every student may pay fees in **two instalments**, which spreads the burden for families who depend on seasonal income. During the COVID-19 pandemic the University extended fee deadlines by up to a year so that no student had to drop out because their family's income had stopped. Students who need more support are guided through the paperwork for **education loans** from banks on favourable terms.

4. Quantitative Evidence of Admission Targets

- **1,947 students** were enrolled in 2024–25, of whom **467 (24%)** received financial assistance.
- Over three years, financial aid reached **744 students**, with **₹5.04 crore** disbursed in all.
- Of the **499 students admitted in 2024–25**, **322** received a University scholarship and **169** were verified by the State as eligible for fee reimbursement after a six-step means test.

- **365 of the 499 students admitted in 2024–25 (73.1%)** belong to the SC, ST and Backward Class communities, well above the 49.5% of seats reserved for them.
- **55 students** in the 2024–25 intake hold an Economically Weaker Section (EWS) certificate and **23** an Economically Backward Class (EBC) certificate.

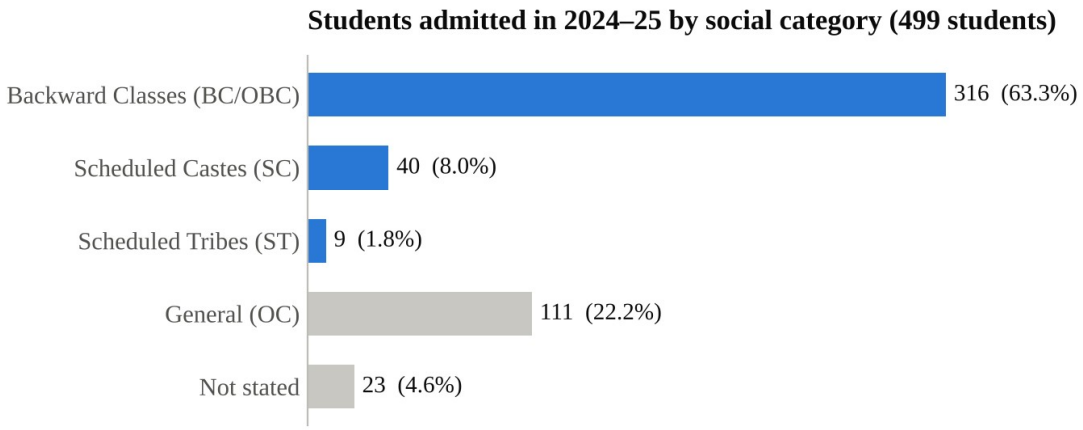


Figure 4: Students admitted in 2024–25 by social category (student register)

5. Alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals

Table 4: CUTM AP's access initiatives and the SDG targets they advance

SDG target	CUTM AP action
1.4 – Equal rights to economic resources and basic services	Scholarships, fee waivers and loan support for students from poor families
4.3 – Equal access to affordable tertiary education	Reserved seats and financial aid for low-income students
4.5 – Eliminate disparities in education	Admission priority for SC, ST and OBC students
10.2 – Social and economic inclusion of all	A campus in an aspirational district, open to rural and tribal youth

6. Conclusion

CUTM AP has a clear aim to admit students from the bottom 20% of India's household income groups, and it has built the systems to make that aim real. Reserved seats bring in students from the most disadvantaged communities, scholarships and fee waivers make it possible for them to enrol, and flexible payments keep them enrolled when family income falters. As financial aid has grown from 143 to 467 students in three years, the University has shown that its commitment to inclusion grows with the campus, turning higher education into a practical route out of poverty for families in Vizianagaram and beyond.