



Gujarat Technological University

School of Management Studies

Report on

"GIFT Lecture Series"

GIFT SEZ: Structure, Operations, and Strategic Importance

(Finance Club Activity)

1. Title of Event: GIFT SEZ: Structure, Operations, and Strategic Importance
2. Type of Event: Expert Session
3. Date: 12th December, 2025
Time: 2:00 pm to 5pm
4. Venue: GTU-SMS, Ahmedabad
5. Details of Expert:
6. Profile of the Speaker

Mr. Yogesh Bobade serves as General Manager at GIFT-SEZ, where he is actively involved in the planning, administration, and operational management of the SEZ ecosystem. With extensive experience in special economic zone administration, regulatory coordination, and infrastructure development, Mr. Bobade possesses in-depth knowledge of SEZ policies, investor facilitation mechanisms, and compliance frameworks.

During the session, Mr. Bobade shared insights drawn from his professional experience, enabling students to understand not only the conceptual framework of GIFT SEZ but also its real-world operational challenges and opportunities.

1. Introduction:

Gujarat Technological University (GTU) organized an expert session for MBA (International Business) students with the objective of enhancing their understanding of India's evolving international business and financial infrastructure. More than 50 students have attended the

session. The session was delivered by Mr. Yogesh Bobade, General Manager, GIFT-SEZ, on the topic “GIFT SEZ: Structure, Operations, and Strategic Importance.”

The session was highly relevant in the context of India’s ambition to position itself as a global economic and financial hub. GIFT City, and particularly its Special Economic Zone (SEZ), plays a critical role in attracting foreign investment, promoting export-oriented services, and strengthening India’s integration with global markets. The expert session aimed to provide students with a practical and policy-oriented understanding of GIFT SEZ, complementing their academic exposure to international trade, investment, and economic zones.

2. Objectives of the Expert Session:

- To introduce students to the concept and rationale of GIFT SEZ.
- To explain the legal, regulatory, and operational framework governing GIFT SEZ.
- To highlight the role of SEZs in promoting international business and exports.
- To discuss investment opportunities, business activities, and sectoral focus areas within GIFT SEZ.
- To familiarize students with career prospects and professional opportunities emerging from GIFT SEZ.
- To bridge the gap between theoretical learning and practical implementation of SEZ policies.

3. Overview of GIFT City and GIFT SEZ:

Mr. Bobade began the session by providing a brief overview of GIFT City (Gujarat International Finance Tec-City). He explained that GIFT City is envisioned as a global financial and business hub, designed to cater to both domestic and international markets.

Within GIFT City, the GIFT Special Economic Zone (SEZ) serves as a critical institutional and operational component. It operates under the Special Economic Zones Act, 2005, offering a business-friendly environment with world-class infrastructure, fiscal incentives, and simplified regulatory procedures.

Mr. Bobade emphasized that GIFT SEZ is not limited to manufacturing but is primarily focused on services-led growth, particularly in areas such as financial services, IT/ITES, fintech, consulting, and global business services.

4. Concept and Rationale of Special Economic Zones:

To establish a conceptual foundation, Mr. Bobade explained the rationale behind the SEZ policy in India. SEZs are designated geographical regions with economic laws that are more liberal compared to the rest of the country. Their primary objectives include:

- Promotion of exports of goods and services
- Attraction of foreign direct investment (FDI)
- Generation of employment opportunities
- Development of world-class infrastructure
- Enhancement of economic competitiveness

He highlighted that GIFT SEZ represents a next-generation SEZ model, aligned with global standards and focused on high-value services rather than traditional manufacturing-led exports.

5. Regulatory and Administrative Framework of GIFT SEZ:

A significant portion of the session was devoted to explaining the regulatory and administrative structure of GIFT SEZ. Mr. Bobade elaborated on the following aspects:

5.1 Legal Framework:

- GIFT SEZ operates under:
- The SEZ Act, 2005
- SEZ Rules, 2006
- Relevant notifications and circulars issued by the Government of India

These frameworks provide fiscal incentives, simplified customs procedures, and operational flexibility to SEZ units.

5.2 Governance Structure:

The governance of GIFT SEZ involves coordination among:

- Development Commissioner (SEZ)
- GIFT SEZ authorities
- Central and state government departments
- Regulatory bodies relevant to specific sectors

Mr. Bobade emphasized that effective inter-agency coordination is crucial for ensuring ease of doing business and timely approvals.

6. Operational Aspects of GIFT SEZ:

Mr. Bobade provided detailed insights into the operational functioning of GIFT SEZ, which was particularly beneficial for MBA students seeking practical exposure.

6.1 Business Activities Permitted:

GIFT SEZ supports a wide range of service-oriented activities, including:

- Financial and professional services
- IT and IT-enabled services
- Fintech and digital services
- Consulting, research, and analytics
- Global capability centers (GCCs)

6.2 Infrastructure and Facilities:

He highlighted the availability of:

- State-of-the-art commercial office spaces
- High-speed digital connectivity
- Integrated urban infrastructure
- Sustainable and smart city features

Such infrastructure enhances productivity and supports global business operations.

6.3 Ease of Doing Business:

Mr. Bobade explained the simplified procedures for:

- Setting up SEZ units
- Import and export of services
- Customs and compliance processes
- Single-window clearances

These features make GIFT SEZ attractive for both domestic and international investors.

7. Fiscal Incentives and Business Advantages:

The session also covered the fiscal and non-fiscal incentives available to units operating within GIFT SEZ. Mr. Bobade explained that these incentives are designed to enhance competitiveness and reduce operational costs. Key advantages include:

- Tax incentives as per prevailing government policies
- Duty-free import of capital goods and inputs
- Exemptions from certain indirect taxes
- Simplified foreign exchange regulations for export-oriented services

He cautioned that students should understand incentives within the broader policy framework and evolving regulatory landscape.

8. Strategic Importance of GIFT SEZ in International Business:

Mr. Bobade emphasized the strategic role of GIFT SEZ in India's international business ecosystem. He explained that GIFT SEZ:

- Acts as a gateway for global business services.
- Facilitates cross-border trade in services.
- Enhances India's visibility as a preferred investment destination.
- Supports the development of knowledge-intensive industries.
- Complements India's broader economic initiatives such as "Make in India" and "Digital India."

These dimensions highlighted the macroeconomic relevance of GIFT SEZ for international trade and investment.

9. Relevance for MBA (International Business) Students:

The session was particularly valuable for MBA (International Business) students. Mr. Bobade outlined multiple areas of relevance:

Career Opportunities: Roles in compliance, operations, trade facilitation, investment advisory, and SEZ administration.

Entrepreneurial Scope: Start-ups and service providers catering to global clients can leverage SEZ benefits.

Policy Understanding: Knowledge of SEZ regulations strengthens students' competence in international trade and investment management.

Global Exposure: GIFT SEZ provides interaction with multinational firms and international markets.

He encouraged students to align their academic projects, internships, and skill development with emerging opportunities in GIFT SEZ.

10. Interaction and Question–Answer Session:

The interactive Q&A session saw active participation from students. Questions focused on:

- Differences between SEZ and IFSC frameworks
- Compliance requirements for service exports
- Long-term sustainability of SEZ incentives
- Skill sets required to work in GIFT SEZ

Mr. Bobade addressed these queries with clarity, using practical examples and policy perspectives, thereby enhancing students' understanding of real-world applications.

11. Key Learnings from the Session:

The major takeaways from the expert session include:

- GIFT SEZ is a strategically important component of India's international business infrastructure.
- SEZs play a critical role in promoting service exports and attracting global investment.
- Regulatory clarity and infrastructure excellence are key success factors.
- MBA graduates with knowledge of SEZ operations have strong career prospects.
- Practical exposure to policy implementation enhances managerial competence.

12. Conclusion:

The expert session conducted by Mr. Yogesh Bobade, General Manager, GIFT-SEZ, was highly informative and academically enriching for MBA (International Business) students at GTU. The session successfully bridged theoretical concepts of international business and SEZ policy with practical insights into the functioning of GIFT SEZ.

By providing a comprehensive overview of regulatory frameworks, operational mechanisms, and strategic importance, the session enhanced students' understanding of India's global economic positioning. Overall, the expert lecture contributed significantly to experiential learning and reinforced the relevance of GIFT SEZ in shaping future international business professionals.



