



# FFEIT NEWSLETTER

Volume 3, Issue No. 25, July 2020

## NOTE FROM MANAGING TRUSTEE, FFE INDIA TRUST



Dear Friends,

This edition comes at a time of great uncertainty...as the new FY began on shaky ground- filled with anxiety, uncertainty, along with untold misery to many millions due to COVID-19. All of us have been impacted in some way by the raging pandemic as have our lives and the way we live and work, which have taken a new turn. While many of us have been able to adapt to the change and the new normal, it has been devastating to many others. This includes several of our scholars and their families, where parents lost their livelihood during the lockdown and entire families were impacted. FFE's resolve to address affected students and their families during these unprecedented times resulted in over Rs. 1.5 Cr being awarded as cash grants to over 3000 student families, thanks to donations from individuals worldwide, corporates and Foundations'. Capgemini in partnership with FFE and Mitti Social Initiatives Foundation (through Mitti Café) was able to provide over 28,000 meals to migrant communities and front-line workers in Bangalore. It is heartening that donors, at this critical juncture generously donated during these difficult times. You will read more about this later.

While the crises prolongs, FFE's student community continues to face uncertainty on multiple fronts, borne from anxiety about exams, online classes and accessibility, returning to college, finding internships and jobs to being required to serve in the Covid frontlines as medical interns for extended periods. To address these and other issues, FFE has been working closely with students, along with donors and corporates', using this lockdown as an opportunity to provide students multiple options for learning through online courses, corporate sponsored workshops related to technical and soft skills, and for student to meet their donors, peers and alumni through virtual interactions. Sandhya Manoj, FFE's CEO and the FFE team have been managing all our programs with Work from Home being implemented. You will read more about these interactions in the newsletter.

FFE is also honoured to welcome **Mr. Arun Kumar, Chairman and CEO of KPMG-India who joined the Board of Trustees, FFE India Trust in May 2020**. We look forward to his engagement with the Board and our stakeholders to further our mission and to learn from his experience and expertise.

As we face this pandemic together, I am particularly proud of the FFE scholars who have exemplified courage, resourcefulness, creativity and resilience- making the best of these uncertain times. As we prepare for the next chapter in this new landscape, I hope our remarkable students can count on your support. FFE scholars are expected to begin classes by September or earlier, and many may require additional financial support to pursue their education including online access and related expenditure. I hope we can count on your generosity as it will give us the resources and agility to meet students' evolving needs.

During these uncertain times, your support will indeed go a long way. FFE, started by Dr. Prabhu and Mrs. Poonam Goel 25 years ago has indeed grown due to contributions from the community. The FFE family has always been steadfast in its support of our work and I am confident we can face these times too with the same resolve, conviction and will to make a difference. Afterall, our lives have been enriched by having the best and brightest students from around India as part of our community.

Best Wishes,  
Sudha Kidao  
Managing Trustee  
FFE India Trust

# 1. NEWS AND EVENTS

## I) New Member of the Board: FFE India Trust

FFE is delighted to welcome **Mr. Arun M. Kumar, Chairman and CEO of KPMG-India** who joined the FFE India Trust Board as an honorary Trustee in May 2020. The Board currently includes Dr. Rishiksha T Krishnan, Director Designate-IIM Bangalore, Mr. Venkatesh Shukla, General Partner, Monta Vista Capital and Ms. Smita Uttarwar, a Mumbai based entrepreneur. The Board is chaired by the Managing Trustee, Dr. Sudha Kidao.



Mr. Arun Kumar is an accomplished global executive with experience spanning multiple sectors from high technology to Government and many geographies from Silicon Valley to India.

Most recently, Arun served as the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Global Markets and Director General of the U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service in the Obama Administration. A former Silicon Valley entrepreneur, he is an Alumnus of the Sloan School of Management, MIT. Member of advisory councils at Stanford University and the University of California, Santa Cruz.

FFE is honored to have Mr. Arun Kumar join the Board of Trustees, FFE India Trust. The 4-member Board looks forward to engaging with our newest Board member, whose experiences and expertise will be invaluable as we work together to oversee strategic planning, fund raising and financial management.

## II) Donor Scholar Engagements

The COVID-19 pandemic, has created much upheaval, particularly among the FFE scholar community who suddenly felt isolated, with health and safety concerns combined with travel restrictions, limited access to lectures and classmates, while being expected to quickly adapt to the change. This has proven to be a larger challenge for students who reside in some far flung and remote areas of India. FFE felt the need to adapt new strategies of engagement with its students and stakeholders. Virtual connections were established by FFE with its scholars to motivate and help them by providing opportunities to learn and up skill themselves through online courses, irrespective of location. FFE also encouraged its corporate donors to conduct workshops, webinars and video conferences with their sponsored scholars and the FFE student community.

These meaningful interactions, ranging from training for career readiness conducted by The

Cognizant Foundation, a seminar addressing emotional-wellbeing by the Aditya Birla group and video conference calls with individual donors, helped motivate scholars and provided them support and guidance they were seeking. FFE is thankful to all its donors – Corporates, Individuals & Alumni, who participated in these virtual interactions with scholars. FFE will be reaching out to many of you and will help facilitate such interactions in the coming months.

We are delighted to share feedback from donors and scholars about their interactions which can be viewed here:

- **Donors Mrs. Sagarika Sen and Mr. Sandeep Sen**  
<https://youtu.be/zSQn2u4eeqo>  
(Munich, Germany)
- **FFE Alumni donor Mr. Kush Saha**  
<https://youtu.be/HoX--pAwl0k>  
(Assistant Professor, National Institute of Science Education Research, Orissa)
- **Scholar Nunna Naga Surya Sai Daivik**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RBgSG-Brycs>  
(2<sup>nd</sup> Year, Sardar Vallabhai National Institute of Technology, Surat, Gujarat)

## III) COVID-19 financial support to families of FFE scholars

The COVID-19 pandemic has undoubtedly crippled the economy and has thrown unimaginable hardships in the lives of many, including FFE scholars. The lock-down in particular has had an impact on many scholar families whose livelihoods were lost during the lock-down.

To address their immediate requirements, FFE, by seeking the support of its donors worldwide, initiated a campaign to provide financial assistance to the families most affected by the lockdown. FFE reached out to its student community of 6000+ scholars and identified the families who were worst hit by the pandemic. Through a timely executed fundraiser and support of its donors, FFE supported families of more than 3000 scholars with a cash grant of Rs. 5000 towards each family. FFE scholars and their families are deeply thankful to all the donors for their timely help and extend their deepest gratitude to them.

Here are a few testimonials received from FFE's scholars

- **Vibha Pandey**  
<https://youtu.be/7hcMcyGX9eE>
- **Prashant Kumar Mali**  
<https://youtu.be/6J7hWUjwY1c>
- **Geetha A**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-IFXhmZYuXg>
- **Singam Saikumar**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z2o0JFnKWok>

## IV) COMMUNITY OUTREACH

### Mentorship Program

FFE's Mentorship program, specifically designed and implemented for FFE scholars, hopes to transition mentees into self-reliant corporate professionals.

The mentoring program, for third year Engineering students, provides an opportunity for scholars to interact and learn from industry experts, who through their participation in the program, facilitates the student's personal and professional development. Besides shared interests between mentor and mentee, the remote mentorship program enables students' access to professionals in similar branches/fields who bring their expertise, experience and guidance to mentoring. The Mentoring Program's curated content addresses concepts, work-related skills and activities that mentors can use with their mentees, to support academic and life success, with an emphasis on social-emotional growth and skills required to meet their career goals.

Here is a Mentor- Mentee perspective

#### Mr. Sushant Garg

Senior Associate

Axtria India Pvt Ltd., New Delhi



*"The mentoring program with FFE scholar Prince Sabhaya has been an enriching experience. He was very focused and enthusiastic in improving*

*himself - which is why we succeeded together. Along with guiding him to prepare for the next steps in life and also inculcating good practises, it has been a learning opportunity for me as well. Sabhaya improved on multiple fronts; The curriculum helped the mentee introspect, which in turn helped him prepare himself to face the job market. This mentoring experience has also provided me with the satisfaction of doing good to the society. Also following schedules every weekend to interact with someone virtually gives you a sense of routine and responsibility. We have now completed the mentoring sessions. However, we are in touch and discuss any situation that needs my suggestion & guidance. I wish him all the luck and thank FFE for such a great opportunity!"*

#### Prince Sabhaya

4<sup>th</sup>Year, Mechanical Engineering

L D College of Engineering, Ahmedabad, Gujarat

Prince Sabhaya dreams of becoming a successful entrepreneur; he hopes to start an Automobile Manufacturing Factory and supply automobile parts and machines at affordable prices



to the masses. Travelling, photography and listening to music are his hobbies.

*"FFE's Mentoring program has been very enriching for me; Apart from building self-confidence, it has made me career ready. I was initially nervous to interact with my Mentor, but once the sessions started, we developed a good rapport in no time. His guidance on career development, problem solving, and decision making were my favourite topics in the program and it has helped me a lot personally and professionally. I got to learn a lot on importance of time management and prioritising tasks, which proved beneficial to me. Throughout the program my Mentor had been very cooperative - always answered my queries and supported them with live examples. I am very thankful to my mentor, Mr. Sushant for our interactive sessions related to job opportunity and corporate expectations, which will definitely help in my early years of professional life."*

### Skill Development Program

The FFE Skills Training Program funded by the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation (MSDF) is in its third year of implementation continues to help student through technical and soft skills training. Students are committed to completing their skills training with 1238 second-year Engineering scholars currently doing their Midline assessment conducted by Aspiring Minds.

Amongst the 909 third year Engineering scholars, 550 students are pursuing technical courses through Coursera's Online program while 346 students have completed the 2nd round of English training - Hi-Touch English, implemented by eAge Tutors. Currently, 107 fourth year Engineering students are in the final round of Mock Interviews offered by Ethnus.

Of the 1023 Engineering scholars who will graduate in June 2020, 673 (66%) have gained employment and 128 (12%) are interested in pursuing their higher education. 223 (22%) scholars continue to seek employment.

Skills Training: Scholar Testimonials

#### Mohammed Mushthaq P C

2<sup>nd</sup>Year, BTech

College of Engineering Trivandrum

*"First of all, I would like to thank FFE for organising such a wonderful course to develop our aptitude skills. It was a long course covering most of the areas in the aptitude section. The lessons were presented simply and the video lectures were also very helpful. The interactive nature of the course was very helpful in mastering the topics covered. Some of the questions were interestingly challenging. The tests at the end of each module were also very good which helped me recall what*



*I've learned in the module. Now I'm confident in attending aptitude tests, thanks to FFE and FACE."*

### **Rajasree Baskar**

3<sup>rd</sup>Year, B. Tech

Government College of Technology, Coimbatore



*"The training programs facilitated by FFE is a boon to all scholars. I benefited a lot through the programs, especially the English training program offered by Hello English. Each module in the program is well curated, keeping in mind the need of students and is easy to understand and grasp. I learnt a lot of new words which helped improve my vocabulary. The program has built my confidence and improved my communication skills. Now I am confident that I will be able to face job interviews with ease. I wholeheartedly thank FFE for giving me this opportunity to be part of their training programs".*

## **V. CORPORATE WORKSHOPS**

### **Webinar on 'Jobs of the Future' by The Cognizant Foundation**

An interactive webinar with the final year FFE scholars of BTech was organized on June 21st, 2020, by The Cognizant Foundation. Mr. Abhishek Jain, Regional Head and Global Pro Bono Lead, Outreach, Cognizant lead the session and shared insights about the future of work, based on a research conducted by Cognizant. The 2-hour interactive session, attended by 75 students from 4th year Engineering from around India, addressing "Jobs of the Future" elicited curiosity, interest and questions from students. Mr. Abhishek urged students to make a habit of learning beyond books and the curriculum and to expand their knowledge and upskill periodically.

### **Technical Webinars by Oracle India Pvt. Ltd.**

Sambharam Institute of Technology supported by IETE (The Institution of Electronics and Telecommunication Engineers), Bangalore along with Oracle Volunteers organized webinars for final year engineering scholars pan India. These webinars were conducted every day (2-hour session) by industry experts, from 8th June to 12th June 2020, covering the following topics:

- Cloud Technologies- Applications, Techniques and Careers
- An Introduction to Machine Learning
- Introduction to Data Science and AI
- Data Exploration and Visualization using Python
- Data Visualization using Tableau

FFE is thankful to Oracle for organizing these informative and interactive sessions, which were invaluable to FFE scholars.

## **2. VOICE OF SCHOLARS**

### **I) CURRENT STUDENT**

#### **Sushmita T.P**

2<sup>nd</sup> Year, B. Tech

Siddaganga Institute of Technology, Tumkur

*"My school teachers have been my guiding stars; they were always very supportive and encouraging. Under their able guidance, I scored 98% in class 10th and was awarded with a gold medal for being the school topper. Actively involved in various school extracurricular activities, I was also selected as School Head Girl; this responsibility taught me a lot.*



*Life was going smooth until 3 years ago when my father, who is a farmer, met with an accident damaging his legs. Being the only earning member in the family, we as a family were shaken, both emotionally and financially. In such difficult times, my teachers and family guided and supported me. I scored 92.5% in class 12<sup>th</sup> and a rank of 4126 in Karnataka Common Entrance Test (CET), securing a seat in the prestigious Siddaganga Institute of Technology (SIT), Tumkur. Due to extreme financial constraints and no source of income, my father had to sell our small land to pay my college admission fee. Fortunately, in college, I heard of FFE's scholarship program and applied for the scholarship. My heartfelt gratitude to my donor, **Société Générale GSC**, and FFE for sponsoring my education and giving wings to my dreams.*

*Life in college is great; the high-end infrastructure, quality teaching and serene campus motivates me to work harder towards achieving my dreams. Once I start earning, I will provide my family the much-needed support and also be a part of FFE's Circle of Giving."*

### **II) ALUMNUS**

#### **Dr. Shivaprasad P M**

Pondicherry, Tamil Nadu



Dr. Shivaprasad is currently pursuing his MD Pediatrics from Jawaharlal Institute of Post graduation Medical Education and Research (JIPMER), Pondicherry. He completed his MBBS in 2018 from Bangalore Medical College and Research Institute (BMCRI), Bangalore. He is proud to be a part of the FFE Family and is determined to motivate all alumni to honour their pledge of support as part of the "Circle of Giving".

*"My journey with FFE started in year 2012. That was the time when my dream of becoming a Doctor and the urge to give back to the society took form. After scoring a good rank in CET, I decided to join Medicine. Unfortunately, finances were always a*

roadblock on the path leading to my dreams. However, a deep desire to achieve my dream kept me going and that is when I found out about FFE and the scholarship, which came as a boon to me. FFE made my journey easy; if not for this scholarship, I would have never been able to pursue my dream. I can proudly say that I have successfully completed my MBBS from the prestigious Bangalore Medical College and Research Institute. My ongoing desire of learning medicine and understanding complex human anatomy has finally become a reality.

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***“FFE is not just an Organization which financially supports education, but it is a family which closely monitors your progress leading you to a successful career path.”***

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*As a Proud FFE Alumnus, I would want to convey to all Alumni and FFE scholars that we must continue this Circle of Giving and provide a chance to other scholars, like us, to chase their desired dreams. I am already doing my bit for the past two years; I hope my fellow Alumni are also supporting more scholars. Let's contribute in all possible ways in further extending FFE's helping hand and making FFE proud of us.”*

### **3. DONOR FEATURE**

**Mr. Manish Mittal**

Country Head, Axtria Pvt. Ltd.

*“At Axtria, Corporate Social Responsibility is fulfilled with the same passion with which we serve our customers in business. With ‘Education’ being an important fulcrum in the development of a nation, in Axtria as well, ‘learning’ is of immense importance ever since we were a young organization. Hence, for Axtria, its association with FFE is a deep rooted connection with its values and core foundation.*



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***“Our most proud contribution has been when we hired one of the mentees last year (2019) and could provide internships to 4 mentees this year (2020)”***

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*During the past 4 years of a fulfilling association with FFE, we have been able to actively support 50 students till date. Axtria employees have mentored 20-25 students and this has been one of their most fulfilling experiences. Axtria employees have conducted 5 workshops, positively impacting 40 students. For our employees, the high point has been when they were able to help their mentees get placed in*

*leading organizations. Apart from this, the mentees & Axtria mentors share a wonderful relationship with each other. With immense sense of satisfaction of our humble contributions to the lives of FFE scholars, we feel strengthened and charged to do much more in the coming years.”*

### **4. VOLUNTEER SPEAK**

Mr. G Gopakumar is a mechanical engineering graduate (1960) from College of Engineering, Thiruvananthapuram. He retired as Addl. Director General from Indian Ordinance Factories Service in 1997. Post retirement in 1998, he



has been actively involved with a NGO named Pratibha Poshini, which works towards nurturing young minds in Thiruvananthapuram. Mr. Gopakumar currently lives with his wife Ms. Jayasree in Thiruvananthapuram.

*“In 1998, while working as Secretary for Prathibha Poshini, I first heard of FFE. In its early days, Prathibha Poshini was supported by FFE. Later on, in 2005, FFE nominated me as a Facilitator, and ever since, my bond with FFE has gotten stronger over the years. Till date I have introduced more than 80 eligible scholars to FFE. I have always been interested to give back to Society and there is no better way to do this than through FFE.”*

#### **FFE Employees Upskilling Session**

*“The lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic gave rise to several opportunities for FFE scholars to be involved in*



*various online learning activities. This also encouraged the FFE Team members to upskill themselves during this time. Beginning on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2020, The Cognizant Outreach & Pro-bono Volunteering Team, with the help of trainer Ms. Subhashree Raagavan, rolled out Intermediate & Advanced Excel Training sessions for FFE Team members, from all locations. The weekly sessions (90 minutes) over 6 weeks was an opportunity to learn the features of Excel and its full potential, an important and core tool used for reports by several team members.*

*FFE would like to thank Mr. Deepak Prabhu, Director – CSR, Global Head – Cognizant Outreach and the Cognizant Outreach team for implementing the weekly sessions and helping achieve tangible results. They met FFE on the Excel Skills curve and walked the path of learning/adoption with the team, even if it meant longer, extended and involved sessions.”*

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#### **Connect With Us**

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