NOTE FROM THE MANAGING TRUSTEE, FFE INDIA TRUST

Dear Friends and Supporters,

This newsletter comes at a time when the pandemic was expected to retreat and 'normalcy' to return to our lives. But it is now anything but, and the return to new normal perhaps a more distant reality. 2020 tested all of us in different ways—the Foundation For Excellence (FFE) was no different.

FFE emerged through these difficult times-more agile and resilient, ready for the numerous challenges that were hurled our way, dealing with some more successfully than others. Students had their struggles that added to the turmoil— including the need to adapt quickly to online learning along with the challenges of lack of computers and/or connectivity. Added to the cauldron of confusion were delayed college reopenings, delayed class schedules and exams, accompanied by much-delayed admission timelines for students, many beginning college only in February 2021 (instead of August 2020). Social isolation, families in financial turmoil and FFE's cancellation of year round in-person events further exacerbated the disconnect with the community.

In the midst of this upheaval, are the heart-warming results. FFE supported 7498 students through scholarships, the highest number since its inception, thanks to the indefatigable spirit of donors from across the world who donated generously, first towards the COVID fund and also towards scholarships. FFE welcomed 2422 new students into our family in FY 2020-21, and awarded scholarships amounting to Rs. 29.38 Crores, another first for FFE! Heartiest congratulations to all the students who were awarded FFE Scholarships!

FFE’s graduating class of June 2020 continues to make us proud with almost 89% of students gaining employment in this difficult year. Also, FFE’s growing alumni family contributed generously last year (Rs. 1.15 Cr), the highest to date, despite many of them enduring pay cuts or job losses. The goal to make FFE a self-sustaining organization as envisioned by the Founders, Dr. Prabhu Goel and Mrs. Poonam Goel is no longer a distant reality, thanks to FFE’s alumni.

How did we manage in the midst of the crises? We sought new collaborations, embraced technology, brought in innovative processes, and leveraged online platforms to engage with our family, virtually meeting over 5000+ participants in 27 states! Our dedicated, versatile and dynamic team of 28, worked tirelessly during this time to whom I am deeply thankful. We are also proud and thankful to several hundred volunteers including several of our alumni who generously participated to making FY 2020-21 a year of many firsts! My thanks also to the support and encouragement throughout from FFE’s Board in USA and India.

While this issue is a wrap up of activities of the last quarter, our COO Ram’s account highlights our achievements in the last year. You may find that work seemed to continue as normal from reading this issue. To make this possible, I would like to thank each one of you, for your support and contributions, monetary and otherwise for enabling FFE to amplify our impact as we seek to help more bright students in the pursuit of their dreams.

Thank you for being a part of this inspiring journey during these unprecedented times. We look to your continued support as we start our new fiscal.

In appreciation and with thanks,

Sudha Kidao
Managing Trustee
FFE India Trust
When the going gets tough, the tough get going!

It is not a saying anymore but what we have been seeing and living over the past 12-15 months. The focus around the world has been to fight the pandemic; several resources, time and effort is being spent in doing that.

Message from
Ram Kolavennu
COO – FFE India Trust

I urge you all to stay safe and healthy.

The last year has set a new benchmark and I am sure with the collective help from everyone, we will reach a new milestone in the lives that we impact during this financial year. I request your continued support as always.

The pandemic is still around and spreading fast; we need to take care of ourselves and the people around us.

I urge you all to stay safe and healthy.

I) Webinar for FFE Medical Scholars

To keep FFE’s medical students motivated during the pandemic, FFE hosted three medical webinars during January-March 2021, which piqued the interest of over 500 medical students across India.

Dr. Benezeeta Pinto-Assistant Professor, Department of Clinical Immunology and Rheumatology, St. John’s Medical College, Bangalore,

Dr. Nilanjan Banerjee- General Physician in Clinical Practice, Pune and Associate Professor of General Medicine, Bharati Vidyapeeth Dental College, Pune and

Dr. Shilpa Kelkar, a Bangalore based practising Dentist, and FFE volunteer and mentor, shared their experiences and expertise with students during these sessions. All sessions concluded with an interactive Q&A session, addressed by speakers. FFE is thankful to the physicians for providing new perspectives to students on different topics, including case studies, which was a shift away from pure academics.

Scholar Feedback:

Naveen Kulkarni
3rd Year, MBBS
Bangalore Medical College and Research Institute, Karnataka

“I am very thankful to Dr. Benezeeta Pinto, who took out time for a session on Immunology - a vast topic that she presented in a very crisp and comprehensive manner. The session was immensely helpful; I would like to thank FFE and Dr. Pinto for this informative webinar.”

Jaypalbhai Khuman
2nd Year, MBBS
Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Gujarat

“A very insightful session conducted by Dr. Nilanjan Banerjee, who emphasized the important soft skills that every doctor should possess. He also shared his experience as a Medical Volunteer at a camp in Sudan, which touched my heart. Thank you, Dr. Banerjee for your valuable time and to FFE for organising this wonderful webinar.”

II) Donor Scholar Engagements

a) Third Virtual meet: Donor Mr. Babu Joseph and his scholars

On 6th March 2021, Mr. Babu Joseph, long-time FFE donor and supporter, had his third ‘virtual-connect’ with his six sponsored MBBS scholars, studying in colleges across India. The session inspired and encouraged students to learn from the current situation and to never give up.
Thanks to Mr. Babu Joseph for his efforts to keep connected with his scholars and always encouraging them to do better.

“I thoroughly enjoyed interacting with my FFE scholars, along with the FFE’s Management Team. I am happy to see the scholars back in college and preparing for their exams. Students feel disappointed at having missed many practical sessions but are motivated to work hard and do well in their studies. I thank FFE Team for facilitating the call and always encouraging students towards their betterment. I look forward to my next interaction with the scholars, three months from now”– Mr. Babu Joseph

Kajal Kumari
3rd year- MBBS
Rajendra Institute of Medical Sciences, Ranchi, Jharkhand

“Listening to Mr. Babu Joseph Sir has always been very motivational and inspiring. His advice on stress management has been most useful to me. Thank you FFE for conducting such inspiring sessions.”

b) International Women’s Day celebration by Fractal Analytics

Fractal Analytics, under the aegis of International Women’s Day, conducted a Town Hall event - Tales of Grit and Persistence on 9th March, 2021. Attended by over 200 participants virtually, the event included Fractal Analytics Global and India Teams, FFE-Fractal scholars and FFE’s management.

Mr. Srikanth Velamakanni, Co-founder, Group Chief Executive & Vice-Chairman, Fractal Analytics addressed the gathering followed by a welcome note by Ms. Chetana Kumar, Head CSR & Special Projects, Fractal Analytics. Dr. Sudha Kidao, Managing Trustee, FFEIT highlighted the FFE-Fractal Analytics partnership and its impact. Seven women scholars from the cohort sponsored by Fractal Analytics shared their stories of struggle, resilience and determination which was the highlight of the event and was a truly inspiring and a heart-warming experience for the audience.

Fractal CSR surprised the scholars with a memento and a tree plantation certificate. Fractal Analytics through their thoughtful gesture may have led to a sizable grove being planted in honour of the scholars!

c) International Women’s day celebration with Oracle India

Oracle India’s volunteering team celebrated International Women’s Day with 51 women FFE scholars virtually on 8th March 2021. The event titled “Chose to Challenge: Be a Leader-Peer-Inspiration” was led by Dr. Kamal Deep Peter-Senior Manager, Corporate Citizenship along with Ms. Ashi Bhargava-Staff Consultant, Oracle Financial Services Software Limited, and Ms. Anushree Juthani-Software Developer, Oracle Retail who interacted with students during the event.

d) Global Virtual Event on ‘GoodWorks’ hosted by TransUnion CIBIL

Foundation For Excellence, was selected as TransUnion CIBIL’s only CSR partner from the Indian subcontinent to represent its CSR activities in the region during a global virtual event, showcasing the ‘GoodWorks’ done by TransUnion CIBIL worldwide on 25th March, 2021. The virtual event was geared towards sensitizing TransUnion CIBIL’s associates from all over the world about its CSR initiatives. Various NGO partners from across US, UK, South Africa, Philippines, Hong Kong, Brazil etc, participated in the event. During a live session, FFE’s Managing Trustee, Dr. Sudha Kidao along with FFE’s COO, Mr. Ram Kolavennu presented some highlights on FFE’s long standing partnership with TransUnion CIBIL.

TransUnion CIBIL is currently supporting more than 700 scholars under the project ‘Udaan’. In FY 2020-21 alone, 270 First year scholars were added to this program.

III) COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Mentorship Program

FFE, through its Mentoring Program, is committed to providing timely career guidance to its Mentees with the help of experienced industry mentors for a positive and impactful outcome. Currently, 400+ FFE mentees have embarked on the mentoring program, paired to mentors. FFE is thankful to our 8 lawyer mentors and several Engineering professionals from different corporates, FFE’s alumni and individuals for mentoring FFE scholars and helping them achieve their career goals.

Mr. Maulik Sathish Kumar Soni
FFE Alumnus (2001-2005)
Technical Sales Consultant
Honeywell Private Ltd, Australia

“FFE’s Mentoring program is an innovative, well-structured program providing a platform for the Mentor and Mentee to connect. Beginning with the ‘Break the Ice’ session, to a range of other interactive modules, supported with examples, videos and role-plays, the sessions play a significant role in preparing the Mentee for his corporate life ahead. Being an FFE scholar myself and now a Mentor, I understand
the anxiety a Mentee goes through and I feel privileged to be a Mentor. My Mentee is a fast learner and is always eager to learn more. The program has helped him improve his communication skills, time/stress management skills and build his confidence levels. I sincerely appreciate FFE’s efforts to mentor students and for providing me an opportunity to be a part of this program.”

Baldaniya Millan Jentibhai
3rd Year
Mechanical Engineering
Maharaja Sayajirao University, Vadodara

“At a time when all information is available online, learning through someone’s experience is rare and was made possible for me through FFE’s Mentoring program. An excellent learning experience, my mentor covered a range of topics using a practical approach, keeping in mind my needs and making me career ready. Decision-making, stress management and time management were my favourite topics and made me realize its significance for a successful work-life balance. I would like to thank my mentor and FFE for this learning opportunity and polishing my soft skills.”

Mr. Maulik and Baldaniya are one of FFE’s star Mentor-Mentee pairs who completed the Mentoring Program of 7 modules and 13 sessions (24 hours in total).

Skill Development Programs (sponsored by Capgemini and MSDF)

The Campus to Corporate ‘Skills Training Program’, supported by Capgemini, welcomed a new cohort of 1431, 2nd-year FFE students who completed their English training programs through FFE’s vendor partners; 814 students under ‘Hello English’ and 617 scholars through the ‘Kings Learning’ program. The BPharm Cohort of 45 scholars also completed the English Training Program with Kings Learning and is currently pursuing courses provided by Courseera.

1353 2nd year students (supported by Capgemini) started the Aptitude program with 496 students mapped to FFE’s training partner Ethnus, and 857 students with Focus Academy for Career Enhancement (FACE).

Out of the current 3rd year scholars supported by MSDF (1257), 720 students have enrolled in the Coursera program and 558 students have enrolled in the Hi-Touch English program by eAge Tutors. Additionally, 862 students are going through Mock Interviews with Ethnus.

To help FFE engineering scholars improve their employability skills, a series of virtual technical sessions were organized for students from Civil and Computer Science specializations by FFE’s NGO partner- Empower ANANYA. Over 100 FFE scholars participated in each session.

Oracle India Private Limited, through their Employee Volunteering Program, conducted seven technical sessions for 115, 2nd and 3rd year FFE Engineering scholars, with an objective to make them familiar with important and latest advances in technology. Topics covered included:

- Relational Database Management System (RDBMS)
- Procedural Language extension of SQL (PL/SQL)
- Digital Marketing and Advising as a Career
- Java
- Deep Learning
- Android App development
- Augmented Reality-Today & Tomorrow

FFE is thankful to Oracle India Private Limited and its employee volunteers, Mr. Naveen Kumar-Technology Solution Architect, Mr. Krishna Raj-Principal Technology Solution Architect, Ms. Mridhula Shetty-Principal Product Manager, Mr. Prashant Khare-Principal Technology Cloud Architect, Mr. Kiran Veruka-Manager Product Development, Ms. Shweta Kumari-Principal Software Engineer and Mr. Sambha Baratam-Sr. Solution Engineer, SE Hub-Application Development for their time and support and for sharing valuable insights with FFE scholars.

Employee volunteers from KPMG in India also conducted seven, highly engaging sessions for 140, 3rd year Engineering scholars with an objective of soft skill enhancement and personality development, for better career opportunities in the future. The following topics were addressed during the sessions:

- Future of work
- Public speaking
- Personal branding
- Resume building
- Work Etiquette
- Negotiation Skills
- Interview handling & Virtual interviews

FFE would like to thank Mr. Atul Gupta-Partner and Head IT Advisory Services, KPMG in India, Ms. Naini Thakkar-Director-Advisory Management, KPMG in India, Mr. Sahil Nayyar-Senior Associate Director-HR, KPMG in India, Mr. Ritesh Tiwari-Partner-Risk Consulting, KPMG in India, Ms. Mridula Khatra-Executive Director-Risk Consulting Management, KPMG in India, Mr. Kurush Dordi-Director-HR, KPMG in India, Mr. Navneet Prasad-Executive Director-HR, KPMG in India and Ms. Yogja Singh-Associate Director-HR, KPMG in India for their time and offering guidance to FFE scholars.

Skills Training: Scholar Testimonials

Abhiram Sai Veeramalla
3rd Year, BTech
National Institute of Technology Raipur, Chhattisgarh

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Skills Training: Scholar Testimonials

Abhiram Sai Veeramalla
3rd Year, BTech
National Institute of Technology Raipur, Chhattisgarh
"With so many courses available online, both paid and free, it got very confusing for me to pick the best skill development course worth my time and money. This dilemma ended when FFE offer edits students with free online courses, affiliated with top universities like University of California for Python, University of Michigan for courses on Data structures, Algorithms, Data Science etc through Coursera. Many new courses were also introduced by FFE during the lockdown, which helped me utilize my time productively and efficiently. I wish to thank FFE for providing such excellent courses that are a boon for students like me."

Manish Samanta  
2nd Year, BTech  
Electrical and Electronics Engineering  
National Institute of Technology  
Calicut, Kerala

“I am grateful to FFE for providing various online learning platforms, especially the English training program offered by Hello English. The app has many interactive online and offline sessions, which have improved my spoken and written English, along with my grammar.”

Internships for Civil Engineering Students

FFE is very proud to facilitate internships to 23, 3rd Year Civil Engineering students through its partnership with Power ANANYA. Students were selected for on-site civil internship programs offered by Nagarjuna Construction Company (NCC), Afcons Infrastructure Limited, J. Kumar Infrastructure, and Larsen & Toubro India (L&T). While 9 students are undergoing internships with NCC at their Lucknow, Pune & Jabalpur sites, 3 students are interning at L&T’s Aurangabad project office and 11 students will begin their internships in April and May 2021.

Students Testimonial on Internship with Nagarjuna Construction Company (NCC)

Prashant Kumar Mali  
2nd Year, BTech  
Civil Engineering  
Institute of Infrastructure Technology Research and Management, Ahmedabad

"My one-month internship with Nagarjuna Construction Company exposed me to on-site construction work at NCC’s Chandani Chowk Flyover and Maha Metro Rail project sites in Pune, Maharashtra, followed by visits to NCC’s Quality Check Labs and Casting Yard sites. This internship helped me gain practical knowledge on aspects of project design, construction and its maintenance. I whole-heartedly thank NCC, FFE and Empower ANANYA for providing this great learning experience."

IV. CORPORATE WORKSHOPS

a) Workshop on Money Mindedness by ANZ Banking Group Limited

FFE students during the ‘Money Mindedness’ workshop conducted by ANZ Banking Group Limited. 

FFE, in collaboration with Capgemini Technology Solutions India Limited, conducted a session on Financial Planning "Money Mindedness" for 15 FFE’s 4th year engineering scholars, on 13th March 2021. An ANZ Banking Group Limited initiative, Money Mindedness focuses on building money management skills, knowledge and confidence among young adults. FFE, as an accredited MoneyMinded Facilitator, will conduct quarterly workshops, to help its scholars build money management skills during their student years.

Amey Phutane  
4th Year, Electronics Engineering, BTech  
Veeramata Jijabai Technological Institute, Mumbai, Maharashtra

“I heard about Money Mindedness workshop through FFE and registered for it. It was a great learning experience covering range of topics on setting SMART goals and ways to achieve them. My favourite topic was on “How to create your own Assets”. Many thanks to FFE, Capgemini and ANZ Bank for conducting the workshop”

b) Workshop on Project Management by Project Management Institute, Bangalore, in partnership with Oracle Volunteering.

A six-day virtual workshop, supported by Oracle India Private Ltd, on ‘Project Management’, was conducted by The Project Management Institute, Bangalore from 18th-27th March 2021.

Specifically curated for Social Sector professionals, Oracle’s NGO partners including FFE attended this workshop, where the Facilitators shared their vast practical knowledge and experience, and applied techniques in executing projects.

Topics covered as part of the workshop were:

- Project Management for Social Sector
- Project Management Concepts (Planning, Execution, Monitoring &Control)
- Project Management Workbook
- Workshop Case Study

FFE, on behalf of its team members, extends its gratitude to Oracle India Private Limited and PMI, Bangalore for providing this incredible learning opportunity.
2. VOICE OF SCHOLARS

I) CURRENT STUDENT

Kshama Hebbar
2nd Year B Tech, Information Science & Engineering
The National Institute of Engineering, Mysore

Kshama hails from Sagar district-Karnataka. Kshama was keen on professional education, encouraged by her father, who owns a small business and her mother who has studied up to class 10th and is a homemaker. Kshama is an active member of her college volunteering group and NGO. Kaliyuva Mane, Mysore, where she teaches children on a weekly basis. An avid reader, she never let go any opportunity to enhance her knowledge, through reading.

"With the dream of becoming a successful engineer and serving my nation, my focus has always been on getting a good education. Despite financial hardships my parents ensured that my older sister and I were never deprived of education and supported our dreams. My optimistic attitude, hard work and family’s strong emotional support paid off when I achieved high grades in my 10th and 12th standard and a good rank in the Karnataka Common Entrance Test (KCET). This helped me gain admission into the prestigious, The National Institute of Engineering College-Mysore. With a focused approach and without having to worry about my educational expenses, I scored a CGPA of 9.75 in the first year of my BTech program and intend to do even better in my 2nd year.

This smooth progression in my studies would not have been possible without FFE’s financial support that has given wings to my dreams. I wish to support more needy students like me once I graduate and can contribute to FFE’s ‘Circle of Giving’. I wish to thank FFE and my donor’s salary again, for sponsoring my education and for their valuable support.”

II) ALUMNUS

Devyani Pandey
Raipur, Chhattisgarh
FFE Scholar: 2011-2015

FFE Alumnus Devyani Pandey, completed her BTech in 2015 from Bhilai Institute of Technology, Raipur. Currently running her own tuition institute “Adhyaan Classes” for school children in Raipur, Chhattisgarh, she has been donating to FFE since 2018, honouring her pledge of support as part of the “Circle of Giving”.

“FFE has been my back bone and reason for where I am today, for which I cannot thank FFE enough. My father, after a long ailment which kept him bed-ridden for almost 9 years, passed away in 2015 worsening our already poor and unstable financial conditions. My mother’s salary, INR 10,000 per month, was the only source of income with which she barely managed my younger sisters and my school education. After achieving a merit rank in the Engineering entrance exam and securing a seat in Bhilai Institute of Technology, Raipur, it was almost impossible for my mother to pay my college fees. At that point in time, I needed financial help to support my education and luckily, I met FFE Facilitator, Ms. Preeti Shukla, who introduced me to FFE that proved to be the turning point in my life. I am a proud recipient for FFE’s scholarship that I was awarded each year during my 4 years of Engineering. After graduation in 2015, I started working as Assistant Professor - Structural Engineering in Rungta Group of Institutions, and then pursued my M.Tech in 2018 from Shri Shankaracharya Institute of Professional Management and Technology, Raipur. Today, I am successfully running my own institute ‘Adhyaan Classes’ in Raipur, providing tuition to more than 3500 school children with recently added tutorials for civil engineering students. Due to the pandemic, I have recently started with virtual classes with a hope that things will be better soon and students will come back to the classroom. FFE is a blessing that made my graduation possible and opened future paths for me, for which I thank FFE once again.”

Varun AM
Arehalli, Karnataka
FFE Scholar: 2011-2015

FFE Alumnus, Varun completed his BTech from National Institute of Engineering, Mysore in 2015. Working as a Senior Android Developer in VMware-Bangalore, Varun is a Udemy, Udacity and Google certified Android Developer with a number #1, Kannada teaching app named “Learn Kannada SmartApp” which has more than 2,50,000 users in 90+ countries. A finalist in the ‘Indian Innovation Championship’ 2021 organized annually by Chitkara University for promoting Young Entrepreneurs, Varun was one of the selected 21 finalists out of 500 entries submitted across India. After a grand finale round held on 15th...
April 2021, all the finalist were awarded a grant amount to build upon their inventions to be able to reach larger audience.

“Born and brought up in a small village in Arehalli, Karnataka, I had a difficult childhood due to financial insecurity. Despite tough times, my parents never compromised on my education and believed it to be the only way to break the shackles of poverty. With my hard work and parents support, I got a high score in class 10 and 12 and got selected to The National Institute of Engineering, Mysore where I pursued BTech in Electronics and Communication. However, paying the college fee was my parent’s biggest challenge; soon I was introduced to FFE though a classmate who was applying for FFE’s scholarship. Without wasting any time I too applied for it. My physics professor and also FFE Facilitator Dr. Gopalkrishna Urs, helped me complete the application formalities. I still remember the day when I got selected for the scholarship; there were no words to express my joy and gratitude! Education was always my priority, and nothing changed that, I graduated with a CGPA of 9.6/10 and with a job offer in hand, from Alcatel-Lucent (Nokia). My job took me to Melbourne, Australia, which was an experience of a lifetime which I could not even imagine in my childhood. In 2017, I joined OLA, the Cab aggregator giant, later moving on to my current organization VMware, Bangalore as a Senior Android Developer.

FFE has been a major contributor in my growth and enabling me today to support others as well. Actively contributing to “Circle of Giving” since 2011, recently I volunteered with FFE as a Facilitator and a Mentor that gave me immense satisfaction. I am working closely with VMware’s CSR team and also reaching out to all FFE Alumni here, to ensure we all are well connected with FFE and are able to contribute in all possible ways. I request all Alumni to stay in touch with FFE and help them reach out to many more students in every possible way.”

3. VOLUNTEER SPEAK

Mr. Sanjeev Khanijo
FFE Facilitator
Jaipur, Rajasthan

Mr. Sanjeev Khanijo, Ex-Chief Manager with Hindustan Salts Limited (Government of India Enterprise) has been associated with FFE as a Facilitator since 2017. An active social worker based in Jaipur, he started his own NGO Sarthi after his retirement in 2018. Sarthi works for the welfare of underprivileged children and families in Jaipur’s slums.

“I heard about FFE in 2017, through a social media platform and have been associated with FFE since then. Till date I have introduced more than 44 meritorious and eligible scholars to FFE. FFE is doing a wonderful job in supporting the noble cause of providing support to bright minds and making a difference in their lives. I wish them all the best as they expand their reach further.”

4. DONOR FEATURE

Lam Research India Private Limited, Bangalore

Mr. Prajwal Byresh
Software Engineer, Senior 2
Lam Research India Private Ltd.

Lam Research India Pvt. Ltd has been a donor to FFE since 2019, sponsoring the education of 7 Engineering scholars.

As quoted by Mr. Prajwal Byresh, representing Lam Research, “The rising fees and educational expenses snatch away the little chance for the underprivileged to compete with others. It was nice to know about FFE’s Scholarship Program which supports meritorious but underprivileged students to pursue their higher education. We at Lam Research India Pvt. Ltd are delighted to partner with FFE to provide Scholarships to meritorious students who face financial difficulties. The modus operandi and functioning of this program has earned our respect as we, at Lam Research, strongly believe in equity of opportunity which is inevitable to fulfill anyone’s dream. Lam Research has joined hands with FFE in the past 1.5 years and have supported 7 students pursuing their four-year Engineering program. It is amazing to see how FFE Scholarships have transformed the lives of thousands of students over the last few years and we are confident that each year the program will continue to be a success. Timely intervention through scholarships makes a difference in students’ lives, and we are excited to see the transformation it brings. We look forward to a long-term association with FFE and support many more students”.

FFE is thankful to Lam Research Pvt. Ltd for their generosity and support.
FFE India Team – who made the year what it was!

Ram Kolavennu, COO- FFE India Trust along with FFEIT team members from different departments

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