Foundation For Excellence
Nurturing Brilliance ★ Transforming Generations

Impact Assessment of Foundation For Excellence (FFE)

An impact assessment study conducted by Sattva Consulting

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Delivering High Impact.

Acknowledgement

This report is an outcome of an impact assessment study conducted by Sattva Consulting Pvt. Ltd on the 'Scholarship and Beyond Scholarship Programme' of Foundation for Excellence (FFE). The duration of the study was from September 2022 to February 2023.

The Sattva team would like to thank Dr. Sudha Kidao, Mr. Ram Kolavennu, Mrs. Tanvi Rawat, and the entire team at FFE for their wholehearted cooperation and valuable inputs in every step of the way.

We would also like to extend our gratitude to the present scholars, the alumni, and other stakeholders that we engaged with as a part of the study. Their feedback, sharing of experiences and inputs have been immensely valuable for this study.

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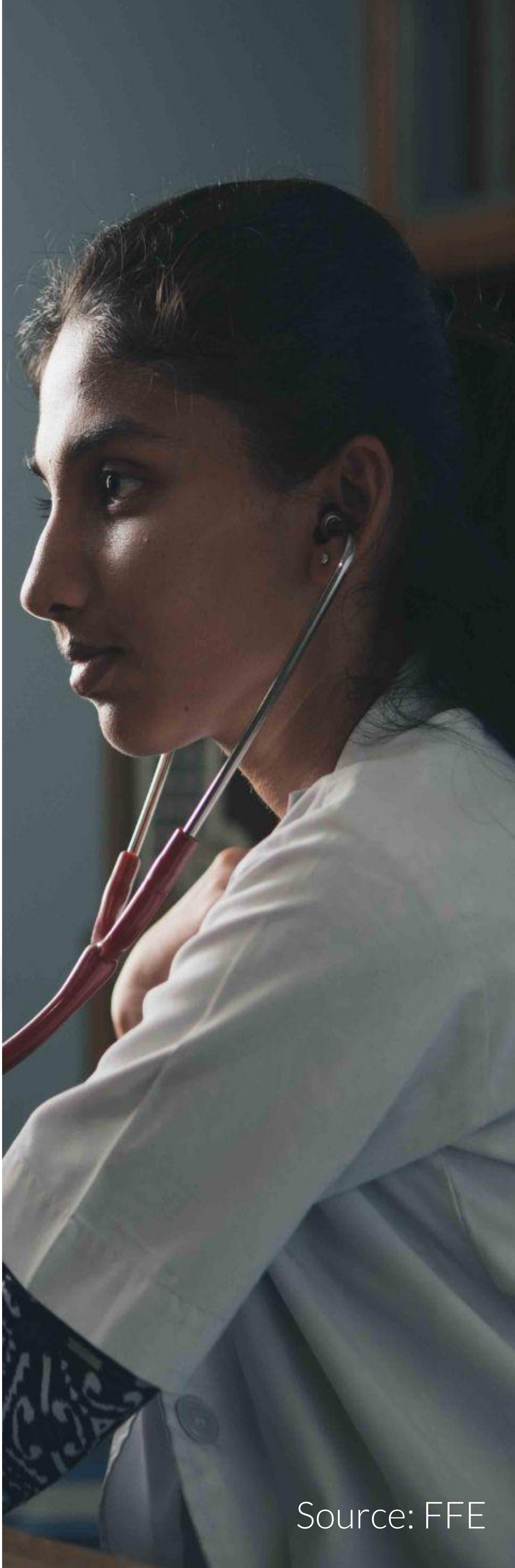
Executive Summary

The executive summary highlights the key insights from the study and provides a brief on Sattva's recommendations to build on the FFE programme.



Source: FFE

The Scholarship Programme

India accounts for a fifth of the world's youth population. However, the Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) of 26.3% for higher education indicates significantly low enrolment and participation in tertiary education. Declining education budget and increasing costs to pursue higher education are some of the barriers that prevent students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds to access and complete their higher education.

According to the India Skills Report 2021, the rate of unemployment amongst Indian youth stands at 54.1%. According to the (WheeBox National Employability Test) , only 1 in 2 of the participating Indian youth were highly employable.

FFE provides financial aid to academically inclined scholars who belong to economically weaker sections of the society and aids them in pursuing higher education in professional courses such as engineering, medicine, pharmacy, or law.

Over time, FFE has evolved its approach based on their observations and interactions with the scholars. The diagram below summarises the holistic and interconnected approach of support provided by FFE to the scholars.

Mobilising deserving and in need candidates through the support of **Facilitators and Virtual Open Houses** FFE.

Qualifying rank in the entrance exam for professional degree courses.
Providing scholarship support to families with gross family income **less than Rs. 3,00,000 per year.**

Shortlisting scholars and giving out an annual scholarship amount based on course of study.

40,000 - 1,00,000 p.a

Scholars can use the amount for either their course fee, other educational expenses or conveyance across the year.

Upskilling followed by and based on an aptitude test at the end of first year.

AMCAT is a test to understand what are the skilling needs of the students and FFE then curates their skill courses from 2nd year onwards on basic and advance skills like language and technical skill building.

Mentoring support provided to the scholars in the third year for 6 months and work with industry experts 1:1 to enhance their soft skills.

Mentors are chosen on the basis of **language, professional stream of work, and years of experience.**

Mentors and mentees choose minimum **4 out of 6** modules which they want to work towards over a period of 12-15 weeks.

Growing confidence among graduated scholars about their placements. FFE continues to follow up on their progress with employment.

Student successfully graduated and employed

Leading to

- Financial stability and security
- Continuing education or supporting education for sibling
- Upward socioeconomic mobility

Continuing engagement with past scholars through **circle of giving** and other volunteering opportunities for advancement of other scholars.

- **Monetary support** or pledge to **Adopt a Scholar or Circle of Giving**
- **Time** as mentors and/or facilitators
- **Influence** as orchestrators or corporate partnerships in hiring, skilling and mentoring

99% of the recent scholars reported that FFE either played a **significant or very significant role in completion of their higher education courses.**

The FFE scholarship accounts for **over half** of the total college tuition for professional courses such as engineering and medicine.

n = 326

FFE's Skill Training Programme

97% of the scholars who participated in the skill training programme reported that they would **recommend the programme to other scholars**

n = 210

81% of the participating scholars reported that there was an **active feedback mechanism**

91% of the participating scholars found the **content useful in practical applicability**

93% of the participating scholars reported that the **support enriched their learning**

FFE's Mentorship Programme

87% of the scholars who participated in the mentorship programme reported that they would **recommend the programme to other scholars**

n = 130

90% of the participating scholars reported that mentors **facilitated engaging and interactive sessions**

82% of the participating scholars reported that the **content was structured and well designed**

87% of the participating scholars reported that the **support enabled them to be better prepared for interviews**

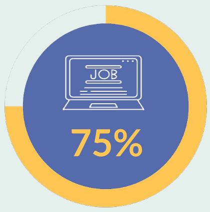
After Graduation

College placements take place towards the end of fourth year for engineering scholars. 81.9% (n = 144) of the engineering graduates reported receiving placement support from their university. 75.4% (n = 118) of these scholars succeeded in securing employment either through campus placement or on their own.

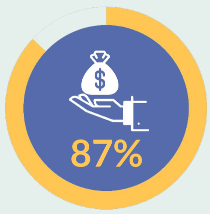
Graduates secured jobs across sectors such as Information Technology, Financial Technology, Consulting, Manufacturing, and Supply Chain Management, amongst others. The hiring companies included TCS, Capgemini, L&T, Cognizant, HCL, Tata, Infosys, and Reliance, amongst others.

The salary package of FEE engineering graduates ranged from ₹1.2 to 22 lakhs per annum (n = 118). FFE engineers secured an average salary of ₹6.5 lakhs from their first corporate job (n = 118), and at present these scholars earn an average salary of ₹10.5 lakhs.

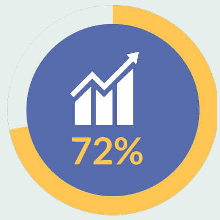
Scholars report being able to contribute to their family's monthly expense, purchase small or large assets for their families, and are able to save/invest their income, creating a financial security net for the scholars and their families.



of the recent FFE graduates who appeared for campus placements secured employment independently or through **campus placements**



of the recent graduates with jobs reported **earning more than the industry standard of ₹3 lakhs from their first job**



of the recent graduates with jobs showed **signs of upward economic mobility**

2.5x **social return generated** on each rupee invested in the FFE scholarship programme.

The current average annual salary of FFE scholars was

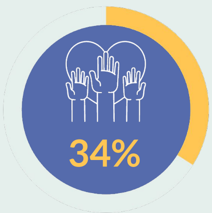
₹10.5 lakhs compared to the average first salary of ₹ 6.5lakhs . Scholars report being able to contribute to their family's monthly expenses, save / invest their income ,and cover personal expenses.

Alumni Engagement

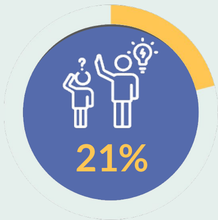
To ensure sustainability of the FFE programme, and instill a sense of 'giving back' amongst scholars, FFE provides multiple volunteering avenues through the Alumni Engagement and The Circle of Giving initiative. On selection of the FFE scholarship, the scholars sign a 'Soft Pledge' wherein they commit to providing financial support towards the education of at least 2 more FFE scholars once they are financial stable.

In addition to monetary donations to FFE, scholars can also volunteer their time as facilitators to aid in the selection of future scholars and/or as mentors to provide 1:1 hand-holding support to newer scholars.

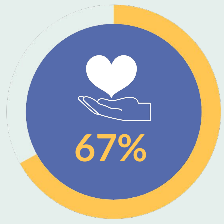
Few FFE alumni also reported helping organise events for FFE, and making introductions and connections within their company, or CSR unit on behalf of FFE.



of FFE Alumni volunteer with FFE as **facilitators**



of FFE Alumni volunteer with FFE as **mentors**



of FFE Alumni volunteer **donate back to FFE**

Few FFE Alumni have also been instrumental in making donor / partner connections. Out of the 17 FGD participants, 3 reported making funder/partnership connections for FFE with their company's CSR wing. FFE's programme team during focused group discussions highlighted that 15 corporate partnerships have been materialised with the support of FFE Alumni.

FFE has played in an important role in my educational journey. In an effort to contribute back to FFE, I introduced them to my company's CSR unit and shared my experience with FFE. The company has sponsored 4 FFE scholars, who were also invited to the company's office to interact with the leadership team, and get a glimpse of corporate life to build a better understanding of the projects, and required skills. As a special invitee board member, I contribute to strategies on how to improve the alumni connect.

\- *Alumni*

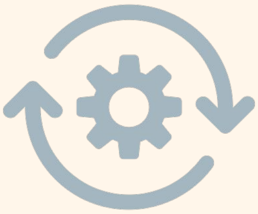
n = 183

Key Recommendations

Recommendations for the programme have been consolidated under 3 areas namely:

- Systems & Processes,
- Operational Strategy, and
- Business Strategy

Recommendation Areas



Systems & Processes

- Conducting sensitisation trainings for intermediaries such as facilitators and mentors to improve awareness, reduce subconscious biases and promote inclusivity.
- Adapting the current MIS software to serve as a collaborative space for mentors, which may result in an expansion of the available mentor network for each mentee.

Operational Strategy

- Deploying a mobilisation strategy that promotes inclusivity.
- Building a contingency fund for students facing personal economic challenges. This could be used in the form of an interest free loan to ensure that scholars are able to cope with the financial pressures and complete their education.
- Conducting primary research with scholars, on a regular basis to establish a real-time feedback loop.

Business Strategy

- Developing a marketing strategy to maximize online and offline reach to donors and funding agencies.
- Researching recent trends on educational giving to boost the funding pipeline.
- Establishing forward and backward linkages to provide better opportunities for female students choosing STEM disciplines.

Chapter 01: Background and Context

This chapter elaborates on the educational giving in India, the access gap towards tertiary education, and how FFE's work strives to bridge this gap.

> *India accounts for a fifth of the world's youth population. However, the GER of 26.3% for higher education indicates significantly low enrolment and participation in tertiary education.*

November 2006, UGC Delhi, "Higher Education in India: Emerging Issues Related to Access, Inclusiveness and Quality", Nehru Memorial Lecture, University of Mumbai, Mumbai.

Source: FFE

Indian Youth account for 27%[1] of the total population (1.4 billion) indicating the potential offering of a large workforce if provided with adequate education, skills, and employment opportunities.

Demographic dividend refers to the potential for economic gains when the proportion of the working age population is greater than that of the non-working age group. The demographic dividend of India is currently in favour of the country's economic growth. However, according to the India Skills Report, India needs to leverage its rich demographic dividend by providing adequate education, skill training, and job opportunities for the youth.

Currently, India accounts for the fifth largest youth population in the world but only 236 million youth i.e. 26.3% are enrolled in higher education. While lack of higher education stands as one challenge, unemployability amongst the youth is another. The India Skills Report (ISR) conducted an assessment for 3 lakh candidates nationwide who appeared for the WNET (Wheebox National Employability Test). According to the Report[2], unemployability rate of Indian youth stands at 54.1%, moreover, the WNET data suggests that only 1 in 2 of the participating Indian youth were highly employable. Furthermore, 88.4% of them expressed that they were still waiting to obtain an internship to kick start their professional career.

As per the employability scores, BTech graduates were the most employable majority with 55.1% as highly employable, scoring over 60% on the WNET.

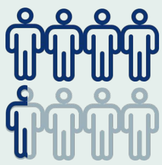
Demand for IT , B Pharma, and Biotech professionals is expected to rise exponentially with employers demanding skills matching with global trends around e-commerce, finance and strategic thinking. The report also suggested the need for increased representation of women in STEM careers.

The market continuously is seeing an increasing demand for 21st century skills such as:

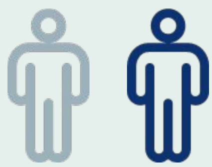
- Critical thinking skills
- English as an advanced language
- Data Analysis
- Growth Hacking/ Strategic thinking
- Data Visualisation
- Product design and ideation

All the data mentioned below is sourced from the references cited in the footnote.

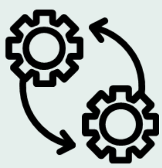
Only
26.3%
of the Indian youth are enrolled in higher education institutions



Unemployability rate amongst the Indian youth is
54.1%
according to the India Skills Report, 2021



only
1 in 2
of the Indian youth were highly employable according to WNET



88.4%
of them expressed that they are still waiting to land an internship to start their professional careers.

As per the employability scores,
BTech graduates were the most employable
majority with 55.1% found highly employable, scoring over 60% on the WNET.

1. MoSPI 2022, India Youth Report 2022, Youth at Glance/
2. July 2021, "Women in higher education: A long way to go", Deccan Herald, accessed on 11th January 2023.

Declining Government expenditure on education and uncertain funding to government colleges continues to impact access to higher education for students in India.

India spends only 3.1% of its GDP on education despite the recommendation of an expenditure of at least 6% from The Kothari Commission (1992). Furthermore, over the last decade, the education budget has recorded a steady decrease of 2%. A few tertiary institutions (catering to specialised higher education) continue to receive a steady 10-11% funding from central government while States see a declining budget allocation over time.[1]

All India average for college density is 30 colleges for per one lakh eligible population (age group 18-23 years)[2]

The NEP aims to increase the Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) in higher education to 50% by 2035. The current average allocation to higher education is 41% of the total budget of the Ministry of Education. Proportionately higher investments are needed to achieve the GER target in the next 13 years.

Graph 1.1: Education GDP budget[3]

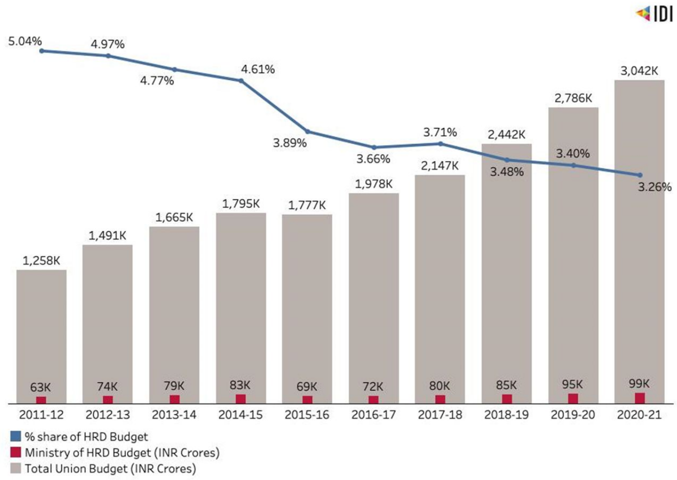


Table 1.1: Centre's funds to states for education (Rs in Crores)

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Funding by M/o Education to States and their Education Institutions	38629	39326	40832	45224	41895
Total Central funding in Education	168322	166558	182140	201755	223054
Percentage (%) difference	**22.9%**	**23.6%**	**22.4%**	**22.4%**	**18.8%**

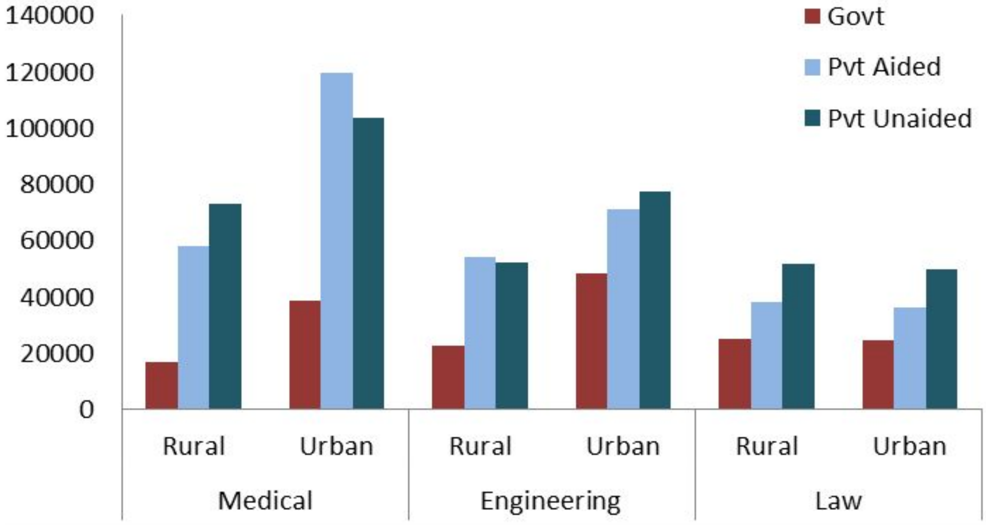
Table 1.2: Total Central funding to top Central educational institutions (Rs in Crores)

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Fund allocated to central educational institutions by D/o Higher Education	17893	22991	18874	22266	22529
Total Central funding in Education	168322	166557	182139	201754	223054
Percentage (%) difference	**10.6%**	**13.8%**	**10.4%**	**11.0%**	**10.1%**

1.December 2022, "IITs, IIMs, NITs got over 10% of Centre's total expenditure on education: Ministry of Education", Indian Express, New Delhi.
2.December 2020, "All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE)", Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, New Delhi.
3.January 2022, "SDG 4: Datashots", India Data Insights (IDI).

Expenses incurred to acquire higher education have increased by 5.83% from 2014 to 2018, creating financial barriers for the economically disadvantaged youth aiming to pursue degrees courses.

Graph 1.2: Course Wise Annual Expenditure 2017-18



Uneven distribution of public and private universities / colleges, rising costs of tuition fees, and other overhead costs such as books, educational supplies, living expenses, amongst others, have increased the cost of higher education. The expenditure on higher education for each student has increased by 5.83%[1], resulting in an increased financial burden on the families. Furthermore, the cost for Professional Higher Education (PHE) is estimated to increase by 10% every year. The NSSO 75th Round on education survey shows that Indian households grapple with various overhead costs in education such as study material (20%), travel (12%) and private coaching (12%)[2].

Course fee only constitutes 50% of the total education expenses incurred by the student. A wage earning household (an average HH with 2 children and one earning member) ends up spending 15% - 40% of their monthly income towards overall higher education expenses including tuition and other expenses. For average urban wage workers, income from 12 - 20 wage days in a month is required to cover the educational expenses of 2 children. Due to increasing costs, lack of credible private universities, and quality education; more than 4.2 lakh (33%) seats in engineering colleges across India remained vacant as of 2021.[4]

An average Indian household spends ₹18,000-25,000 annually on tertiary education for 1 child for a household.[1]

Table 1.3: Division of rural and urban population across education levels.[3]

Level of Education	Rural	Urban
Upper Primary	3,953	15,337
Secondary	5,856	17,518
Higher Secondary	9,148	23,832
Diploma/certificate below graduate	8,545	22,281
Diploma/certificate graduate	12,415	19,979
Graduate	11,845	18,485
Post Graduate and above	15,827	20,443

1. November 2020, Chandrasekhar CP and Ghosh J, "An official survey shows that education spending has gone up sharply in India, forming a huge financial burden on households", Business Line, The Hindu.
2. June 2018, "Status of School Education in India", 75th Round, NSSO.
3. November 2019, Gupta P, " How much it takes to educate people in India; Cost of education revealed in four charts", Financial Express, accessed on 11th January 2023.
4. PTI, December 2022, "Over 4.21 lakh seats were vacant in engineering colleges across country in 2021-22: MoE", Economic Times.

In 2021-22, the Government spent only 17.7% of the ₹3112.65 crores allocated scholarship budget towards Merit-cum-Means scholarship schemes reaching 3.72 lakh students[1]

Only 1% of the total enrolled undergraduate and postgraduate students receive financial aid at an average of ~₹14,000 annually per student, which covers approximately 3.5% of average tuition fee for professional courses in India. As per All India Survey for Higher Education (AISHE 2019), 3.74 crore students were enrolled in 993 universities and 39,931 affiliated colleges. Demand for professional higher education (PHE) continues to grow in tandem with economic growth in India with a 70 times jump in enrolment from 1950s to 2019.

Despite lower penetration of merit-cum-means scholarship for higher education, the demand for professional courses continues to rise (2021).[2] Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) for higher education has seen an exponential jump from 0.4% in 1950-51 to 26.3% in 2018-19 (MHRD, 2019; UGC, 2015).

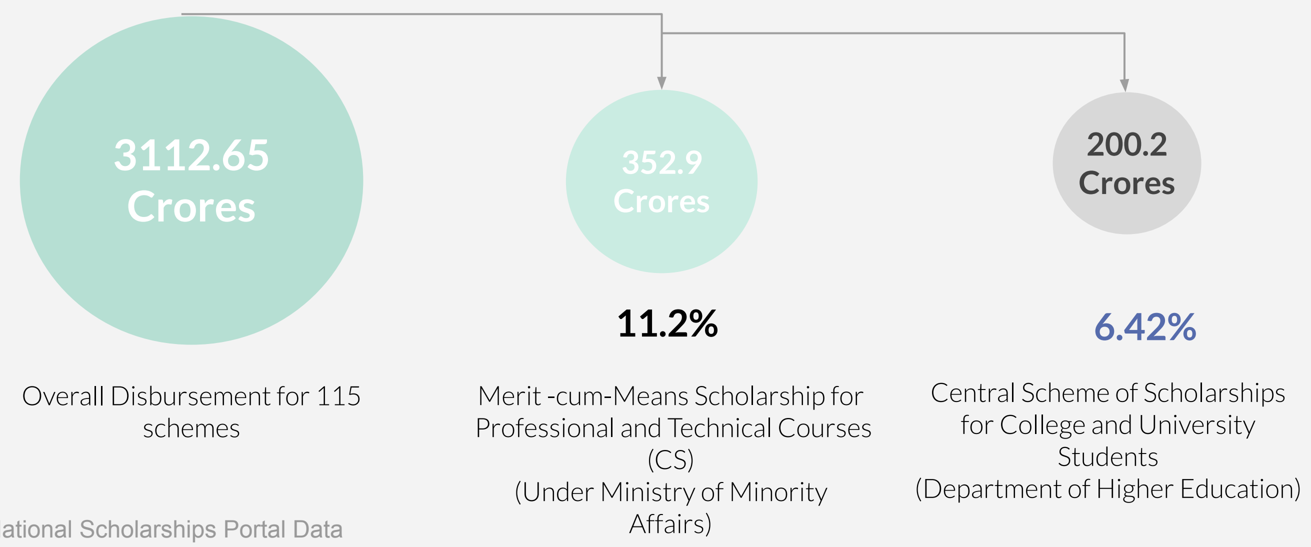
Increase in private educational institutions: In 2018-19, share of private institutions in the country is upto 90% for UG level engineering with private medical colleges seeing a jump of 540% in the last 30 years (1990-2020).

Increase in PHE enrolments : From 2011 to 2019, enrolment for engineering courses went from 29 lakhs to 40 lakhs.

Table 1.4: Merit-cum-Means scholarships disbursement for 2021[3]

Merit-cum-Means Scholarship Scheme	Disbursement for 2021 (in Cr)	Number of students covered
Central Sector Scheme 'National Means cum-Merit Scholarship Scheme	25.64	69,486
Postgraduate Scholarships for Professional courses to SC, ST Students:	1.64	225
Post Graduate Scholarship for M.E/M.Tech/M.Pharma to GATE/GPAT Qualified Students	12.4	1613

Figure 1.1: Higher education and professional education received less than 20% of the disbursed funds in 2021

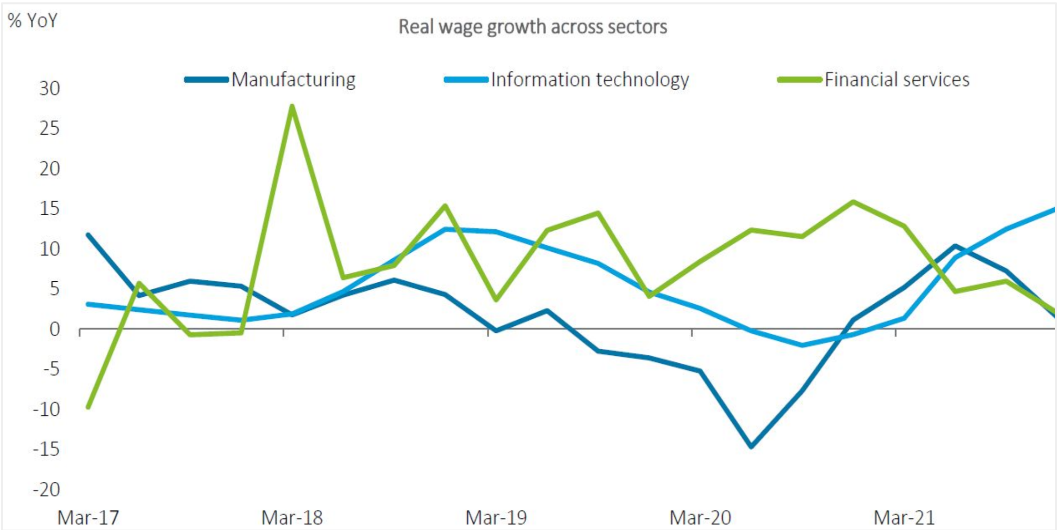


National Scholarships Portal Data

1. December 2022, National Scholarship Portal, Dashboard accessed on 23rd December, 2022.
2. Choudhury PK and Kumar A,"Changing Landscape of Professional Higher Education in India: What Do We Know and What Do Recent Data Tell Us?," India Studies in Business and Economics, in: Sunil Mani & Chidambaran G. Iyer (ed.), India's Economy and Society, chapter 0, pages 287-324, Springer.
3. Ministry of Education, Department of Higher Education, *Annual Report 2020-2021*, New Delhi.

Engineering, Medicine, Management, and Law are the most enrolled professional courses in India as they assume to provide relatively higher economic stability for the disadvantaged families.

Graph 1.3: Real wages have been declining in the *manufacturing and financial services sectors but rising in the IT services sector[3]



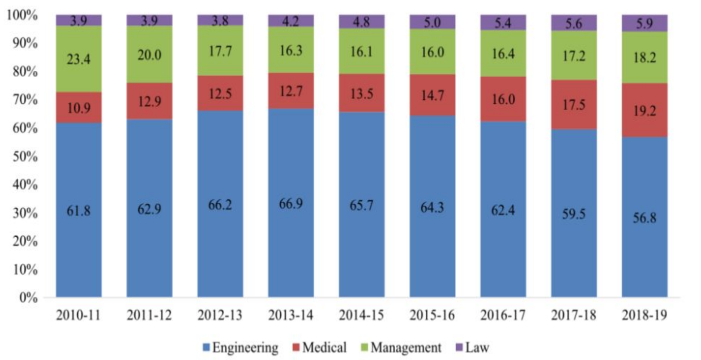
Source: Centre of monitoring economy.
* There is a steep dip in the manufacturing sector in 2020, due to the lockdown restrictions of the Covid -19 pandemic

In the last decade, medical enrolments recorded an increase from 2.4% to 4.2%, a two time jump in the time period and engineering continued to hold 56.9% overall enrolments in PHE (Choudhury & Kumar 2021). A landscape study of India's job market by Deloitte indicates that while demand for manufacturing and finance professionals has decreased, demand for IT professionals continues to increase. [1]

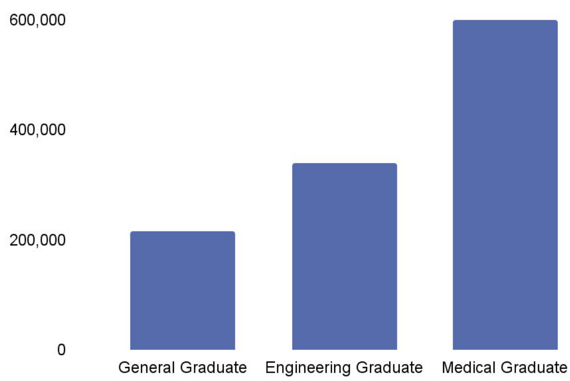
Students and families continue to prefer professional degrees primarily due to higher ROI for a majority of Indian families who aspire an upward economic mobility. In 2021-22, India recorded a 300% increase in demand for engineering professionals in project based to process based roles, indicating a shift in the professional job market. [4]

Compared to a general (non-professional) degree graduate, the return on Investment is 3 to 4 times higher for engineering graduates and 4-5 times for medical graduates.

Graph 1.4: Enrolment numbers for professional courses from 2011-2019 (Choudhry & Kumar 2021)[4]



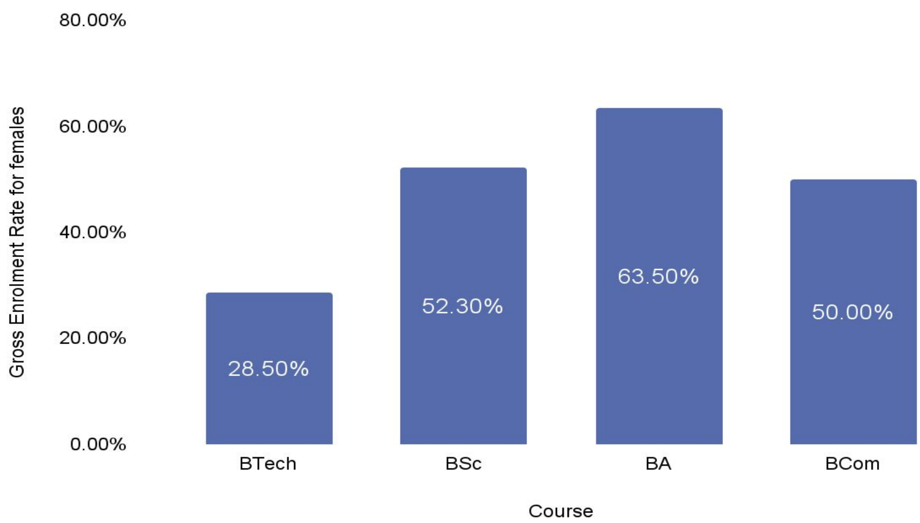
Graph 1.5: Professional degrees also have some of the highest ROIs for fresh graduates[2]



1. March 2022, "An analysis of India's labour market", Deloitte.
2. April 2022, Devina Sengupta, " Entry-level salaries at IT companies set to rise amid high attrition", Live Mint, accessed on 11th January, 2023.
3. April 2018, "In 2018, specialist doctors, techies top pay charts; Bengaluru, Pune best among cities", TNN, Times of India, accessed on 11th January, 2023.
4. Choudhury PK and Kumar A,"Changing Landscape of Professional Higher Education in India: What Do We Know and What Do Recent Data Tell Us?," India Studies in Business and Economics, in: Sunil Mani & Chidambaran G. Iyer (ed.), India's Economy and Society, chapter 0, pages 287-324, Springer

A meta analysis of higher education trends in India concludes that there remains inequitable access to PHE with visible disparities between gender, regions, and socio-economic status.

Graph 1.6: General (non-professional) degrees see a higher female enrolment rate (showing comparison with B.Tech) (AISHE 2019)



Of the total students enrolled in PHE, only 36.2% were reported to be females in 2007–08. This share declined to 35% in 2017–18 and further to 29.2% in 2019-20.

As per AISHE (2019), the GER for females stood at 27.3% as compared to 26.9% for males. However, GER for females in BE or BTech degrees remained significantly lower at 28.5% while males enrolment was 71.5%. The share of female students is lowest for national level institutions at 24.7%, followed by 33.4% in government deemed universities and 34.7% for state private universities.[1] Various reports indicate that female participation and enrollment in STEM courses (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) continues to be low. Historically, even the IITs do not witness more 20% enrollments from females.[2]

GER in education continues to be consistently lower for students from rural regions at 24% in comparison with urban at 44% (AISHE 2019).[4]

According to the AISHE 2019 report, 60% colleges are based in rural regions of the country. Despite a huge proportion of institutions situated in rural areas, the GER of students from rural areas consistently remains lower than that of urban areas due to cost and transport inaccessibility.

A study by CRY (Child Rights in You)[3] in 4 states of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, and Haryana revealed the following 3 key reasons for girls dropping out of education:

66% reported early marriage

65% reported domestic labour

62% reported cost of education

1. July 2021, "Women in higher education: A long way to go", Deccan Herald, accessed on 11th January 2023.
2. June 2021, Gohain, PM, " 18% more women in higher education in 5 years", Times of India, accessed on 11th January 2023.
3. September 2019, Usha R, " Why girls drop out of higher education", The Hindu Business Line, accessed on 11th January 2023.
4. Jun 2021, Das P, "AISHE 2019-20: Rural India has 60% of our colleges, but how robust is the primary education there?", Edex Live, accessed on 11th January 2023.

Evidence based on students' experience in higher education[1] indicated that success in completing the degree is closely linked to the amount of financial aid received by a student.

Student success in higher education depends on three key factors: a. Persistence (i.e., continued enrollment in the institution), b. Progression (i.e., successful accrual of credit hours), and c. Timely graduation.

Financial aids and institutional scholarships emerged as the strongest predictor of student persistence, progression, and timely graduation.

The extent need-cum merit based support in addition to family income has proved to have the most positive effects on students' success in completion of the course.

The following Persistence - Progression - Success framework systematically maps a scholar's journey:

Figure 1.2: Students' journey from education to financial security

1. Persistence

The household ensures continued enrolment in school because of which scholars are able to complete higher secondary education.

They incur expenses such as exam application fee, entrance preparation fee, tuition fee, hostel/mess fee, travel, study material expenses, etc.

2. Progression

With recurring expenses, student and family continue to invest time and money towards upskilling and excelling in academics and co-curricular activities.

They incur overhead expenses for external courses such as technical, soft skills, interview or placement training, unpaid internships etc.

3. Success

Consistent and timely funding at every stage allows graduates to exercise their full potential and become job-ready in the market, leading to:

- Graduates successfully and is employed
- Gains financial stability and security
- Continues education or supports education for sibling
- Achieves upward socioeconomic mobility
- Earns intergenerational learning growth

1. Ganem NM & Manasse M, 2011, " The Relationship between Scholarships and Student Success: An Art and Design Case Study", Hindawi Publishing Corporation, Education Research International, Volume 2011, Article ID 743120, 8 pages

According to OECD's India Private Giving Report (2019)[1] despite education receiving maximum CSR and Philanthropy funds, contribution towards higher education accounts for only 0.5% (~244 crores)

The India Philanthropy Report 2022[2] (by Bain and Dasra) conducted a trend analysis of CSR funding in education to conclude that over the last 3 years, the education sector saw a decrease of 18% in funding in light of increased funding towards COVID-19 relief work.

While within the education sector, education policy and administration, vocational training and advanced technical training have been getting adequate support by CSR and domestic foundations; higher education has not received the required support. Scholarships from charitable and other organisations cover only 0.1% of eligible students for merit-cum-means scholarships in India (NSO 2019).

Moreover, the government spending on higher education sector is only around 1.5% of the GDP. Therefore, at an individual level, a deserving candidates in need of private funding to manage educational expenses is unable to receive sufficient funding through any source.[3]

With existing barriers in higher education, contribution from the private/non governmental players like NGO, foundations, CSR giving, etc. either towards higher education programme or through scholarships support is pivotal to bridge the access gap ensure completion of tertiary education.

According to OECD's India Private Giving Report (2019), the education sector received ~ ₹5046 crores through CSR, domestic and international philanthropy.

Of this, only 0.5% (₹244 crores) was granted towards higher education of students.

~50% of CSR funding continues to be directed towards the education sector in India.

Scholarships from charitable and other organisations cover only 0.1% of eligible students for merit-cum-means scholarships in India (NSO 2019).

1. OECD (2019), " India's Private Giving: Unpacking Domestic Philanthropy and Corporate Social Responsibility Development Centre, Paris.
2. India Philanthropy Report, 2022, Bain & Company.
3. Sundar P, June 2017, "Philanthropy for Higher Education", Live Mint.

Foundation For Excellence, an NGO founded in 1994, aims to bridge the access gap to tertiary education for young and bright scholars across the country

LIFE's Mission: To help **academically bright** but **underprivileged** students in India complete their higher education through their **Scholarship Programme**

Birthing an idea : FFE's origin story

The Foundation For Excellence was founded in 1994. After selling his first company, Dr. Prabhu Goel and his wife Mrs. Poonam Goel decided to use part of the proceeds to build a philanthropic foundation to provide scholarships to bright students with financial constraints to support them complete college degrees.

In 1994, FFE US was founded: FFE started reaching out to students through their informal network of Indian professionals in the US who in turn reached out to friends and family in India to further the FFE vision. The first beneficiary in 1994 is still a special one for FFE. A tailor's daughter in Chennai had wanted to become a doctor despite her father's wish that she trained as a tailor.

In 2003, FFE India Trust was established, a momentum was created to translate this to a mission of nurturing brilliance and transforming generations. With the support of committed and cohesive network of over 500 volunteers along with systems & processes being established FFE was able to support many deserving students.

With consistent effort of the Board, Founding members, along with the support of its donors; FFE continued to gather momentum and scale. In the initial phases, potential beneficiaries were reached out by word of mouth and goodwill of donors, facilitators, and well-wishers. In the last 28 years, 24,816 students have been assisted with 71,342 scholarships. The beneficiaries include 17,498 male scholars & 7318 female scholars. A total amount of INR 192 crores has been awarded to aid the student's education.

Over the last 28 years, the Foundation has reached to more than 28000 students, creating an even larger pool of alumni donors and partnerships in the Indian education sector.

Figure 1.3: Scaling Up, FFE's Ecosystem Impact in Numbers (upto FY 20-21)

28000+
Students

70+
Corporates

1800+
Individual Donors

700+
Volunteers

18
Foundations/ Trusts

FFE orchestrates impact with a sustainable multi-stakeholder ecosystem that is invested in the mission and vision of the organisation

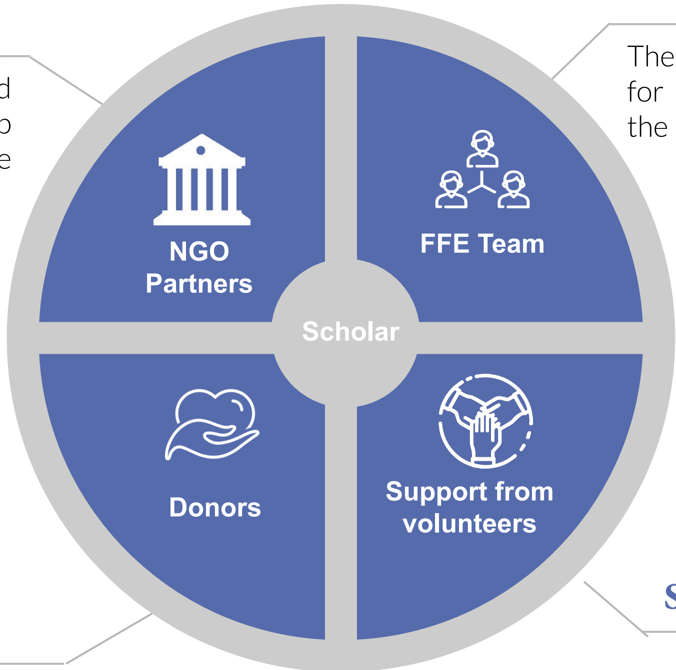
FFE brings all stakeholders to synchronously work to ensure scholars are able to actualise their potential and change the very narrative of the country.

Backward Linkages

NGO partners and academic institutions help to scout and mobilise potential scholars

Programme Execution

The FFE team is responsible for designing and executing the programme



Fund the Programme

Philanthropists and donors drive major funding and capacity needs for catalysing the envisaged impact.

Support by Volunteers

Facilitators support in the selection process while mentors provide career guidance to the scholars.

Scholars' Journey

1. Student applies for scholarship
2. FFE verifies the student's eligibility
3. If selected ,FFE grants scholarship
4. Skill training support is offered to scholars
5. Mentorship support is provided (optional)
6. Scholar graduates as a Professional
7. Alumnus chooses to contribute to the Circle of Giving

Chapter 02: Methodology and Approach

This chapter explains the methodology adopted for the impact assessment.

“*Sattva incorporated a descriptive cross-sectional study design using quantitative and qualitative means of data collection. Sattva also estimated the Social Return on Investment (SROI) for FFE's programme.*”

About the Impact Evaluation Study: *Capturing over 20 years of Impact*

In order to assess its impact on the students and families, Sattva conducted a retrospective impact evaluation to assess:

Impact on the scholars' lives: How the scholarship has enabled employability, financial independence and improved living standards of the scholars and their families.

Impact of the skilling & mentoring support programmes: How the addition of skilling and mentoring support enhanced initial placement for recent graduates.

Impact of the ever growing alumni engagement programme: How FFE has engaged alumni across various initiatives and leveraged their skills and network.

Social return on investment of FFE: What is the social returns of all of FFE's effort in monetary terms to better plan for further scale up.

The study incorporated a descriptive cross-sectional design from a retrospective lens where data was collected from primary and secondary stakeholders to provide a snapshot of the outcome and the characteristics associated with it, at a specific point in time:

- Whether the intervention worked as expected to achieve its objectives, and
- What are the strengths and challenges of the intervention and the learnings/recommendations for the programme.

The in-depth study leveraged Sattva's extensive experience of more than 10 years in Impact Assessments, an in-built knowledge repository, and tech enabled data collection solutions. The study incorporated a mixed-method approach which helped gather valuable impact related insights from a 360-degree perspective across stakeholders. The approach was also fundamental in providing recommendations towards strengthening and scaling the FFE model in the long term.

Over the course of 6 months from September 2022 to February 2023, with the support of the FFE team, Sattva strived to assimilate perspectives across all stakeholders involved in the Scholarship and Beyond Scholarship initiatives of FFE.

Study Design

August - October 2022

- Review FFE programme documents
- Define methodology, financial indicators and data collection tools
- Research on secondary ecosystem level data for the SROI calculation

Data Collection

November - December 2022

- Gather quantitative data from primary stakeholders
- Gather qualitative data from all stakeholders
- Conduct data monitoring
- Conduct data cleaning
- Conduct data-audits

Analysis and Reporting

December - January 2023

- Conduct analysis for primary data (both quantitative and qualitative)
- Triangulate insights using secondary data
- Incorporate insights on SROI
- Synthesize insights into a report

Key Research Questions

Hypothesis 1: The financial scholarship program contributes towards completion of professional degrees of students from underprivileged backgrounds, setting better chances for financial stability and security and improved standard of living.

Hypothesis 2: The mentoring and skilling components of the program result in improving employability skills of the students resulting in ease of job placement and therefore, income generation.

Sattva used the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) framework for the evaluation. The relevant principles were used to frame the key areas of enquiry for the study.

DAC Principle	Research Questions	Indicators
Relevance & Coherence	Is FFE able to reach the last mile ? Is the FFE Scholarship relevant to the students' needs?	• % of students from BPL households • % of students with uneducated / primary school educated parents (at least one) • % of first generation graduates • % of the course fee covered by FFE Scholarship on average • % of scholars requiring to take a loan
Effectiveness	Are the mobilization efforts ensuring inclusion in the reach? Does different components of the programme design and processes match the needs of the scholars?	• Demography of the students (Gender/ Rural /Urban) • % of students who report that they are able to understand the course content covered in skill training and mentorship • % of students paired with the mentor with the desired expertise • % of students who report being able to meet x% of their educational expenses
Impact	Persistence (Short term): How has financial aid enabled scholars to pursue their professional courses?	• % of scholars who have completed their undergraduate courses • % of scholars with grades 75% or above / 7 CGPA
	Progression (Medium term): How has the mentorship and skilling programmes as recent additions added value towards improved students job search activities and consequent placements?	• % of scholars who agree / strongly agree that the beyond scholarship support aided them with their job search
	Socioeconomic mobility (Long term): How has past and current scholars' standard of living changed?	• % of scholars who secured employment in the formal sector • % of scholars who report an increase in their family income • % of scholars who are able to purchase assets • % of scholars who are able to build savings

Sampling Approach

As part of the study, stakeholder mapping was conducted wherein scholars were identified as the primary stakeholder for the study, from whom data was collected through quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews. Parents of these scholars were identified as secondary stakeholders, with whom in-depth interviews were conducted.

To develop a deep understanding of the programme, and consolidate perspectives of all the involved stakeholders, qualitative interviews were conducted with the FFE founder, Board Members, Programme Team, Mentors, Facilitators, and Donors in the form of in-depth interviews and focus group discussions.

Sattva used the **simple random sampling** technique to sample the population and ensure adequate representation. The minimum required sample was 379 scholars (past and current) at a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error. Since we reached out to scholars using email and WhatsApp, we received a greater response than required. **The total study sample used for quantitative analysis was 509 scholars.**

Stakeholders	Quantitative	Qualitative	
		Focused Group Discussions	In-Depth Interviews *
Current Scholars / Scholars beyond 2017	326	31	8
Past Scholars / Scholars prior to 2017	183	13	8
Parents of current scholars	-	-	4
Facilitators	-	9	1
Mentors	-	6	4
FFE Founder	-	-	1
Donors	-	-	8
Board Members	-	-	3
FFE Programme Team	-	9	-

*Qualitative interact is limited given the nature of of interview conducted is detailed and in depth

An end-to-end, thorough process of evaluation was followed to gather insights and synthesize learnings from all perspectives

Data collection approach:

Virtual, self-paced data collection: The evaluation deployed a self-reporting, self-paced survey for selected primary beneficiaries using Zoho Surveys. Respondents were expected to fill the forms within a stipulated timeline.

High Frequency Checks: Data was monitored at the backend. Correction of data gaps was ensured with a focus on checking for user friendly interpretation and use of the surveys.

Data cleaning and adjusting for outliers: Data was scanned for outliers and +ve and -ve outliers were identified and adjusted wherever applicable. A thorough data cleaning exercise was followed to ensure standardisation, accuracy and logic in primary data.

Benchmarking Values: A thorough benchmarking exercise was conducted to triangulate and compare data points for the SROI exercise. This ensured cross-checking data reported by primary respondents with FFE's and secondary data sources.

Analysis approach:

The observations, insights and analysis are divided in 2 parts in order to capture the short term and long term impact created by FFE. Since the skill training and mentoring support was introduced only from 2017, the impact pathway and indicators differ for those who graduated before 2017 versus those after. Given the span of the assessment, indicators were limited to short and long term outcomes.

Short term impact indicators included:

- Perceived impact of skilling and mentoring programmes for students
- Perceived improvement in skills and clarity towards one's professional path for students
- Impact on placement timelines for recent graduates
- Immediate impact on household income for recent graduates

Long term impact indicators included:

- Impact on the scholar's household socio-economic status (including ownership of capital and white assets, pursuing further education)
- Impact on access to education for the next generation in the household
- Impact of alumni engagement on Circle of Giving, Adopt a Scholar, Volunteering and Mentoring programme support

Informed Consent

All respondents were given appropriate information about the purpose, methods, and intended use of the research, what their participation in the research entails, and what risks and benefits, if any, are involved. The assessment was undertaken only after written consent, free from coercion or undue pressure, from the respondents.

Voluntary Participation

The interview sessions were conducted in an environment that ensured the privacy of the respondents as per their convenience and comfort. They were made aware of their right to refuse participation whenever and for whatever reason they wish, without the fear of penalization or victimisation. Consent was taken regarding the recording and usage of all information acquired - written, verbal, photographic.

Confidentiality

The identity of research participants was and will always be protected through anonymity or confidentiality, unless research participants explicitly agree to, or request the publication of their personal information.

An SROI component was explored to measure the social and financial return on investment in the FFE programme

Social Returns on Investment (SROI) is a tool used to capture and quantify the financial value of the impact created by the programme on its stakeholders. SROI denotes an approximate fiscal value to the return expected on every rupee invested in social programmes.

$$\text{SROI Ratio} = \left(\frac{\text{Outcomes - Attribution - Deadweight - Drop Off}}{\text{Input}} \right)$$

The timeframe of respondents considered are between 2017 to 2021. (Proportionate values are taken for students enrolled from 2013 in the course as its a 4 year engagement) The duration for outcome calculation is 3 years from graduation.

Outcomes refer to the change resulting from the project activities (planned and unplanned). In this study, outcomes are:

- Income earned by the scholars
- Reduced financial burden on family

Attribution accounts for an average percentage of outcome that was caused due to similar initiatives. In this study, attributes are:

- Estimated % of students availing scholarship provided by other sources

Deadweight is an estimation of the value that would have been created even in the absence of the programme. In this study, the deadweight is:

- Estimated percentage of professional growth without the support of FFE

Drop Off: Accounts for the diminishing value to the impact created over a period of time

- Inflation rate in the country

Inputs are direct and indirect costs needed to execute the programme. In this study, input refers to:

- All costs borne by FFE to run the scholarship and beyond scholarship programme

Note: This section has been further detailed ahead.

The scope of the SROI calculation includes:

Scholarships

Skill training

Mentorship

Key Limitations and Challenges

The study had some limitations which are detailed out below:

Lower response rate led to low achievement of the ideal sample. This happened perhaps due to low mobilisation of primary beneficiaries and absence of enumerators to nudge them to answer the survey in time.

In order to address lower response rate, the study deployed the following mitigation strategies:

- **Email Reminders:** Shared routine reminders over email to participate in the survey.
- **Phone call nudges**: Hired data collectors and reached out to 144 scholars on phone, to nudge them participate in the study.
- **WhatsApp nudges**: Reached out to ~1600 scholars and alumni on WhatsApp to request their participation in the study every 2 days to increase traction and attention towards the survey links.

Recall bias crept in as the lookback period for the participants was as long as from 1994. This was a result of differences in the accuracy or completeness of the recollections retrieved by study participants regarding events or experiences from the past.

Response bias might have creeped in during the data collection when respondents self-report their answers on a survey. The inaccuracy, or bias, may be deliberate or unconscious on the part of the respondent. It is the result of a respondent being unduly influenced to respond a certain way, or a respondent's unwillingness to answer the questions honestly.

Social desirability and conformity bias in regard to openly expressing non-conformity when asked to self-report their behaviour and opinions. In such cases, respondents tend to provide a socially acceptable response, sometimes subconsciously, over their true feelings.

Chapter 03: Insights from the Assessment

This chapter relays comprehensive insights generated from the assessment across the key stakeholders involved in the programme, directly and indirectly.

> *“For every ₹1 invested in the FFE programme, a social value of ₹2.56 is generated in over 3 years from course completion.*
>
> *Nearly all scholars believe that FFE played a crucial role in supporting them complete their education.”*

Recent Scholars

Source: FFE

About the Recent Scholars who are currently studying or have recently graduated between 2017-2021

326
Recent Scholars

55.8%
respondents are currently studying

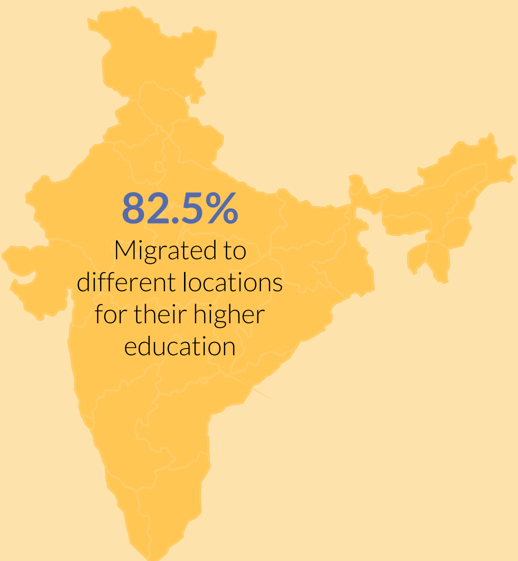
44.2%
graduated between 2017-2022

Gender Disaggregation

14.1%
female respondents

85.6%
male respondents

0.3%
gender non-conforming respondents



Course Disaggregation

76.7%
BTech respondents

21.2%
MBBS respondents

0.3%
B Pharma respondents

1.8%
respondents from other courses

A strong network of facilitators helps FFE identify the right set of candidates for the scholarship and supports their journey thereon.

Facilitators are retired experienced professionals or FFE Alumni who act as a liaison for the scholar and their families before, during and after the scholarship programme. Since inception, FFE has engaged 700+ facilitators and continues to expand their facilitator network using a referral system as highlighted through focused group discussions with the FFE team. **Facilitators play a crucial role in the selection of the scholars, and are able to build empathetic relationships with them.**

Following are the major areas in which facilitators support the execution of the programme:

Programme Outreach: Reach out to potential colleges and candidates to spread awareness about FFE and mobilise students to apply for the scholarship. 17.8% of the scholars reported learning of FFE through facilitators.

Support with Applications: Resolve student queries on the application procedure and provide ad hoc support.

Candidate Verification: Conduct online or in-person verification of the candidate to assess the genuineness or need of the applicant in accordance with the eligibility criteria. Each facilitator is allocated 10-20 applicants for screening during the selection cycle as mentioned during an FGD with facilitators.

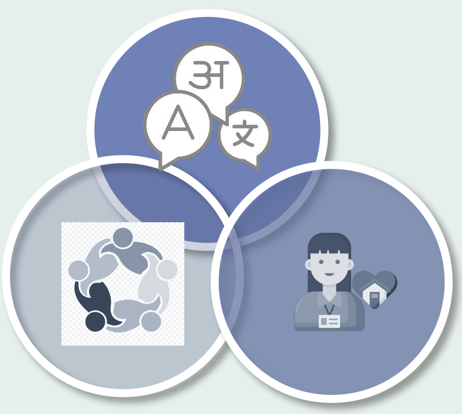
Conducting Quarterly Check Ins: Routinely check in with the allocated scholars on their academic progress, challenges, and areas where support is required.

Scholarship Renewal Support: Provide administrative support to their allocated scholars for their yearly application to renew their scholarship

> *“As part of my role as a facilitator, I have visited a few schools in Rajasthan, and informed them about the FFE scholarship. I ensured that FFE posters were displayed in schools so that the students, especially girls were aware of the scholarship opportunity available for them, and inspire them to continue with their education.”*

Facilitators are **based in the communities** and can ensure mobilisation in an **empathetic manner and build trusting relationships**.

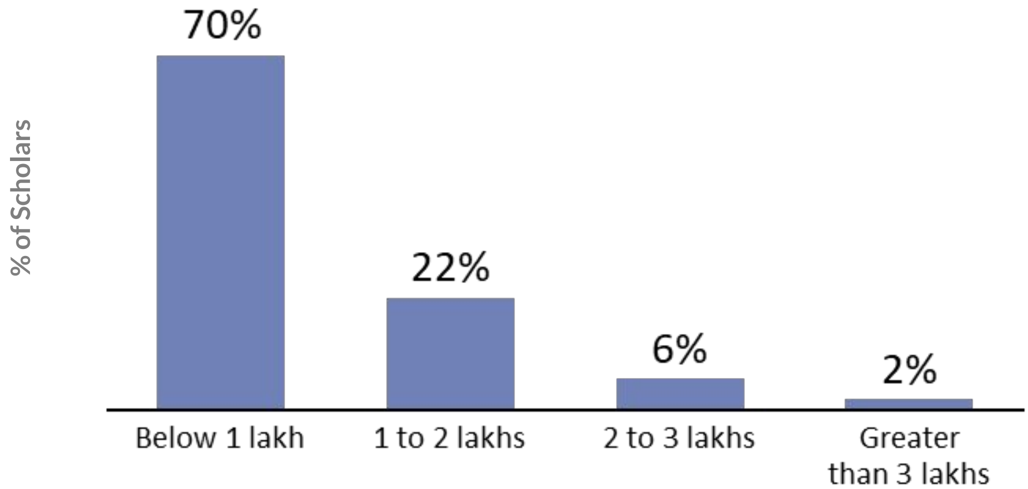
Facilitators play a limited role post selection of the scholars, hence only a **small proportion of scholars continue to engage with them** as mentioned in focused group discussion with the facilitators.



Majority of the facilitators are **trilingual which enables them to reach out to a range of communities** during the outreach period.

The scholarship supported the most deserving candidates as 70% of the scholars fell under the EWS category, and 28% came from households with an annual income between ₹1 to 3 lakhs.

Graph 3.1: Scholars household annual income at the time of scholarship
(n = 326)



FFE scholars belonged to households where the primary occupation was either agriculture, daily wage labour, or small businesses.

A typical FFE scholar belongs to a family with **an income per capita of ₹49/day or $0.6/day.**

95.4% (n = 326) of FFE scholars came from families with only 1 earning member to 3 dependent members, which worsened the financial stresses and burden experienced by them. A typical FFE scholar belonged to a family with a daily income per capita of ₹49/day or $0.6/day, which is below the updated poverty line of $2.15/day as defined by the world bank.

70% (n = 326) of scholars' parents had completed some level of schooling. As revealed during qualitative interviews, parents deeply understood the crucial role played by education in the betterment of the family.

Owing to parents' who understand the value of education, and the overall strides made in access to primary and secondary education, **1 in 3 FFE scholars studied at a private-English medium school**.

46.9% (n = 326) of FFE scholars studied at a private school, while the other 42% (n = 326) studied at government schools. 68.4% (n = 326) of FFE scholars studied at an English-medium, and 14.5% (n = 326) studied at a Semi-English medium school.

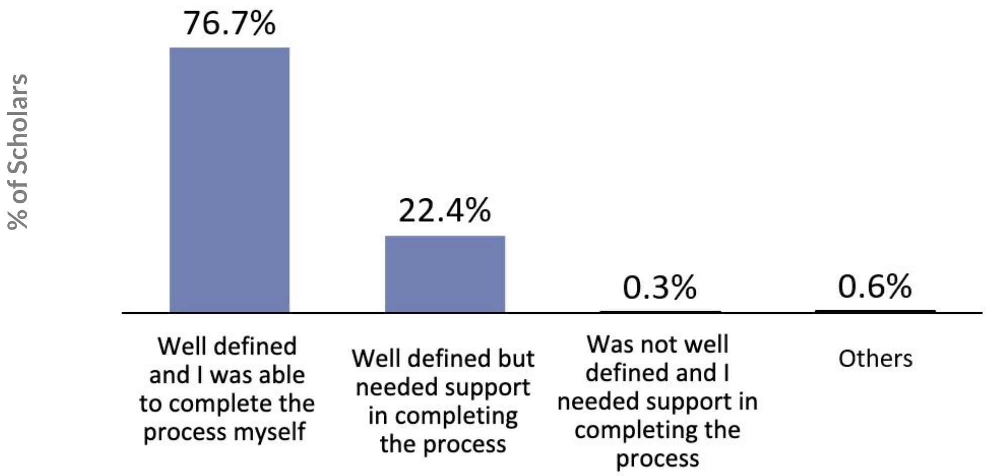
As highlighted during qualitative interviews with the FFE programme team, in order to reach the most disadvantaged student, FFE selected scholars who were the first ones in their family to pursue higher education. Within the study sample, 73.6% of FFE scholars reported being the first-generation graduates in their family.

73.6% (n = 326) of FFE scholars were the **first ones to acquire higher education in their family**.

> *"My mother is the sole earner of my house, and a majority of her wages are spent in covering my father's medical expenses. Without the support of FFE, I would not have been able to work on my dream of becoming the first female engineer of my family."*
>
> *- Scholar, Engineering.*

72% of the scholars heard about the FFE scholarship through their network, and 99% found the application process to be well defined.

Graph 3.2: Scholars perception of the application process
(n = 326)



72% (n = 326) of the scholars reported hearing of the support provided by FFE through their own personal network. 32% (n = 326) learnt of FFE through their college seniors, 27% (n = 326) through their friends, and 13% (n = 326) through their college professors/staff.

FFE facilitators also helped build partnerships with colleges, and provided awareness on scholarship among potential candidates. During an FGD with facilitators, one of them shared creating a partnership model with schools on behalf of FFE to mobilise scholars. 17.8% (n = 326) of the scholars reported learning of FFE through facilitators.

Only 5.5% (n = 326) of the scholars reported hearing of FFE through internet/social media, highlighting the gap in strategically using social media to mobilise candidates. Furthermore, 2% (n = 326) of the scholars heard of FFE through other NGOs such as Avanti Fellows and Dakshana Foundation, highlighting the need to effectively utilise NGO partnerships to scout for and mobilise future candidates for the scholarship.

Scholars made their application for the FFE scholarship via the NGO's website. Since the application process was online, having an electronic device became imperative. A student reported finding the application process hard due to lack of having a smartphone. However, for a majority of applicants (99%), the application process was perceived to be well defined. 77.7% (n = 326) of them were able to complete the application process by themselves, while 22.4% (n = 326) reported needing assistance.

Scholars reached out to their facilitators, college professors, or the FFE team for help. Majority of the scholars reported that the FFE team was available to support them during the application process. As highlighted by a few scholars during the quantitative survey, FFE facilitators were particularly helpful during the application process. 94.5% (n = 326) found the FFE team to be very supportive during the application process, and 4% (n = 326) found the FFE team to be somewhat supportive during the application process.

94.5% (n = 326) of the survey respondents found the **FFE team to be very supportive during the application process.**

"FFE as an organisation is very well structured, the processes are well-defined and clear. FFE facilitators are extremely good.

- Scholars."

The scholarship assisted scholars cover their expenses as 86.8% of scholars paid a portion of their college tuition fees with the scholarship amount.

On an average, FFE provides a scholarship in the range of 40 thousand to 1 lakh rupees per year which may be used as per their academic needs. Scholars reported using the scholarship amount for a wide range of purposes such as paying college tuition (86.8%), living expenses (61.7%), books and other supplies (48.2%).

On an average, the FFE scholarship contributes to **47.1% of an engineer's college fee, and 100% of an MBBS scholar's college fees**, if FFE is the only source of support.

However, since a majority of FFE scholars came from financially disadvantaged backgrounds, multiple Central and State government schemes, waivers and scholarships may be available to them, because of which the total payable expenses by the scholar may have reduced. The above mentioned percentage of expenses is against the overall cost without accounting for specific waivers availed. During qualitative discussions with the FFE team, they highlighted that the scholarship covered 70-80% of the payable expenses of the scholars.

Following are some examples of the additional support available to FFE scholars:

- As per the government mandate, NIT universities and offer a 100% tuition fee waiver for EWS scholars and a ⅔ rd waiver for scholars with an annual household income between ₹1 to ₹5 lakhs

- As per MHRD, Government of India has specific scholarships for higher education such as Central Sector Scheme of Scholarships for College and University Students.

- State governments also provide state-specific scholarships to support economically disadvantaged students. For instance, the Government of West Bengal provides Merit-cum-Means scholarship to assist meritorious students belonging to economically backward families in State to pursue higher studies.

Note: This is a suggestive list and not exhaustive in nature

Table 3.1: Comparison of the scholarship amount with college tuition and total educational expense required to acquire higher education *(n = 326)*

Particulars	Engineering (4 years)	MBBS (5 years)
Expenses*		
Total college tuition fee	3.4 lakhs	4 lakhs
Total living expense	2.2 lakhs	3.2 lakhs
Total expense for books and educational supplies	51 thousand	1.2 lakhs
Total	**6.1 lakhs**	**8.4 lakhs**
Scholarship		
Planned Scholarship (average)	**1.6 lakhs**	**4 lakhs**
Scholarship as a % of college tuition fee	47.1%	100%
Scholarship as a % of the total educational expense	26.2%	47.6%

Note: These figures are analysed as reported by the scholars during the quantitative survey, to be read in context with the details provided on waivers above

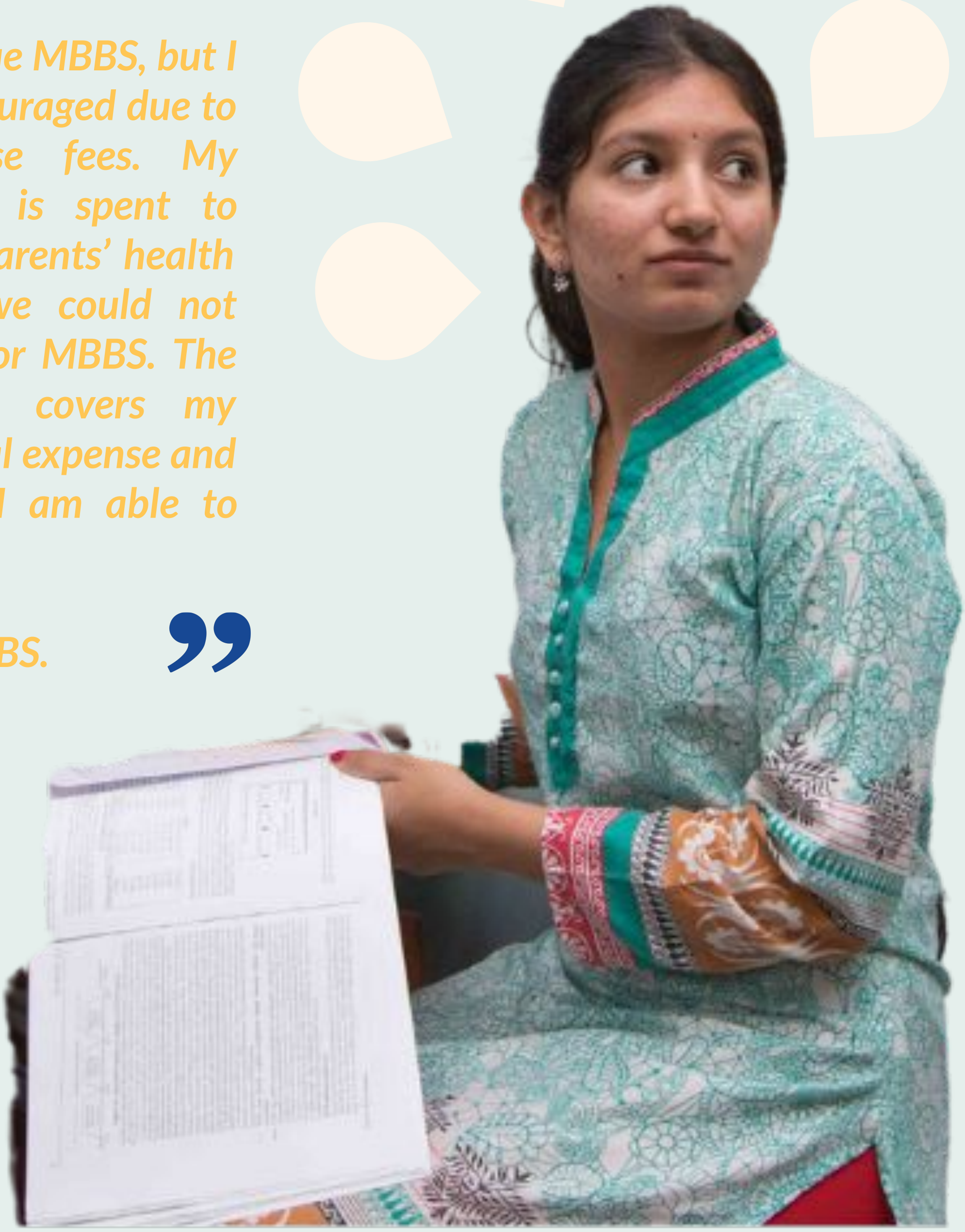
99% of the scholars believe that the FFE scholarship played a significant or very significant role in supporting them to complete their higher education.

Nearly all scholars believe that FFE played a crucial role in supporting them complete their higher education. 84% (n = 326) believe that the role played by FFE was very significant in helping them complete their higher education, while 15% (n = 326) believed that FFE played a significant role. Only 1% of the scholars believed that FFE did not significantly contribute to their attainment of higher education.

The reliability of the FFE scholarship helped reduce the financial stress experienced by the scholars as shared during qualitative interviews.

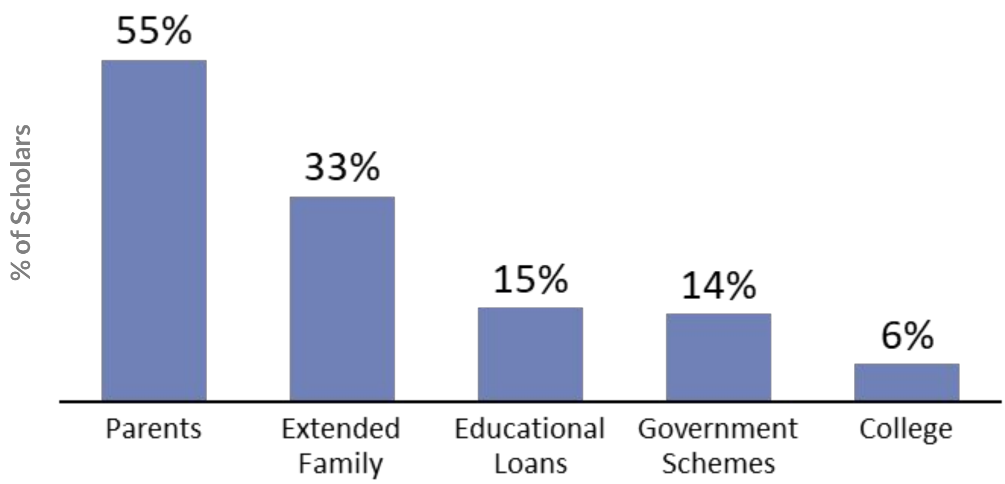
84.7% of the respondents reported receiving the scholarship amount in a timely manner across multiple years, while 14% of the FFE scholars reported receiving the scholarship in a timely manner across some of the years. Only 1% of the FFE scholars reported never receiving the FFE scholarship in the stipulated timeline.

> *I wanted to pursue MBBS, but I initially felt discouraged due to the high course fees. My father's income is spent to cover my grandparents' health expenses, and we could not afford the fees for MBBS. The FFE scholarship covers my major educational expense and by virtue of it I am able to pursue MBBS.*
>
> *- Scholar, MBBS.*



88.3% of FFE scholars reported that they required financial support from more than one source, indicating a need to create more systems of support for the scholars

Graph 3.3: Sources to pay college fees in addition to the FFE scholarship
(n = 326)



As the FFE scholarship covers a portion of the total educational expense incurred by scholars, 88.3% (n = 326) scholars reported requiring support from multiple sources to finance their higher education. 55% (n = 326) of the scholars reported depending on their parents to financially support them.

Due to limited access to formal sources of debt, **parents liquidated assets and depended on extended family** for financial support

Heavy reliance on informal sources of borrowing: Limited knowledge of formal sources of debt, coupled with ineligibility for loans, results in heavy dependence on informal borrowing such as from grandparents and relatives, as expressed during qualitative interviews with parents and scholars.

Mortgage or selling assets: In instances where parents were unable to meet educational expenses through informal debt, they resorted to taking mortgages and/or selling assets such as inherited gold, agricultural land, cattle, etc. as highlighted during interviews with 4 parents.

In addition to financial support from parents, few scholars reported taking up part-time assignments and providing coaching services to meet their expenses. During an FGD, a facilitator reported supporting their allocated scholar with the cost for purchasing books and academic materials as they lacked the resources to do so for themselves.

During an FGD with law students, they mentioned the importance of internships in order to make the most of their course and improve their chances of securing a job at a law firm. However, these internships are often unpaid and involve migration costs as law firms are typically clustered around cities. Due to the absence of sufficient finances, a law student reported missing out on an internship opportunity, despite being selected for it.

> *"I lost my father in my childhood and since then the joint household's financial responsibility is solely on my uncle. However, recently my uncle's health has also deteriorated because of which the financial burden of the family is on my cousin. With the semester fees increasing every year, I am constantly stressed about managing my educational expenses.*
>
> *- Scholar"*

Skill Training

Source: EF

The skill training programme had a three-pronged approach, focused on building of knowledge, enhancement of interview skills and overall employability skills.

In the last decade, FFE recognised that graduating scholars were facing difficulties clearing the campus placement phase. In order to solve for this, in 2016, FFE conducted an internal assessment with the scholars to understand key reasons for the low placement rates. The study found that language competency, technical skills and preparation for interviews were three main areas where additional support was required.

Basis the results, FFE designed a skill training programme for its scholars to ensure that they are job ready. Since 2017, FFE has been providing their scholars training on key skills that are required to secure employment post graduation.

Upon completion of the skill training programme, an FFE scholar is expected to have:

- Higher chances of securing stable job placement
- Higher CTC with improved technical and soft skills
- Opportunity to work at multinational companies

1900+ scholars availed skilled training support
(Upto FY 2021-22)

1. Build English Language Skills (Year 1-2)

- Take an aptitude test to understand strengths and weaknesses
- Learn basic english communication, aptitude and writing skills

2. Improve Technical knowledge (Year 3)

- Advance english language skills
- Take advanced courses to improve technical knowledge and skills

3. Practice Interviewing Skills (Year 4)

- Placement prep. Support on resume writing
- Mock interview prep

4. Capitalize on Campus Placement

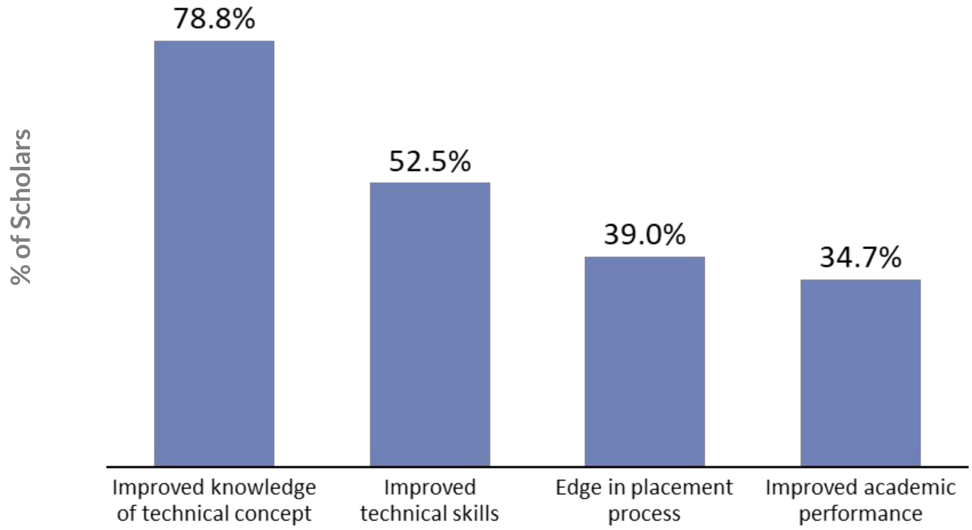
Utilize the skills learnt over the past there years to:

-Have a well written resume
-Communication skills
-Technical edge

Scholars found the technical support useful as it provided them with free access to relevant courses, through which they gained an edge in the placement process.

Graph 3.4: Outcome of technical skill training courses

(n = 124)



Out of the study sample who participated in the skill training programme, 59.1% (124/210) of scholars took the technical course support. Majority of these were engineering scholars who studied online courses on Python, Data Science, Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence. The technical support stood out to participating scholars as it provided free access to highly renowned courses, it helped them build their competency in new skills and improved their ability to crack technical interview rounds.

Free access to certification courses: Free access to highly renowned certification courses helped the scholars build their knowledge and also showcase it in their CV to stand out from other applicants, as highlighted during qualitative interviews.

Build competency in new skills: 94.4% (n = 124) of the scholars who participated in the technical support found that it helped them learn a new skill, and build their competency in it. Below is the reported competency level.

49.6% at intermediate level

19.7% at advanced level

17.1% at professional level

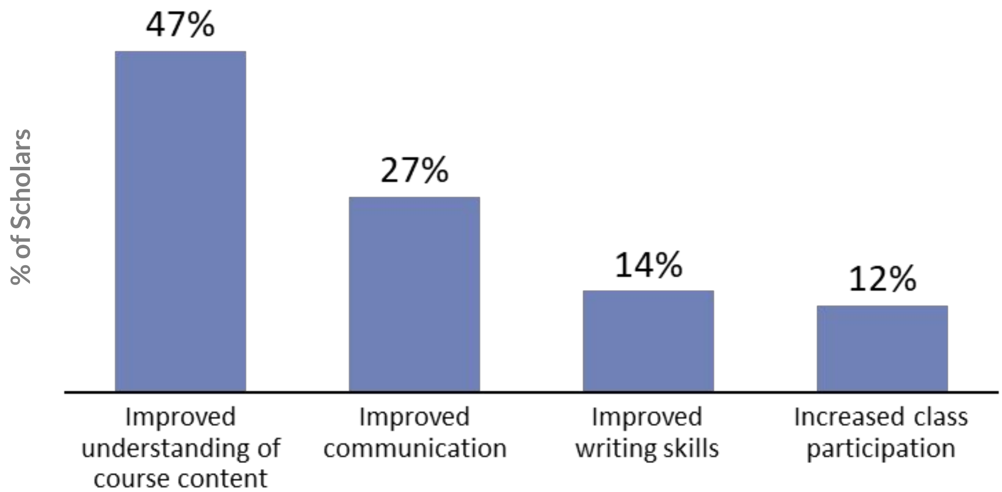
13.7% at beginner level

Ability to successfully navigate the technical round: Dedicated time for specialised courses in parallel to their academics strengthened their knowledge and ability to crack technical or field specific interview rounds. 78.8% (n = 124) of the participating scholars reported that technical courses improved their conceptual knowledge and 39% (n = 124) of them believed that it gave them an edge in the placement process.

> *"What I found the most impressive about the skilling programme is the technical course support from Coursera as it not only supports my learning of technical skills but also that I can showcase the course certificates on my résumé."*
>
> *- Scholar, Engineering.*

The English beginners course was useful to the scholars as 47% of scholars improved their understanding of the language, and they believed it aided them with job interviews as well.

Graph 3.5: Outcome of the English training support *(n = 182)*



Out of the study sample who participated in the skill training programme, 86.7% (182/210) of scholars took the English Beginners course and 43.3% (91/210) took the Advanced English course.

19.23% (35/182) of the scholars availing the beginners english course studied in vernacular schools and 14% (26/182) in semi english medium schools.

57% (n = 35) of the scholars from **vernacular schools** found that the english course helped them the most in **improving their comprehension of the course content.**

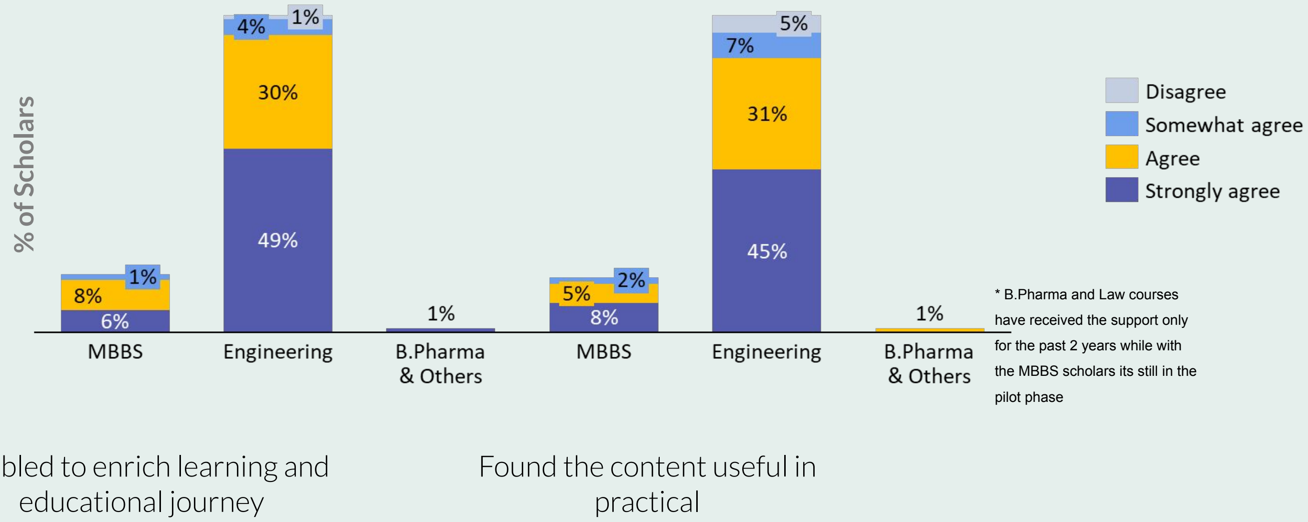
Out of the study sample who participated in the skill training programme, 31.9% (67/210) of scholars undertook the placement prep support. Scholars utilised the N-Guru platform to hone their english language & communication skills.

Under the placement prep support, 72% (n = 67) of scholars availed support to improve their communication, 70% to build on their soft skills, 54% to improve their interview skills, 36% to enhance their CV writing skills and 31% to improve their overall writing skills.

> *"Campus placement has begun at my university, and I have been appearing for interviews. Had the courses provided by FFE not been there, I would not have been able to confidently communicate in these interviews.*
>
> *- Scholar."*

Nearly all participating scholars (97.1%) would recommend the skill training programme to others. However, medical and law students highlighted the need to customise the programme to their needs.

Graph 3.6: Outcome of the skill training support *(n = 210)*



80.5% (n = 210) of the participating scholars reported that there was an active feedback mechanism with FFE and they could share their observations, challenges and recommendations with the team. 97.1% of the participants reported that they would recommend the skilling support to other scholars as well.

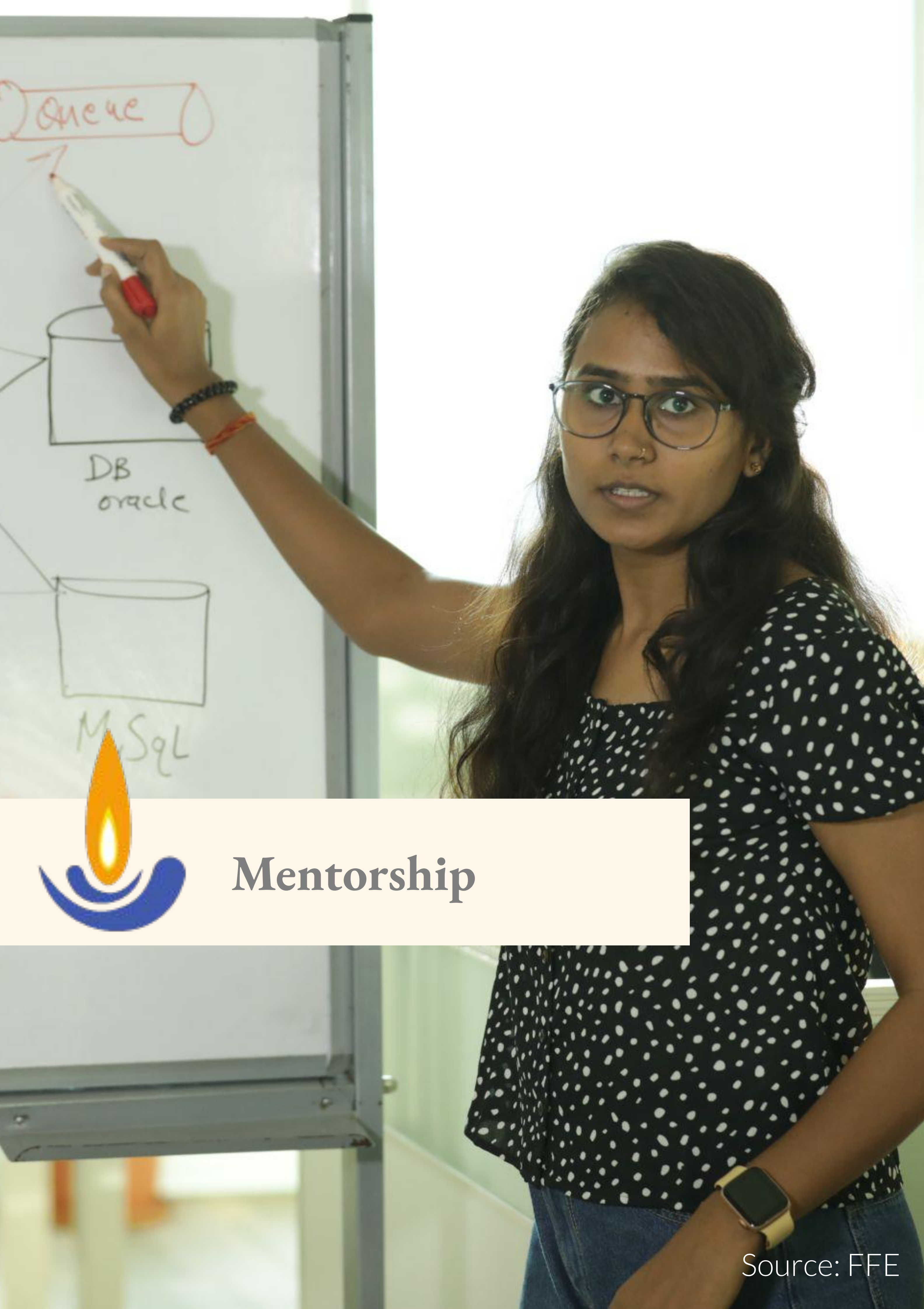
97.1%

Would recommend the skill training support to others

While majority of the scholars would recommend the skill training programme to other students, qualitative discussions with current scholars revealed that the programme in its current design is more geared towards the requirements of engineering students, and that there is scope to further customize the programme to the needs of medical and law students.

58% of the engineering scholars strongly agreed that the skill training support enriched their learning and educational journey.

Medical students highlighted the need for medicine specific courses and Law students mentioned that they value internship opportunities more as compared to general courses on research and legal writing, as mentioned during FGDs with current scholars. Law scholars also highlighted financial and regional barriers that prevent them in accessing internship opportunities.



Mentorship

Source: FFE

The objective of the mentorship programme was to enhance the employability of scholars through curated content and guidance of experienced professionals.

FFE recognised the need for individual guidance to the students, in order to prepare them for excelling in academics and professional spaces. The mentors and mentees are paired keeping in mind several considerations to ensure effective learning and minimal challenges during the period of interaction. Mentoring support is provided to the scholars in the 3rd year of the course. FFE analysed that scholars required additional support to learn self management, communication and soft skills, along with the need for professional guidance.

Scholars can choose any 4 out of the 6 mentorship modules: Communication skills, Time/Stress Management, Etiquette, Problem Solving and Decision Making, Career Development and Interpersonal Skills. The mentor and mentee select the 4 modules to be worked on together.

By the end of the programme, FFE scholars (post placement) are expected to have improved their:

- Self-efficacy skills
- Self management skills
- Soft skills
- Career awareness
- Confidence to prepare for and secure jobs

700+ scholars availed Mentoring support

Experienced professionals from different industries handhold the mentees for a period of 4-6 months. Mentors include employees from large national and multinational companies, FFE alumni, and a few individual volunteers.

1. Sign up for mentoring programme

- Interested FFE scholars sign up for the mentorship programme.
- Experienced professionals volunteer to be mentors

2. Mentor and Mentees are matched

- Mentors and Mentees matched on - language, area of expertise, gender, location.
- An orientation session is conducted to set context for the engagement

3. Mentor engagement begins

- FFE provides a detailed curriculum of 6 modules for the period of engagement.
- 1:1 sessions are conducted monthly with mentees to complete 4 out of the 6 modules

4. Capitalize on Campus Placement

- Mentees are able to navigate the placement process with confidence
- Improvement in interpersonal skills make them well prepared for the interview process

Mentors demonstrated high accountability for the success of their mentees, often going above and beyond to support them, especially during the placement period

The mentor-mentee matching criteria helped build trust and rapport among the different stakeholders

Matching based on common language: Since majority of mentor-mentee connections were made based on commonality of language, it ensured ease of communication and rapport building with their mentee, especially during the initial sessions, as reported during qualitative interviews with mentors.

Matching based on common area of study: As mentor-mentee matches are also based on similar academic backgrounds, it made the mentors interactions effective as they were able to resonate with their academic struggles and challenges, and also provide relevant and focused advice to their mentees.

Mentor are able to contribute qualitatively to the personal development and journey of their mentee.

Through discussions with 10 mentors, it was learnt that their mentorship added the most value to the following areas for a mentee:

Ability to be shortlisted for interviews: Mentors provided targeted feedback on their mentee's job application and ensured that it met the industry standard.

Ability to confidently handle interviews: Mentors reported conducting mock interviews, and fine-tuning their mentee's responses to standard interview questions.

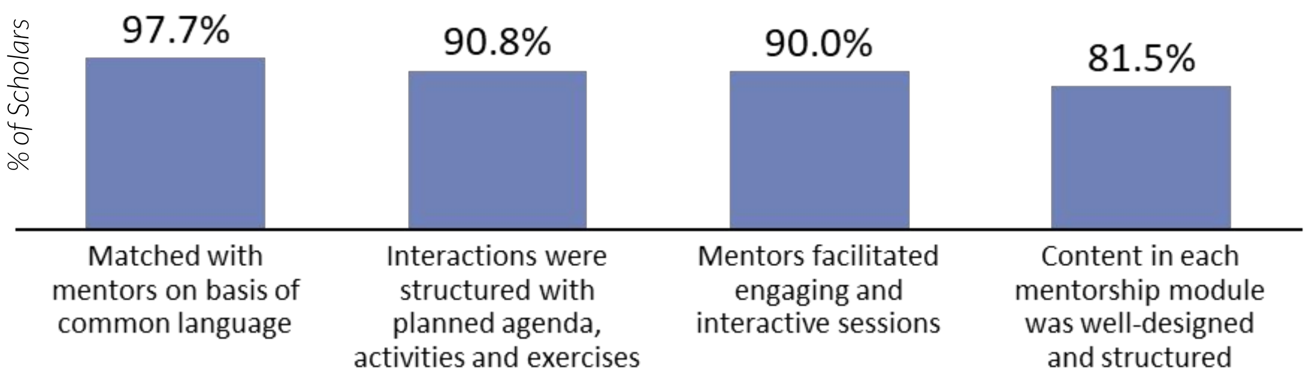
Ability to cope with rejections: Mentors reported supporting their mentees to deal with rejections.

> *"My mentee and I have similar educational backgrounds because of which we were easily able to build rapport and discuss latest developments within the industry. I could also help him prepare for technical rounds within the interview process"*
>
> *- Mentor*

The mentorship programme successfully met the needs of a majority of the scholars, and 86.9% of them would recommend the mentorship programme to other scholars.

Graph 3.7: Scholars perception of the mentoring process

(n = 130)



39.8% (130/326) of the survey respondents participated in the mentorship support offered by FFE. Scholars enrolled in this programme to receive guidance from experienced professionals, understand the job market, access networking opportunities, enhance their employability and soft skills, and gain technical knowledge, as highlighted through 3 focused group discussions.

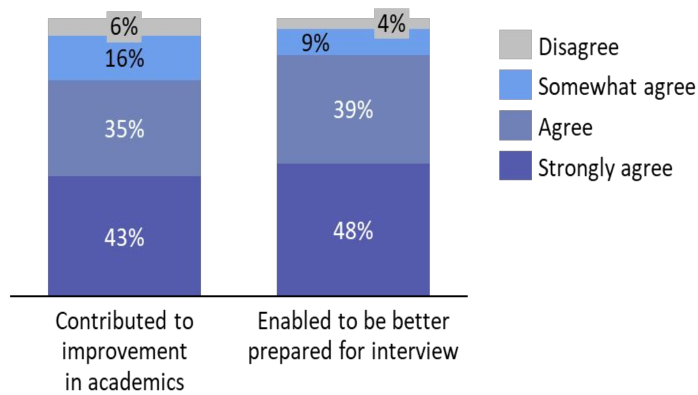
92.3% of the mentees (n = 130) reported that the expertise provided by the mentor met or exceeded their expectations

Mentees were able to capitalize on their mentor's knowledge and experience because of the manner in which they had been paired by FFE.

Mentees benefitted from the semi-structured approach of the mentorship programme as it enabled them to customise the support provided by the mentor to precisely match their requirement.

78% of scholars agreed or strongly agreed that the programme contributed to improvement in academics and 87% of scholars agreed or strongly agreed that the programme enabled them for better interview preparation*

Graph 3.8: Outcome of mentorship programme *(n=130)*



I want to switch my career from electronic engineering to computer science. FFE allocated a mentor to me keeping this criteria in mind. In addition to the mentorship curriculum, my mentor guides me on how to prioritise my tasks, and balance my current course studies and learn computer science concepts on the side. She has helped me create a task tracker, and routinely checks in on my progress.

- *Scholar*

Mentors highlighted the need for cross collaboration between mentors and a more structured training programme for them to be able to to support their mentees

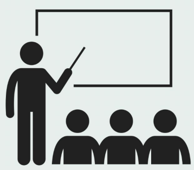
During FGDs, mentors highlighted the need for a formal interface with FFE through which they can interact with the team and call attention to any additional support that is required for their mentee. Mentors also mentioned that a short brief on their mentees, an ice breaker session with FFE and the mentee, and setting clear expectations from the mentorship programme would help them be more effective in their support for each mentee.

Mentors reported that they currently work in silos and would greatly benefit from collaborating with other mentors. This will help them share common resources and gain from each other's experiences and learnings. Mobilising support through an internal network of mentors can enable curated and proactive response to the needs of the mentee.

Mentors as well as the FFE programme team mentioned that mentors continue to struggle with the management of updates on the platform and since it is a self-driven model, it is heavily person dependent. A common platform for all stakeholders, mentor - mentee and FFE to update status, share learnings and track progress can be shared among all stakeholders for ease of management.

Need for an interface with FFE for prompt feedback and management of the mentor-mentee relationship.

Need for a structured platform to train, meet and facilitate



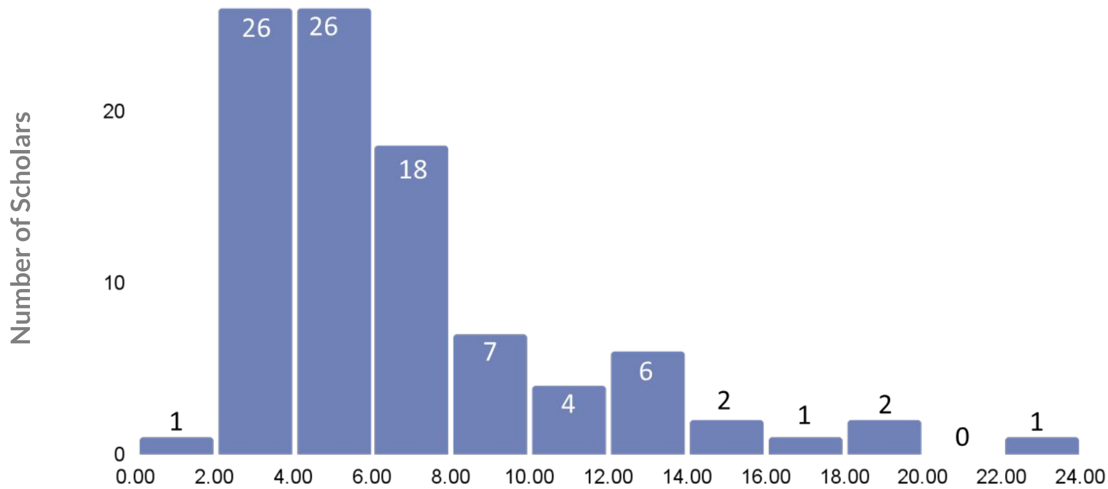
Need for the programme to enable cross collaboration between mentors

After Graduation

Source: FFE

Scholars reported earning ~7 to 9 times their previous household annual income on average from their first corporate job.

Graph 3.9: Scholars' CTC from their first job after placement *(n = 104)*

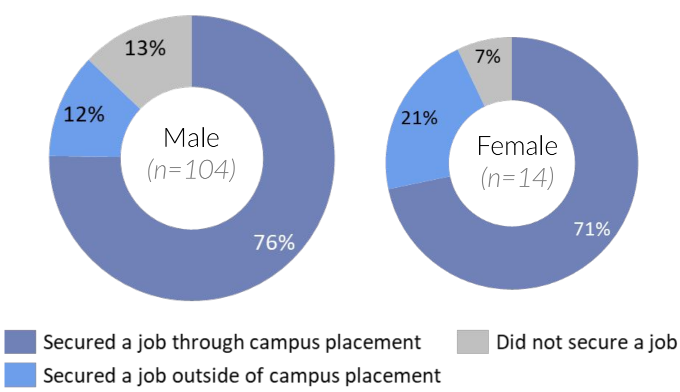


College placements took place towards the end of fourth year for engineering scholars. 81.9% (n = 144) of the graduated scholars reported receiving placement support from their university.

75.4% (n = 118) of graduated engineering scholars **succeeded in securing jobs during campus placements.**

3/4th (n = 118) of the scholars who appeared for campus placements, reported securing a job through it, and 12.7% (n = 118) were able to secure jobs on their own outside of campus placement. However, 11.8% were unable to secure jobs.

Graph 3.11: Result of Campus Placement



Graduates secured jobs across sectors such as Information Technology, Financial Technology, Consulting, Manufacturing, and Supply Chain Management amongst others, and worked at companies such as TCS, Capgemini, HCL, Reliance, L&T, Cognizant, Infosys, and Tata, among others.

The salary package secured by graduates ranged from ₹1.2 to ₹22 lakhs per annum. On an average, engineering graduates secured a job with an annual salary of ₹6.5 lakhs which is ~7 to 9 times their previous annual household income.

86.5% (n = 118) of engineering graduates **secured a salary package greater than the industry standard of ₹3 lakhs.**

According to a Times of India research[1],, the average salary for an engineering graduate is ₹3 lakhs. Majority of FFE scholars not only succeeded in securing salary packages greater than their previous annual household income, but also at par with industry standards.

Select companies where FFE graduates work:

1. ToI, ttps://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/education/news

71.6% of scholars showed early signs of upward economic mobility on completion of their graduate studies and securing employment

Economic mobility, in this context, is defined as the change in economic outcomes as experienced by FFE scholars and their families. Adapting the McKinsey Global Institute, (MGI) framework, scholars were divided into 5 distinct groups based on their current income levels - *deprived, aspirers, seekers, strivers and the rich.*

FFE scholars typically came from the deprived strata, and post completion of their courses and subsequent employment, 71.6% of scholars showed early signs of upward economic mobility, within a span of 0 to 3 years from graduation The below categorisation and definitions are as per the MGI framework.

Figure 3.2: Current Economic Status of FFE scholars *(n = 113)*

Rich - *Annual Income Greater than ₹30 lakhs*
Individuals in this strata enjoy a very high standard of living. **3.5%** of the graduates are in the rich category.

Strivers - *Annual Income between ₹15 to ₹30 lakhs*
Strivers and upwards are considered to be financially successful. They have a stable source of income, access amenities and are able to create a wealth base for themselves and their families. **11.5%** of the graduates are strivers.

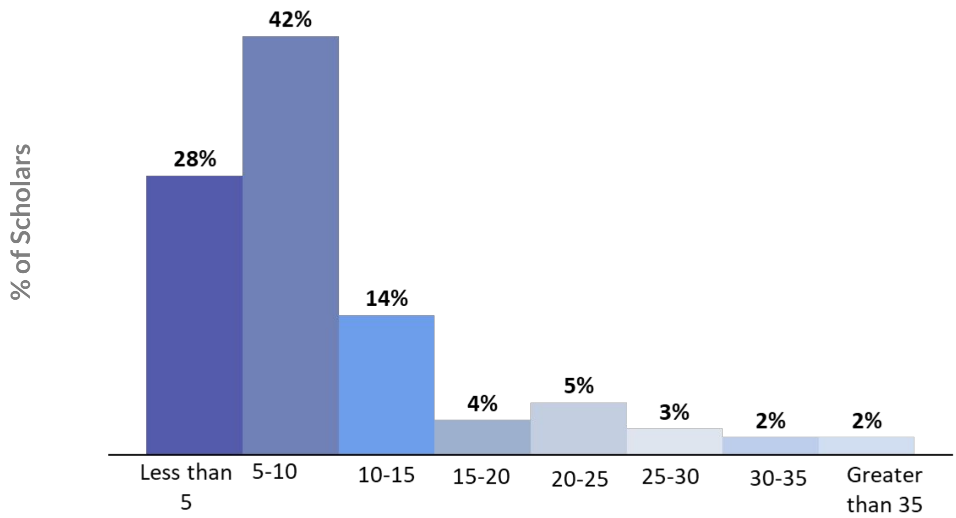
Seekers - *Annual Income between ₹5 to ₹15 lakhs*
Individuals in this strata have the most variation. Generally, they are able to comfortably meet all their basic needs and start to purchase small to large assets. **56.6%** of the graduates are seekers.

Aspirers - *Annual Income between ₹1.3 to ₹5 lakhs*
Aspirers continue to struggle to live comfortably, typically spending almost half of their income on basic necessities. **28.3%** of the graduates are aspirers.

Source: The 'Bird of Gold': The Rise of India's Consumer Market. N = 113 (some respondents were uncomfortable with sharing this information)

Financial burden to meet daily expenses on the household has reduced as 100% of the employed FFE graduates reported contributing to their household's monthly expenses

Graph 4: Current CTC of FFE Scholars *(n = 113)*



Over half of the employed scholars work in metropolitan cities such as Bangalore, Chennai, Hyderabad, Mumbai, and Delhi. **On an average, they earn an annual income of ₹10.8 lakhs at present**, and utilise it to cover their own personal expenses, support their families' expenditure, and save / invest the remaining amounts. .

> Scholars' contributed **58.3% of their income to cover their family's monthly expenses on an average.**

All scholars (n = 113) who graduated and are currently working report contributing to their household's monthly expenses. A typical FFE scholar who has graduated and is currently employed, contributes 60% of their income to support their family, and are able to save 15% of their annual income.

As 89.4% of graduated FFE scholars who are currently employed reported being able to save / invest their income, they are likely to be able to build a financial security net for themselves and their family. This can enable them to cope with any uncertain circumstances in the future.

At the time of disbursing the scholarship, FFE expects their scholars to financially support at least 2 more FFE scholars after they have achieved financial stability. 31.8% (n = 113) of the employed scholars reported that they were in a financial position to donate back to FFE. Of which, 66.7% (n = 36) reported donating a cumulative sum of ₹9 lakh rupees.

> 36 scholars reported having the **financial ability to donate back to FFE**.

On an average, recent graduates willingly donated ₹34 thousand rupees to FFE's scholarship fund.

Majority of families doubled their source of income after FFE scholars secured employment as highlighted through qualitative discussions with parents.

Households transition from one to two earning members: Parents found it important to support higher education of the scholars despite the challenges as they believed it would pave a clear path to sustainable employment and a steady source of income for the household, as highlighted in qualitative discussions with parents.

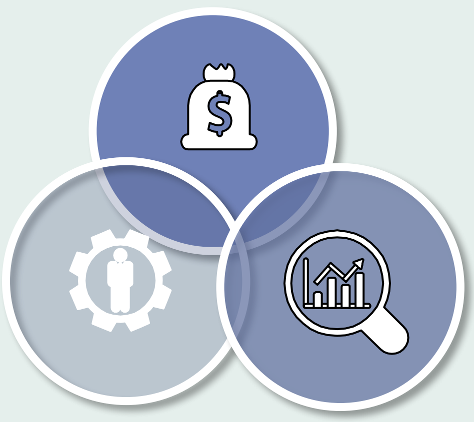
Improved access to resources: Parents were able to access and utilize multiple resources, previously unavailable to them as a result of their child's employment in the formal sector. They were able to access banking services and take loans for purchasing small assets for the household, farms, small businesses, etc. Access to health insurance is another aspect that parents perceive as an important safety net that comes as a perk of formal employment of the FFE scholars.

Reduced burden of education expenses of younger children: Parents were persistent on investing in education of their children, especially elder children as they perceive it to be a way to reduce burden of economic expenses of educating their younger children.

Improved social status: Completing professional education with scholarship and securing a formal employment is a huge achievement for the families of the scholars given their socio economic background. Parents experience an improvement in their social status due to the education and professional status of their children (FFE Scholars) .

> ***"The scholarship not only helped my daughter complete her education, but it also improved the opportunity for my two younger children as I no longer needed to sell our land to support my daughter's education.***
> ***I believe that scholarships have an ability to create long term impact not just on the individual but also the entire household.***
> ***- Parent"***

Improvement in **access to resources**



Strengthened **social security net**

Increase in **asset ownership**

SROI Analysis

Source: FFE

Social Return on Investment - Methodology and Approach

Social Return on Investment (SRoI) is a tool used to capture and quantify a financial value of the impact created by the programme on its stakeholders. SRoI allows to denote an approximate fiscal value to the return expected on every rupee invested in social programmes.

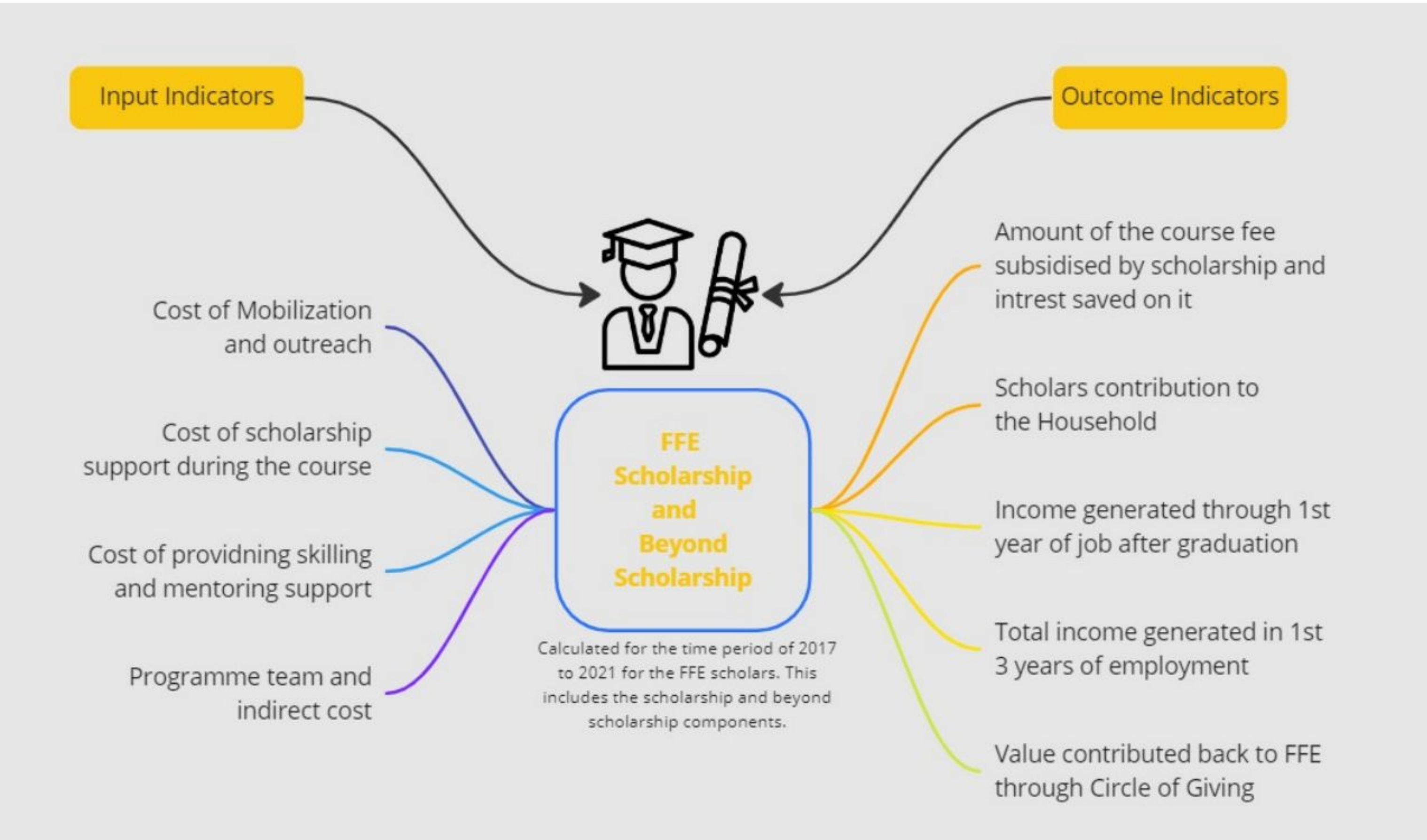
- **Duration for SROI Calculation:** Social Return on Investment is calculated for FFE scholars from the the time period of 2017 to 2021. This includes the scholarship and beyond scholarship components.

- **Outcome data for SRoI :** The data utilized to capture the output depends on the primary response form the scholars (N-104) and the secondary data used to derive standard values for deduction as applicable.

- **Input Data source for SRoI:** Input data sources are taken basis the calculations provided for SRoI, and the input cost has been adjusted to match the respondents engagement with FFE.

- **Calculation Methodology:** The deduction is calculated on the outcome value of each stage and not in a consolidated manner.

Table 3.2: Components & Indicators



250% return generated on the inputs cost invested in the FFE scholarship programme*

A return of INR 2.56 is generated on every 1 Rupee invested in the FFE scholarship programme.

Outcome: **INR 215,671,104**

Changes resulting from project activities (planned and unplanned)

Attribution: **INR 142,260,560**

Accounting for an average percentage of 74% [1] outcome that was caused by other means

Deadweight: **INR 14,682,109**

Is an average estimation of 20%[2] of the value that would have been created even in the the absence of the programme.

Drop Off: **INR 4,404,633**

An approximate 7.5%[3] accounted for the diminishing value of the created impact.

Input: **INR 21,228,098**

Input cost invested in the programme (direct and indirect)

1. Calculated basis the attribution denoted by the scholars in the primary data
2. Calculated against the proxy of percentage of students availing education loans basis primary data
3. Average of the last 5 years of inflation trend in india

This is calculated over a duration of 3 years from completion of graduation. The average ratio of investment in the Indian education space is at around 1.25 and the school education projects come closer to 0.75 to 1. While there is no direct data available on expected ratio on Scholarship programmes, comparing to the sector average the return generated by the FFE scholarship and Beyond Scholarship programme is higher.

$$\text{SRoI Ratio} = \left[\frac{\text{OUTCOME – ATTRIBUTION- DEADWEIGHT- DROP OFF}}{\text{INPUT}}\right] \left[\frac{215{,}671{,}104 - 142{,}260{,}560 - 14{,}682{,}109 - 4{,}404{,}633}{21{,}228{,}098}\right]$$

$$\left[\frac{21{,}228{,}098}{54{,}323{,}803}\right] = \textbf{2.56 Social Return on Investment}$$

Input of INR 2.14 lakhs on each scholar creates a return of INR 5.49 lakhs from the FFE support

For every engineering scholar the FFE programme including scholarship assistance with beyond scholarship initiative was able to generate a return of 2.56x within the duration of 3 years from course completion.

The areas in which the scholars are able to generate impact is not limited to themselves but also trickles down to the family and the household of the scholars to create economic stability and improved chances of higher education for the younger siblings.

A average 2.56 x return is generated of

INR 549,806

AREAS OF OUTCOME

- Formal employment
- Increased income
- Improved socio economic status of the HH
- Improved asset generation / ownership

For every Scholar's an average input of

INR 214769

Scholarship support for the duration of course

+

Support from Beyond Scholarship components

- Skill training
- Mentorship

Past Scholars

Source: FFE

About the Past Scholars who are graduated between 1994 - 2016

*Provided details are derived from the primary data from the surveys conducted with scholars between 1994 and 2016.

183
Past Scholars

Gender Disaggregation

15.84%
female respondents

84.1%
male respondents

Age

29.6
years

59%
were first-generation graduates of their families

Course Disaggregation

90.2%
BTech respondents

3.83%
respondents from other courses

54.5%
MBBS respondents

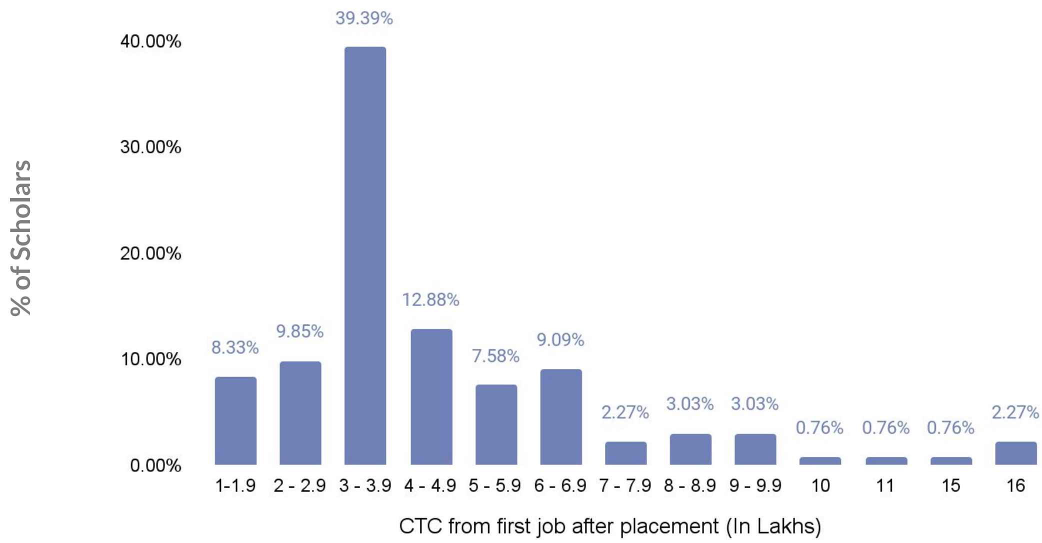
A typical FFE scholar came from a family where income per capita was **₹68.5/day or $0.8/day**

87.9% of the respondents came from families with an annual income of less than 2 lakhs

94.33% of scholars' parents were farmers, small business owners and daily wage labourers at their time of graduation

₹4.4 lakhs was the average CTC among alumni who opted for and secured employment immediately after graduation (Scholars graduating before 2017)

Graph 4.1: Past Scholars' CTC at placement *(n = 132)*



Upon completion of their graduate courses, 22.4% (n = 183) opted to study specialised courses such as MTech, MS and MD. They reported requiring financial support from sources such as their parents, government schemes, and formal institutions to pursue these super specialised courses.

76.5% (n = 183) aspired to secure employment immediately after they completed their graduation. Of which, 94.3% (n = 140) were able to do so within 6 months of graduation. A majority of these scholars secured employment in the same domain as their undergraduate course.

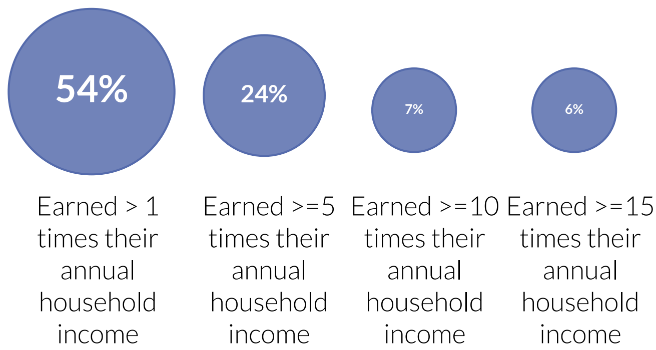
The minimum salary package secured by a scholar from their first job was **₹1 lakh while the maximum was ₹16 lakhs.**

On an average, the scholars secured a salary package of ₹4.4 lakhs after their graduation. The range of the salary packages was 15, with the minimum salary package of ₹1 lakh per annum and the maximum salary package of ₹16 lakhs per annum.

92% of the scholars reported earning an annual income which was greater than their annual household income during their graduation. On an average, they earned a salary which was 6 times greater than their annual household income

92% of the scholars immediately after graduation earned an annual income which was **greater than their previous annual household income**

Figure 3.1:Comparative analysis of scholars' annual income and previous household income *(n = 132)*

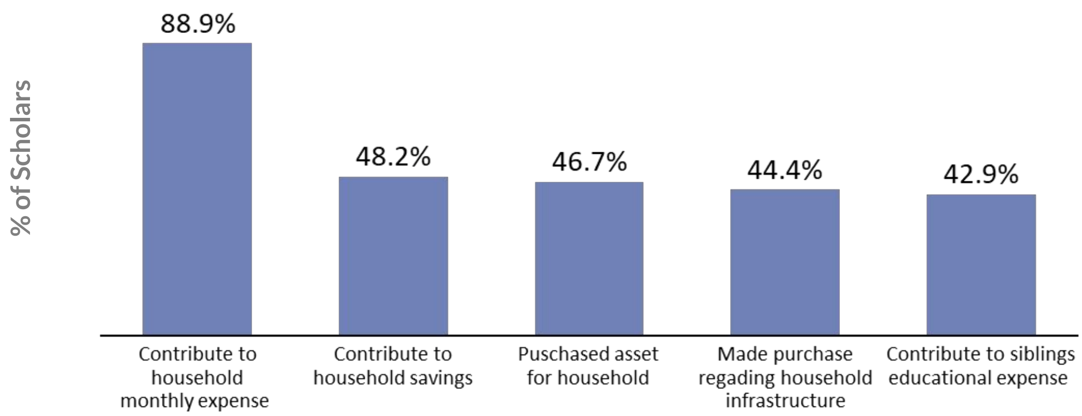


I work as software engineer at Agilysys, and from my salary I bought back the house my parents sold during my college time. I am now at a good position to save and take care of my family.

- Scholar

The economic mobility of the scholars improved since 48.2% were able to contribute to household savings and 46.7% of scholars were able to purchase assets for households (graduates prior to 2017)

Graph 4.2: Financial contribution by scholars to their households *(n = 135)*

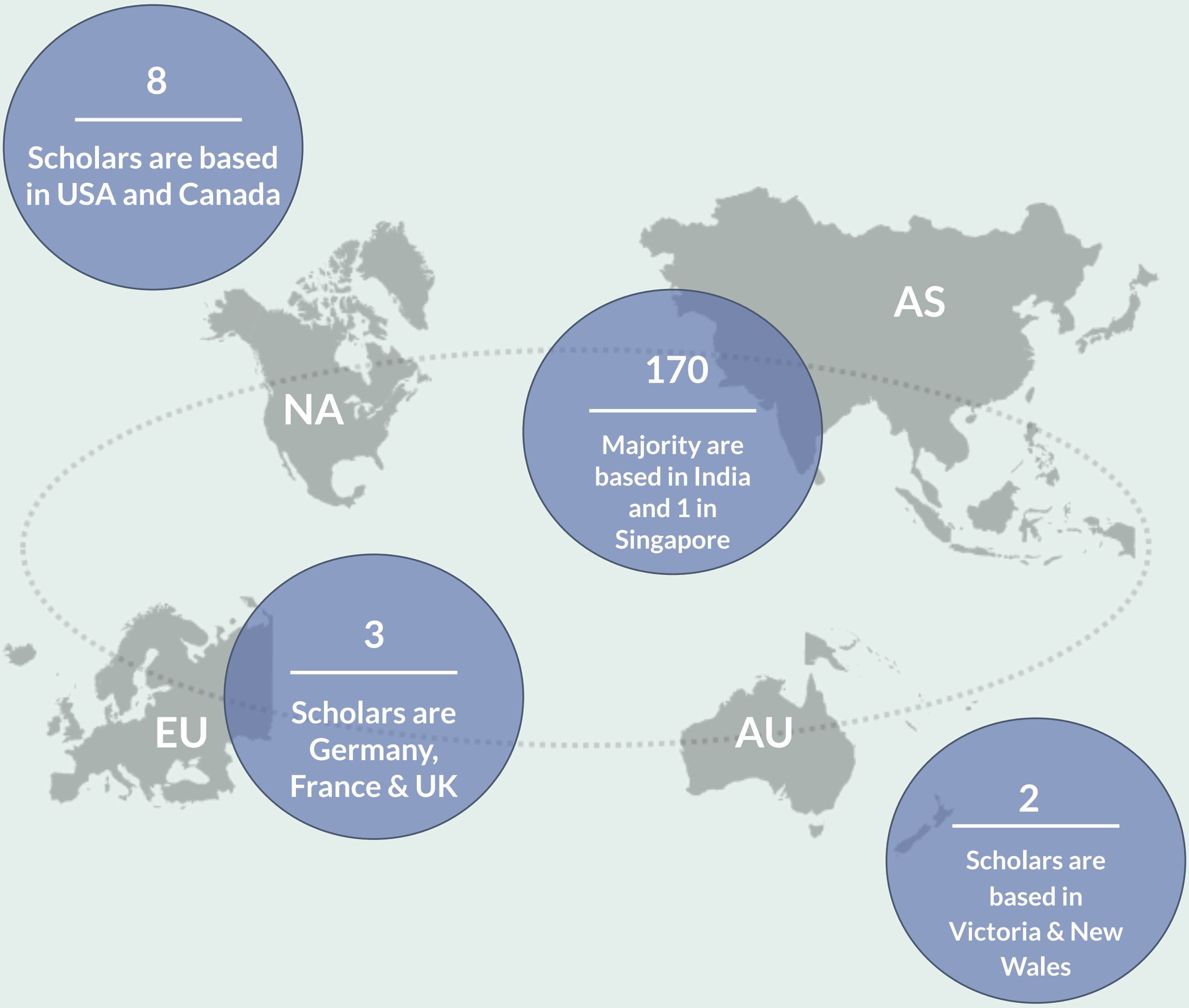


Through qualitative discussions with 28 alumni, upward economic mobility was observed among the alumni whose income was in the range of 6-12 lakhs, leading to increased savings (21%), increased asset ownership (11%), and ability to support the family (25%), creating prolonged financial security for the family.

Out of the 141 currently employed scholars, 95.7% reported being able to financially contribute to their household, among those who were employed or self-employed

> *It was difficult for me to access higher education due to my family's financial condition. The FFE scholarship covered a majority of my educational expenses and reduced the financial burden felt by my parents. Within 4-6 months of graduation, I secured a job at a multinational company, through which I also got the opportunity to work abroad in Europe and Asia for a couple of years. I have been able to invest in real estate, and own a house of my own in my hometown as well. I am currently working on building my own startup, FFE has played a significant role in supporting me complete my education. As a way to give back to the organisation, I volunteer as a facilitator and mentor. And I have also partaken in the "Adopt A Scholar" initiative.*
>
> \- *Alumnus, (2004 -08)*

8% (14 out of 183 alumni) of FFE Alumni have migrated to different countries such as USA, Australia, Germany, France and Canada

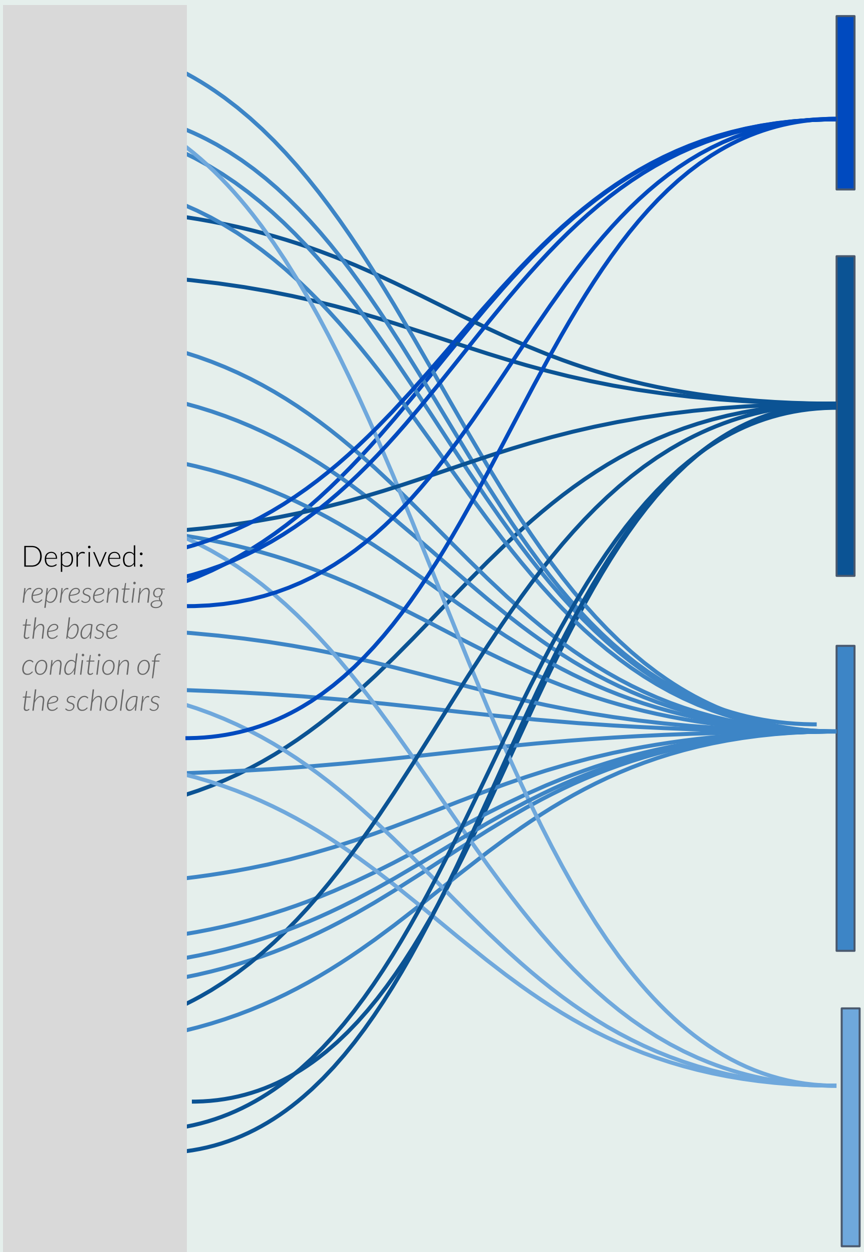


86.7% of alumni scholars showed signs of upward economic mobility, with an average income of ₹19.2* lakhs amongst FFE alumni who are currently employed

Economic mobility, in this context, is defined as the change in economic outcomes as experienced by FFE scholars and their families.Adapting the McKinsey Global Institute, (MGI) framework, scholars were divided into 5 distinct groups based on their current income levels - deprived, aspirers, seekers, strivers and the rich.

FFE scholars typically came from the deprived strata, and post completion of their courses and subsequent employment, 86.7% of scholars showed signs of upward economic mobility.

Figure 3.4: Current Economic Status of Past FFE scholars



Rich - *Annual Income Greater than ₹30 lakhs*
Individuals in this strata enjoy a very high standard of living. **12.6%** of the graduates are in the rich category.

Strivers - *Annual Income between ₹15 to ₹30 lakhs*
Strivers and upwards are considered to be financially successful. They have a stable source of income, access amenities and are able to create a wealth base for themselves and their families. **28.9%** of the graduates are strivers.

Seekers - *Annual Income between ₹5 to ₹15 lakhs*
Individuals in this strata have the most variation. Generally, they are able to comfortably meet all their basic needs and start to purchase small to large assets. **45.2%** of the graduates are seekers.

Aspirers - *Annual Income between ₹1.3 to ₹5 lakhs*
Aspirers continue to struggle to live comfortably, typically spending almost half of their income on basic necessities. **13.3%** of the graduates are aspirers.

Source: The 'Bird of Gold': The Rise of India's Consumer Market.

FFE's Supporters

Source: FFE

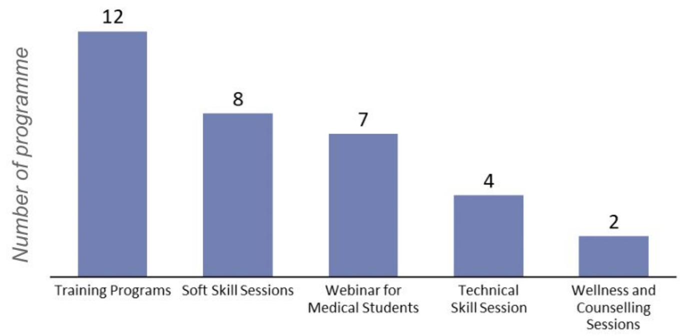
Donors: From funding 795 students till 2011 to funding 10,227 student in a single year (2021-22); FFE donors have played a pivotal role in the sustainability of the program

Donors resonate with the vision of FFE scholarship programme and their consistent support is key to financial sustainability of the programme

Through IDIs with 9 donors, it was revealed that majority of donors started funding small set of scholars and gradually expanded their support to other students because FFE's commitment to support students from financially underprivileged section coupled with rigor of selection criteria, thought leadership, transparent reporting & proactive communication mechanism, and the magnitude of impact created by the program motivated the donors.

Donors are therefore willing to support in growth and strengthening the programme beyond the scope of current engagement by providing training, internship, and employment opportunities for eligible scholars

Graph 4.3: Donors Support to Employability Programme



*Souce: FFE annual report 2021-22

Active donor engagement has ensured sustained skilling and mentoring support for holistic educational support to the scholars

Donors have extended their support to FFE's beyond scholarship programme as they understand the importance of skilling and mentoring support that provides professional guidance to help students navigate through college challenges and gain skills essential to grab competitive job opportunities in the market. Additionally, 1004 FFE scholars were mentored by employee volunteers from 70+ corporates during the year 2021-22.

52% — 13 Foundations

40% — 64 Corporate

5% — 226 Individual donors

3% — 1538 FFE Alumni

Figure 3.5:Share of INR 51.45 Cr donations received in the year 2021-22

Donors: Suggestions from donors to further strengthen the programme

Programme Suggestions: For efficient implementation of the programme

Strengthen MIS system: The current updates given to the donors are manual with limited utilization of tech and data which creates challenges in tracking and managing the CSR activities. CSR donors mentioned the need to further strengthen the MIS system for efficient tracking of funds and beneficiary.

Focus on generic need based course: During in-depth interviews, donors suggested that in addition to focus on STEM courses, a few generic need based ones can also be included for the students to ensure inclusiveness.

Integrating mentoring program in CSR contracts: To ensure participation of employee volunteers in the mentoring program, CSR donors suggest that mentorship can be included in the MoU with CSR since it simplifies the approval and documentation process for the CSR leads/managers.

Process suggestions: For meaningful and holistic impact.

Strengthen engagement with students through a goal setting exercise: Goal setting can help students organise their thoughts and creates pathways for individual development. Donors suggested that FFE can include these goal setting exercises as a part of their scholarship programs.

Expanding Outreach: Donors identify a need to expand outreach to ensure that a larger pool of students from the marginalised section are aware of the offering, especially females, PWDs, and students from rural India. Moreover, FFE can ensure that top colleges have them listed under their scholarship list to help expand their outreach numbers.

Increasing motivation for Mentors: Corporates who provide large number of employee volunteer for mentorship support find it difficult to recognise them for their efforts. This, in the long term, can decrease the motivation level of the mentors. By exploring small recognitions FFE can keep mentors motivated and engaged.

Alumni: Due to sustained efforts from the FFE team, 1 in 2 alumni continue to engage with and support FFE in their endeavours

To ensure sustainability of the FFE programme, and instill a sense of altruism amongst scholars, FFE provides multiple volunteering avenues through the Alumni Engagement and the Circle of Giving initiative. Scholars sign a "Soft Pledge" at the time of receiving scholarship, wherein they vow to financially support the education of at least 2 FFE scholars after securing a job and financial stability.

1 in 2 FFE Alumni continue to engage with and support FFE by volunteering their time as facilitators, mentors, or both

34.4% of FFE Alumni volunteer as facilitators. FGDs and in-depth interviews revealed that alumni view this opportunity to give back to the organisation and society by supporting the selection of future scholars.

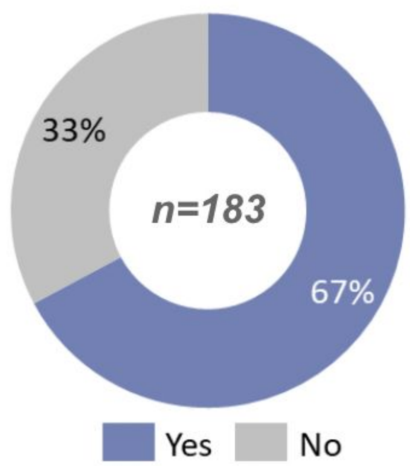
21.3% of FFE Alumni volunteer as mentors. Alumni identified the need for a mentor in their professional journey, and therefore to fast track the growth of current FFE scholars, they volunteer as mentors and provide 1:1 support, guidance, and share their experience.

Few FFE Alumni have also been instrumental in making donor / partner connections for FFE through their company's CSR initiative. Out of the 17 FGD participants, 3 reported making funder/partnership connections for FFE with their company's CSR wing. FFE's programme team highlighted that 15 corporate partnerships have been materialised with the support of FFE Alumni.

Direct alumni contributions to FFE during FY 2020-21 was INR 1.2 Cr under the Circle of Giving initiative

- As per FFE's records

Alumni part of the Alumni Giving Circle



- Of those who donate to FFE, 63.4% (78/123) report making a donation every year.
- Remaining 32.8% who are yet to donate, mentioned that limited funds was a major barrier to giving.

I informed my office colleagues about FFE and the role it played in my life, to encourage them to donate and support the education of disadvantaged scholars. The company's CSR unit has a Matching Grant policy, so I ensure that every donation made is replicated by the company as well.

- *Alumni, Engineering*

Founder and Board members understand current challenges and are motivated to strengthen the program to bring financial, institutional and operational sustainability

From the year of inception (1994) to 2023, FFE has strengthened its scholarship program by using data and evidence to take strategic decisions. Detailed conversations with the Founders and Board Members reveals that FFE aspires to further strengthen the program by:

Build a Cohesive Alumni Network

FFE augmented its alumni network in the year 2011. Since then, the alumni network has been pivotal in the financial and operational sustainability of the program through donations and volunteering for beyond scholarship program. The focus now is on building a cohesive alumni network and leveraging their expertise to further upgrade the programme. Furthermore, encouraging alumni participation and involvement in the management and decision making within the organisation can help strengthen the impact.

Strengthening Fundraising Strategy

Board members recognise the need for consistent fundraising with respect to the increasing cost of education coupled with high population of scholars who need scholarship for higher education. Consolidating funding through various channels such as Alumni networks, Government, CSR, and charities can ensure consistent funding support to current and future scholars.

Mentorship support to Medical Scholars

Currently, the mentorship program is not extended to medical scholars since availability of the medical professionals for the mentorship program is a challenge. Increasing focus of the Beyond Scholarship program for medical students can provide the required professional guidance to the scholars.

Increasing Female Enrollment

Only 19.72% of BTech scholars in India are women which creates a barrier for FFE to ensure increased participation of women applicants and scholars. A Board member suggested relaxing the merit criteria marginally for women applicants to increase the female applicant pool.

Chapter 04: Recommendations and Way Forward

This chapter provides recommendations on how the FFE programme can be further enhanced.

Three key areas of recommendations emerge based on the interactions and observations during the course of the study

On conducting a 360-degree assessment of the FFE Scholarship and Beyond Scholarship programme, three key areas of recommendations emerge based on several interactions with different stakeholders and observations made by Sattva during the course of the study.

Recommendation Areas

Systems & Processes

Recommendations on internal systems and processes that focus on:

- Design of the programme
- Formulation of internal policies
- Capabilities in technology

Operational Strategy

Recommendations on what can help improve the value add or relevance for primary beneficiaries and how inclusive strategies can be deployed, focusing on:

- Mobilisation of beneficiaries
- Customisation of the programme
- Coping with unexpected risks and building resilience

Business Strategy

Recommendations for scalability and sustainability in line with trends on donations and educational giving:

- Role of FFE as an ecosystem orchestrator
- Strategy for improving donor communication and participation
- Strategy towards alternative mediums for larger funding

Systems and Processes:

Sensitisation training:

Conduct sensitisation trainings for intermediaries such as facilitators and mentors to improve awareness, reduce subconscious biases and promote inclusivity.

Considering that scholars who apply for the Scholarship and Beyond Scholarship programmes come from vulnerable backgrounds, it is important to create a supportive and inclusive environment for them. Sensitisation trainings for experienced professionals who volunteer as facilitators and mentors may increase their knowledge about the unique challenges faced by the scholars and its impact on their lives. By being aware of their circumstances, mentors and facilitators may be better equipped to build empathetic and stronger relationships with the scholars - leading to increased engagement, improved self-esteem and also contribute to the overall success of the scholarship and beyond scholarship programmes.

Internal policy formulation:

Design clear policies to safeguard scholars from any discriminatory or harmful behaviours, and provide protocols for exceptional situations

As scholars are outside the safeguard of a particular educational institution, and are expected to regularly interact with individuals with whom they do not have a pre-existing professional relationship, it becomes imperative for FFE to state clear policies, guidelines and SOPs to inform how scholars interact with intermediaries. A policy can prevent incidents of discrimination, harassment and any other harmful behaviour and also outline the process to raise any such issues in a confidential manner.

As the mentor may also provide emotional and psychological support to their mentees, there should be a clear policy that outlines the role of the mentor and sets expectations and boundaries in case the mentee shares sensitive information with them. For instance, during qualitative interviews, a mentor shared that his mentee confided in him about having suicidal thoughts. It becomes imperative for FFE to state a policy with a reporting and response protocol in such situations.

Cross-collaboration across mentors:

Adapt the current MIS software to serve as a collaborative space for mentors, which may result in an expansion of the available mentor network for each mentee.

Mentors during qualitative interviews highlighted that there is limited scope for collaboration amongst mentors. To enable cross mentor learning, FFE could provide access to their mentor directory amongst all mentors and conduct introductory webinars or in-person networking events so that mentors have a chance to be acquainted with each other. FFE could also sort mentors into smaller groups on the basis of their mentees' super specialisation, and. these mentor groups could routinely connect with each other to share challenges, resources and learnings. A member from FFE's mentorship team can be allocated to these groups to ensure smooth coordination, participation from mentors and provide support from FFE on an adhoc basis. FFE can also augment their current technology platform so that the entire mentor network can connect with each other, post queries, share resources, amongst others.

These initiatives may improve collaboration across mentors, and expand the mentor network for each mentee.

Technological Infrastructure:

Leverage technology to automate processes and streamline beneficiary management.

With Salesforce as a new addition to streamline MIS, plugins such as Open Water, Jotform, Submittable can be used to streamline beneficiary management. For instance, forms can be directly linked to the main database on scholars. If FFE aims to track the performance of each scholar, they can request scholars to fill in their quarterly or bi-annual progress using forms and link the responses to the main database. This may help optimise beneficiary management while capturing any and all important information. Google calendars can also be used as a means of verification for the mentoring sessions. Automating routine activities may help the implementation team focus more on analysis, problem solving and strategy.

Operational Strategy:

Mobilisation Strategy:

Deploy a mobilisation strategy that promotes inclusivity on the basis of geography, gender and socioeconomic background - leading to a feeder network between alumni and potential scholars

To ensure that FFE's support reaches the last mile and promotes inclusivity on the basis of gender, geography, and socioeconomic background, a mobilisation strategy that leverages partnerships, the facilitator network and social media is required.

FFE could start by identifying their serviceable available market (SAM), i.e all economically disadvantaged scholars studying in high school within India, and then divide them into strata based on gender and geography. The mobilisation strategy can be designed on the basis of FFE's current resources and objectives, i.e identifying what portion of the serviceable available market (SAM) is to be targeted. Accordingly, FFE could develop strategic partnerships with NGOs in alignment to the serviceable obtainable market (SOM) and FFE's objectives. For instance, if FFE aims to improve their rural outreach amongst students who want to pursue STEM courses, FFE could partner with NGOs such as Universe Simplified, North East Development Foundation) that will act as backward linkages for FFE. These strategic partnerships may lead to improved awareness of the FFE scholarship and may also contribute to an improvement in the retention rates among high school students. In addition to this, FFE could also partner with NGOs such as the India Stem Foundation, and SMILE Foundation to create awareness about the scholarship.

FFE can actively scout for and leverage facilitators who reside in their target geographies to conduct scouting workshops in regional languages across high schools, and other institutions across states to improve the accessibility of the programme.

Feedback Mechanism and Stakeholder Communication:

Periodically conduct primary market research and establish a real-time feedback loop to evolve the programme as per the specific requirements of the scholars

To ensure that FFE's programme continues to be relevant to the primary beneficiaries' needs, FFE could conduct primary market research (PMR) to judge the relevance of the programme, and renvision their strategy if required. FFE could proactively and routinely seek for feedback from their scholars ensuring representation of all courses so that the evolution of the programme is in alignment with their dynamic needs.

FFE could also opt for softer and more positive modes of communication in case of non-compliance for voluntary programmes, especially since scholars come from vulnerable backgrounds, and have to cope with many difficulties.

Contingency Fund:

Build a contingency fund and create awareness amongst the scholars about it to ensure that scholars are able to cope with personal difficulties and complete their education.

Since scholars come from financially weaker backgrounds, any unexpected expense or challenge such as family's health problems, loss of a parent or community level challenges like the pandemic or financial depression, may prevent them from completing their education, or put additional pressure on them. Building a contingency fund for students facing personal economic challenges at a given point which could be used in the form of an interest free loan to ensure that scholars are able to cope and complete their education. It would be imperative for FFE to clearly communicate the presence of such a fund, and how to access it amongst the scholars.

Financial Management:

Conduct sessions on financial management, which may improve their knowledge and skills and could potentially accelerate their journey towards financial stability.

As part of the skill training initiative, FFE could also conduct a few optional sessions on financial planning and management. These sessions could improve the scholars' financial management and budgeting skills and accelerate their journey towards financial security and stability.

Business Strategy:

Marketing Strategy:

Develop a marketing strategy to maximize online and offline reach.

While FFE has extensive documentation to prove impact, a plan around annual communication events, social media posts / traction and specific event based marketing may help them grow their online and offline presence. .

Social Media Presence:. Instagram can prove beneficial for sourcing donations and improving FFE's visibility as a whole. FFE could consider increasing their reach on instagram, establish credibility by getting verified through using user engagement techniques such as targeted advertisements, reels / videos, consistent campaigns like blog series, appropriate usage of NGO hashtags, among others.

Hackathons: Hackathons can be a great medium for FFE to increase awareness about the scholarship amongst students. Hackathons are tech or non tech competitions that bring together experts and students to create a collaborative environment for solving a certain social or a business problem. FFE can collaborate with NGOs or organizations that host hackathons at government, government-aided or low income private schools across India as it will help FFE spread awareness about FFE and also encourage girls to take up STEM education.

PR Events: FFE could continue partnering with platforms and credible news agencies that can lead some of the thought leadership posts for FFE. For instance, in the South, EDEX Live of The New Indian Express covers education for Southern states and can be reached out for sponsored articles or view points. Additionally, FFE can consider ensuring presence of its various stakeholders at conferences, round tables, industry specific events, workshops etc, for example the FICCI higher education summit.

Funding:

Research recent trends towards educational giving to boost the funding pipeline.

According to India Philanthropy 2022, gradual increasing households incomes will pave way for increased retail individual donations. In the last 5 years, the education sector saw an 18% dip in funding indicating a need to look at small ticket size or retail philanthropy as a model for sustainability of the programme. Similarly, a lot of philanthropic funding in education is going into setting for profit or not for profit institutions leaving little scope for scholarship based models to receive a major chunk of this funding. FFE alumni alone contribute ___ INR (As of 2022) under the Adopt a Scholar scheme indicating a healthy ground to explore how FFE can optimise this trend in individual giving further. FFE can also explore options of online charity fundraising such as instagram fundraising or participating in yearly events like Daan Utsav where in various platforms like Letzchange.org, Donatekart.org, among others help NGOs raise funds.

Ecosystem orchestrator:

Establish forward and backward linkages to provide better opportunities to female students choosing STEM disciplines.

Backward linkages: FFE can partner with nonprofit organizations and corporates to provide scholarship aid and skill training and mentorship support for female students wanting to pursue a career in STEM. Just like FFE's current tech scholarship programme in partnership with Amazon called AFE-FFE programme, FFE can provide more of such scholarship opportunities by collaborating with other corporates having similar tech scholarship programmes for eg Adobe Research - Women in Tech Scholarship, Goldman Sachs Global Scholarship, Qualcomm Global Impact scholarship among others. On the training front, FFE can provide joint trainings with organizations such as Women in Tech Academy who specialize in providing data science and technology training for women.

Forward Linkages: In order to make sure that students get the right career opportunities post training and scholarship aided education FFE can collaborate with corporates having programmes to provide internship and full time opportunities exclusively for women in tech. A few examples of such internship and full time programmes are Microsoft's She Codes, Amazon's amaze wow, Google's STEP internship, Twitter's DevelopHER, among others

About Sattva

Sattva (www.sattva.co.in) is a social impact strategy consulting and implementation firm. Sattva works closely at the intersection of business and impact, with multiple stakeholders including non-profits, social enterprises, corporations and the social investing ecosystem. Sattva's work spans multiple states in India, multiple countries in Africa and South Asia, on the ground, and Sattva has engaged with leading organizations across the globe through its practice in a strategic advisory. realizing operational outcomes, CSR knowledge assessments, and co-creation of sustainable models. Sattva works to realize inclusive developmental goals across themes in emerging markets, including education, skill development and livelihoods, health care and sanitation, digital and financial inclusion, energy access and environment, among others. Sattva has offices in Bangalore, Mumbai and Delhi.

The impact assessment study was conducted by the Impact Measurement and Advisory team at Sattva. The team comprised:

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