



Mahatma Gandhi National Fellowship Program (MGNF)



“Knowledge gained through experience
is far more superior than bookish knowledge”

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<https://www.iimb.ac.in/mgnf>



Jointly designed by IIM Bangalore and the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) in the Government of India, the Mahatma Gandhi National Fellowship (MGNF) pilot program was initiated in March 2020 to create a cadre of individuals who will assist the district administrative structure in supporting the delivery of skill development programs while receiving education and training at a leading management institution. The pilot phase of the 2-year Fellowship program is currently active with 69 Fellows posted in 69 districts of India across 6 states (i.e., Gujarat, Karnataka, Meghalaya, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Uttarakhand). Based on the success of the pilot phase, the program has been extended to another 661 districts across the country. In phase 2, IIM Bangalore is managing 79 Fellows posted in 79 districts across 6 states (i.e., Odisha, Karnataka, Goa, Haryana, Uttarakhand, Tripura).

Implemented in collaboration with the State Skill Development Mission (SSDM), Fellows are assigned to a district during the two years where they assist the Department of Skill Development and work toward energizing the functioning of the District Skill Committee (DSC) to support the districts skill ecosystem and ensure better growth and development.



Review from the State level Officials



Our Karnataka MGNF Phase 1 cohort in collaboration with a very driven and passionate Phase 2 cohort, is creating valuable impact in areas such as 21st-century skills, Nano Entrepreneurship, and Industry Linkage and are effectively streamlining the implementation of existing programs.

Mr. Ashwin Gowda, IRS, MD, KSDC, Karnataka

It is a point of motivation for the whole fraternity of skill development that MSDE, GoI is focusing on strengthening the skill ecosystem at every level. Deploying the Mahatma Gandhi National fellows is one such innovative initiative that focuses on bringing convergence at the grass-root level. The Directorate of Skill Development, Govt. of Tripura with the support from all district authorities and other stakeholders are extending necessary support and coordination to the MGNF so that they can contribute to the holistic development of the skill ecosystem within the State. I am hopeful that together, we would be able to showcase greater achievement in strengthening the skill ecosystem in the State.



“Skilling requires a holistic approach to achieve the desired outcome both at State and country-level”

Mr. Sanjay Chakrabarty, Director, Directorate of Skill Development, Government of Tripura

Vision from the Academic Mentors and Program Directors, IIMB



“As one of the Program Directors and a faculty mentor, it does not take much to realize that the MGNF program fills in a huge praxis-related gap in Management Education. A unique opportunity for listening to the 'voices on the ground' of this vast and frenetically changing nation of ours”

Dr. Rajlaxmi Kamath, Prof, IIMB

"MGNF is a program designed to act as a bridge between policy and practice – the same would be achieved as the policy would be framed by grassroots level input from the MGN Fellows. Working at the district level, the fellows have a good idea of the issues and challenges facing the districts and also what would potentially be the solutions for them. This kind of bottom-up approach is certainly likely to offer better developmental perspectives than what has happened in the traditional top-down approach. Further, the scale of the project (all districts of the country) allows a holistic understanding at the state levels as well at the national level."

Dr. Sankarshan Basu, Prof. IIMB



Comments from the Faculty Panel members



MGNF gives a great opportunity for young graduates interested in public policy to learn concepts and their application in the field. It helps fellows to comprehend rural economic and social problems and try out their ideas particularly in skill development. It provides invaluable insights into functioning of governmental organizations and challenges in implementing public policies.

Prof. Gopal Naik, IIMB

"MGNF is a unique fellowship which brings the academics and practice together through young, hardworking, and creative Fellows who go beyond expectations. Mentoring these fellows has given me deep insights into how a government program can make a difference in a district economy. It was a great experience to work with these young energetic Fellows who are passionately involved with every dimension of skill development."

Nagadevara. V, Retired Prof. IIMB



Involvement of Phase 1 fellows in the contribution to the DSDP Preparation and Awards

Sl No	Name of the Fellow	State	District
1.	Ms. Ashwini Togare	Uttarakhand	Bageswar
2.	Mr. Dheeraj Rathore	Uttarakhand	Rudraprayag,
3.	Mr. Hemanth Kumar V	Karnataka	Raichur
4.	Mr. Hiralchandra Maru	Gujarat	Rajkot
5.	Mr. Nikhil	Uttarpradesh	Bahraich
6.	Mr. Ramesh Kumar	Uttarpradesh	Sonbhadra

Uttarakhand

The Districts of Bageswar and Rudraprayag earned accolades from MSDE, GoI for their DSDP, and the concerned District collectors and phase 1 fellows of Bageswar and Rudraprayag, Ms. Ashwini Togare and Mr. Dheeraj Rathore, were present at the New Delhi celebration. It was not a simple voyage; rather, it was a difficult one, requiring fellows to labor tirelessly at the district despite several obstacles. The MGNF Program Director and PMT would like to congratulate the fellows and concerned SRA for their hard effort in ensuring that this momentous day is remembered by many as an inspiration for MGNF Phase II and the IIMB team.



Karnataka

Sri Rajesh Bavagi, DSDO, Raichur District, Karnataka - a long-serving and devoted official who has made a significant contribution to the talent ecosystem. His constant supervision and mentoring of the MGNF Mr. Hemanth Kumar V paid off when the district received an award from the MSDE, GoI for their outstanding work. The IIMB wishes to congratulate everybody involved at the district and IIMB, particularly the SRA and FP members of the fellow, since recognition would not be possible without their dedicated guidance.



A glimpse from the social media platform



Mr. Hiralchandra Maru, MGNF Phase 1, Rajkot District, Gujarat, showed his dedication and perseverance when the DSDP received great acclaim and was awarded by the MSDE, Government of India. At various stages of Fellowship activities, there were several obstacles and issues, but the Fellow overcame them all and completed his duty with entire dedication. The Rajkot District Collector congratulates the Fellow and expresses his gratitude for his contributions during his fellowship in the district. In the same vein, IIMB wishes to express its gratitude to the Fellow, concerned SRAs, FPs, and all other district officials for their efforts in making the day a reality.



A District Skill Committee at South Tripura District, Tripura



District Skill Committee meetings are being organized by MGN Fellow in many districts in 6 states and here is one example. During the meeting the MGN Fellow of South Tripura District, Tripura made a brief PowerPoint presentation where she highlighted the status of various skill development schemes of the districts such as DDU-GKY, PMKVY, PMKK, and others. She also briefly discussed various challenges of the district regarding skill and entrepreneurship activities of the district along with identification of potential areas of entrepreneurship in the district where she identified horticulture-based products like Cashew Nut, Palak Honey, Rubber, etc. The District Collector chaired the meeting and express his happiness as the MGN Fellow facilitated the whole process of organizing the same.

District Indicator Workshop and Academic Module II at IIM Bangalore

As part of the MGNF curriculum, the district Indicator workshop has been conducted from 7th March-19 March 2022 at the IIM Bangalore campus. All the 76 Fellows from Phase-II have presented their District Immersion reports along with templates to their concerned Faculty Panel and necessary feedback for betterment.



Figure 1 AM 2 Classes (Evaluation)



Figure 2 DI Workshop, a fellow explaining to FP queries



Stories from the grassroots Haryana

Swati Aggarwal, Charkhi Dadri, Haryana Swati Aggarwal has been working with the district-specific initiative, CHIRAG, Charkhi Dadri Rural Artisan Gathering. The journey of CHIRAG started in December 2021, when she started mapping the vulnerable skill sets in the agrarian district, with an intent to provide a new identity to this unexplored district. She established strong collaborations with Block Development Officers, Panchayat Secretaries, National Urban Livelihood Mission (NULM), and National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) to realize this vision. In the process, she identified more than 80 artisans across 16 vulnerable vocations in the district in her village level skill mapping exercise. CHIRAG was inaugurated by Deputy Commissioner, Charkhi Dadri on 23rd April 2022. About 17 artisans showcased their skills in the form of handmade paintings, wall hangings, edible products, terracotta utensils, mudras, etc. in the Quila Maidan, Charkhi Dadri. The response was phenomenal with some artisans reporting a ten-time rise in their daily sales. Mahatma Gandhi National Fellow of the district is looking for opportunities to further strengthen this initiative and for newer opportunities to strengthen their value chains through a proper blend of marketing, skill development, quality assurance, and financial linkages.



Karnataka



Srinidhi Gurunath, Chikmagalur, Karnataka

to allow the youth to synthesize problems of their region into entrepreneurial ideas to aid the development of their Malnad home region. The larger idea is to bring out the voices of the homegrown ideas for development as opposed to adopting foreign ideas of development.

Srinidhi Gurunath has been looking into engaging with environmentalism and sustainability through skill development in the western ghat district of Chikmagalur, Karnataka. Recognizing the natural heritage of Western ghats as a crucial factor in organizing skills, the fellow is working towards alternative special projects for the region that foster a circular and sustainable economy. Of the lot, one of the projects is aimed at enhancing entrepreneurship and the relevance of the Malnad (Hilly Region) through Design Thinking. Srinidhi Gurunath, Chikmagalur, Karnataka Under the guidance of the MD of the State Skill Development Mission, on a pilot basis, the fellow conducted a Design Thinking Workshop for final year degree students in the Remote town of Kalasa. The workshop intended



Uttarakhand

Kartikeya has been working on developing a homestay ecosystem in Uttarkashi. The tourism sector is the major contributor to the district economy. The sector has untapped potential as less than 1% of all the tourists visiting Uttarakhand visit Uttarkashi. He is working on increasing the digital presence of the district by utilizing social media, developing a GIS (Geographical Information System), and skilling the youth in tourism and hospitality. He has followed a cluster approach and has identified the homestays, tourist spots, and villages suffering from migration. He is developing linkages between these to address migration, generate livelihood, and increase the productivity of the region. You can check out his GIS work at <https://bit.ly/UttarkashiGhostVillageAndTouristSpot>



Kartikeya Kotnala,
Uttarkashi, Uttarakhand

Tripura

Asit Debbarma is closely associated with the District Industry Centre, and he has received exposure to the industries of West Tripura. From his exposure, he found out that West Tripura has 220 major industries in the district, and the Bodhjungnagar growth center is the biggest industrial area in the district. The top industrial sectors in the district are rubber, bamboo, food processing, agriculture, tourism, and, hospitality. Apart from this, he has played a role in conducting the Investment Summit 2022 along with the General Manager of the District Industry Center, in which more than 80 companies have participated and MoUs worth Rs 2500 crore between the Tripura government and 50 investors have been signed. He also assisted the District Industry Centre in West Tripura with the implementation of the "Mukhyamantri Cha Sramik Kalyan Prakalpa" scheme.



Asit Debbarma, West Tripura



Odisha

Case Study of Dhenkanal District – Digital Marketing and Entrepreneurship training for WSHGs. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the economic condition of the women has become poignant, and the lack of digital awareness and literacy has added to their plight. Empowering a woman empowers the entire family. As part of the Aspirational District program, Odisha Skill Development Authority (OSDA) and Mission Shakti Dept. in collaboration with NIESBUD are imparting Digital Marketing and Entrepreneurship Development Training to WSHGs of the district. Pallavi has actively coordinated with the line departments for the successful completion of the training. Initially, a group of 8 master trainers were identified from each block and were imparted training at NSTI, Bhubaneswar. A total of 157 SHG members (20 members/block) associated with different products have been imparted training. The 3-days training program's curriculum covers Digital Marketing, Digital Payment systems, Search Engine Optimization, Social Media Usage, Content Marketing, PAN, GST, KYC registrations along with Entrepreneurship Development. During the training, the participants are guided thoroughly to register themselves and list their products on e-commerce platforms like Flipkart, Amazon, Mission Shakti e-commerce portal, etc. The fellow has provided sessions on the significance of digital marketing, and entrepreneurship, how to ensure consistent income, and assist the district in the registration process. She is following up with the master trainers of each block, Mission Shakti Dept. and NIESBUD trainers to facilitate the necessary handholding support required to streamline the process and further increase the turnover of the trainees.



Pallavi Mishra, Dhenkanal, Odisha



Quotes from the MGNF



Mahatma Gandhi National fellowship has helped me demystify the rural economy and broaden my horizon about challenges people face at the grassroots level. I am actively engaged with farmers, Self Help Groups, and government bodies to tackle the challenge of skill gap and employment in the food processing industry in the district.

Sai Kiran Rai, Davanagere, Karnataka

MGNF, to me, is about connecting the administration with the people and the people with the administration through interdepartmental collaborations by understanding the issues of society's shifting Dynamics and Continually evolving living standards through Office and field work and developing skilling proposals to generate Revenue and Livelihood to create a skilled district ecosystem.

-Bindiya Gadkar, North Goa, Goa



"Transform and channel the power thinking to positive thinking, peer learning to solo practice, classroom orientation to grass-root orientation to make a meaningful change by adding to the story that I want to see in the district. Blending traditional wisdom with technological advancements: the bumpy roads of a North-Eastern journey to a holistic development by MGN Fellow, Unakoti."

-Subhasis Mondal, Unakoti, Tripura.

"Extensive field immersion visit is constructing a robust community network and assisting us to recognize grassroots issues. Additionally, boosting our way of thinking about entrepreneurship by getting enriched mentorship from splendid professors of IIM Bangalore to put ideas into action with the aid of using local resources."

-Shanti Murmu, Jagatsinghpur, Odisha



"Immersing with rural communities while supporting district administration in a small district of Haryana, has provided me an opportunity to learn about the intricacies of the government system along with possibilities to collaborate with different stakeholders, who are working on a common mission. As MGNF, I aim to further strengthen these collaborations while focusing on research and data analytics-driven decision making to bring some developmental changes at the grassroots level."

- Rahul Saini, MGNF, Panipat, Haryana

Some Glimpse of Fellows' involvement in skill and entrepreneurship ecosystem of the district

Figure 2 Women weaving Golden grass for making handicrafts.
Bhomiya Kalo, Kendra Para, Odisha



Figure 4 Meeting with organic producers company in Unakoti District,
Subhasis Mondal, Tripura



Figure 5 Varun a Fellow of Bellary
interacting with the College students



Figure 6 HP Manoj visited the Turmeric
production center in Chamaraja Nagar,
Karnataka



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