



# Mahatma Gandhi National Fellowship (MGNF) Programme



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

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Jointly designed by IIM Bangalore and the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) in the Government of India, the Mahatma Gandhi National Fellowship Program (MGNF) was initiated in March 2020 to create a cadre of individuals equipped to assist the district administrative structure in supporting the delivery of skill development programs, while receiving education and training at a leading management institution. The two-year Fellowship program is currently active with 69 Fellows posted in as many districts of India across six states, namely Gujarat, Karnataka, Meghalaya, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

Implemented in collaboration with the State Skill Development Mission (SSDM), the program involves Fellows being assigned to a district for two years, where they assist the Department of Skill Development and work towards energizing the functioning of the District Skill Committee (DSC) to support the districts' skill ecosystems, and ensure better growth and development.



*"The first batch of MGN Fellows have successfully completed their first year of fellowship in a very challenging and difficult year. In the year gone by, they have not only understood (and in some cases improved their understanding of) how the government functions at different levels, particularly at the district level, but also gained tremendous insight into the formation and functioning of the District Skill Committee. This has resulted in vastly improved district development parameters in all districts where MGN Fellows are active. The upcoming year will get the fellows to distill their ideas and learnings further and convert them into actionable plans to further galvanize the district skill economy and the district skill ecosystem, thereby improving the economic conditions of the districts and their residents."*

**- Sankarshan Basu,**

Program Director, MGNF

Professor, Finance and Accounting Area



*"MGN Fellows from the first cohort have completed Year 1 in the program. Their understanding of district administration protocols, functioning of District Skill Committees and their districts has improved significantly. I expect Year 2 to be when they converge many of their ideas and experiences into plans and action points that will energise the district's skill departments."*

**- Arnab Mukherji,**

Program Director, MGNF  
Professor, Centre for Public Policy



*"MGN fellows in Meghalaya have been instrumental in facilitating convergence among different line departments, which has helped the District Skill Committee (DSC) take up demand-driven skilling initiatives in the districts."*

**- Dr. D Vijay Kumar,**

IAS, Chief Executive Officer,  
Meghalaya State Skill Development Society



*"All our District Skill Development Officers are very happy with the way the MGN Fellows are working, coordinating with various other departments and collecting data and reports required for preparing skill development plans. Given the PMKVY 3.0 and the importance of District Skill Committees, I feel MGNF will play a much bigger role in effective implementation of PMKVY with the DSCs."*

**- Shri Ashwin Gowda,**

IRS, Mission Director,  
Karnataka Skill Development Corporation



*"MGNF is a unique initiative by the Government of India, which tries to combine the management education imparted by IIMB under the Academic Module and with the ground-level realities under the district immersion module. This is a great opportunity for the Fellows to learn and contribute in the economic growth of the districts by strengthening the skill ecosystem."*

**- Shri Kunal Silku,**

IAS, Mission Director,  
Uttar Pradesh Skill Development Mission

## Completion of Academic Module 3

The Academic Module 3 was conducted at the state capitals of six the MGNF active states from March 7 to March, 2021. A total of 59 sessions were delivered in two weeks. During AM3, the Fellows were introduced to courses like competition and strategy, financial management and impact evaluation, among others. They were familiarised with challenges around managing and setting up of FPOs. The Fellows also participated in the “District Indicator Workshop”, where they presented their analysis on the resources, opportunities, growth drivers and skill scenarios of their respective districts.

## Supporting customised crash course under central component of PMKVY 3.0

The onslaught of Covid-19 has subjected existing health infrastructure to unprecedented stress. In order to strengthen the healthcare system, MSDE is formulating customised National Occupational Standard (NOS) based Covid-19 job roles under the central component of PMKVY 3.0 with an aim to create a large pool of trained and skilled healthcare professionals. This month, Fellows across the six states have been engaged in supporting their respective district administrations in identifying demands from the districts for each of the job roles. The Fellows are also working with the respective DSCs to mobilise candidates identified under the job roles.



*“I learned how the government works, be a part of the skill development ecosystem at the grassroots level; I had the opportunity to interact with people from diverse backgrounds, from IAS officers to Professors at IIMB, from weavers in a village to the Secretary of RSLDC, Jaipur. The dual aspects of the program offer tangible and intangible benefits that are unmatched.”*

**- Rajeev Kumar,**  
Kota, Rajasthan



*“Peer learning within the state during academic modules and workshops helps in exchange of best practices and building value chain in possible areas.”*

**- Shweta,**  
South Garo Hills,  
Meghalaya



*“A mixture of academic and on-ground reality helps one bring in more practical strategies and ways to reach the end results of your goal. This Fellowship not only gives you that, but also the freedom to work on the ground in your own way. It's an amazing learning phase, where you are contributing to some valuable outcomes too.”*

**- Hiralchandra Maru,**  
Rajkot, Gujarat

# Snapshots from the Field



## **Saloni Parikh, Surendranagar, Gujarat**

Honey bee cultivation through natural processes has been ongoing in the district for a while. However, Saloni observed that these women's groups lack marketing efforts to optimise their income. Hence, she encouraged them to experiment with a few ideas, including setting up stall at prime locations. To their surprise, one group had a turnover of Rs 50,000 in just three days. Such examples are a building base for promoting skill development efforts.

Meeting SHG women, who are a core part of the packaging process



SHG women on field

Saloni Parikh has been deputed to the Surendranagar district of Gujarat. She holds a degree in Electronics and Communication Engineering (2015-19) from Gujarat Technological University, and has been a volunteer of the National Service Scheme (NSS) since 2015. With a slant towards handloom and handicrafts, she envisions leveraging the GI tag to empower artisans of Tangaliya in the district by establishing their own chain of value-added products. She is simultaneously working on tourism development in the district with local voices.



## **India Shreekanth Panchagavi, Dakshin Kannada, Karnataka**

India has contributed to organising dry fish training in her district by conducting a study of dry fishing units in Mangalore and Udupi. She has volunteered to organise a training programme in her district, which has been boosted by funding from CDA for the construction of a mechanized fish drying unit in Mangalore.



Dry Fish Processing

India Shreekanth Panchagavi is a lawyer by qualification, graduating from University Law College, Bangalore University, Bengaluru in July, 2018. During her college days, India participated in NSS programmes and volunteered in an NGO, where she learnt to recognise various problems and suggest practical solutions at the level of the citizens. She visited Ralegaon Siddhi and Jhabua to understand sustainable development in villages through community work. As an MGN Fellow, India is currently post in Dakshin Kannada district.



**Meghan Satish Kadam, West Garo Hills, Meghalaya**

Meghan has undertaken a concrete intervention for the creation of a self-sufficient Skill Development Cell in Tura, since a suitable office space in the form of a District Skill Office was missing. He has been actively involved from conceptualization to planning, designing and execution of an office space for DSC. It is the first dedicated Skill Development Cell in Meghalaya at the district level, which will act as a dedicated knowledge resource centre for skill development.



Skill Development Cell - West Garo Hills, Tura

Meghan Kadam is a MGN fellow for West Garo Hills, Meghalaya, posted in Tura. Having pursued Development Studies at the University of Sussex in the UK, he is primarily interested in the intersections of gender, informality and migration in South Asia.



**Shubham Yadav, Alwar, Rajasthan**

To combat the lack of awareness among students and job seekers, Shubham took the initiative for conducting an employment fair, along with his DEO and ITI Principal. A Rojgar Mela was organized on February 27, 2021. A total of 12 employers were brought on board and the event attracted a footfall in the region of 1,500 candidates. The fair led to 214 candidates being offered appointment letters, while another 256 candidates were called for further selection processes by the employers. A total of 391 candidates were offered placement through the Rojgar Mela.



Pre-Placement Talk and Counselling by Fellow and other District Officials were designed to help aspirants make the right choice



The Placement Drive attracted more than 1,500 aspirant footfalls. Interviewed by 12 Employers, 391 candidates were provided placements

Shubham Yadav is currently working in Alwar as an MGN Fellow. He is also the founder of a Start-up, “ezyPedl”. His areas of interest are public policy, policy outreach and financial inclusion actions. He has degrees in Business Administration, and in Computer Science & Engineering.



### **Ashwini Patekar, Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand**

Ashwini has worked closely with the district administration on the Badalu Horti-Tourism Growth Centre, one of the first government-led horti-tourism projects in India. The project will benefit 20 Gram Panchayats by way of household incomes and access to rural facilities. She has been actively involved in conceptualization, planning, conducting viability analysis, creating a business plan and skill mapping. A sum of Rs 60 lakh under the BADP scheme has been sanctioned for the construction of the capacity building centre, work on which has already begun. Rs 90 lakh has also been sanctioned under the BADP scheme for a food processing unit and for marketing.



Pear cultivation at the Horti-Tourism Growth Centre

Poly house inspection by the Chief Horticulture Officer at the Horti-Tourism Growth Centre



Ashwini Patekar has an MTech degree in Biotech and Research. After working in the developmental sector as a fellow for two years with Teach For India, she joined a non-profit organisation that worked towards helping school principals and leaders to run effective schools in India. In her previous position as a Research, Monitoring and Evaluation Manager, she was involved in programme design and impact assessment of programme in school leadership. Currently, she is posted in Pithoragarh district as an MGN Fellow.



### **Nikhil, Bahraich, Uttar Pradesh**

Led by women of Bahraich district, an initiative was conceived to provide direct market linkage to SHGs. Separate outlets for selling handmade items of these SHGs is the first of its kind project in the district, which aims at uplifting the SHGs and providing a great opportunity for entrepreneurial development in the district. The designated space for this market has been named “B2 BAZAR”, and all the products shall be marketed under the brand name “BRAND BAHRAICH”. The initiative will be rolled out in three phases, on the basis of customer responses. The district administration has also planned to promote these products on online platforms.



Shri Rajiv Kumar, Vice-Chairman, NITI Aayog, interacting with SHG Members



Inauguration of the B2 Bazaar. Sales topped Rs 10,000 on Inauguration Day

Nikhil is an MGN Fellow posted in Bahraich, Uttar Pradesh. A reader at heart, he spends his time reading about self-improvement, financial planning, brands, apart from cooking delicious meals and seeking to keep learning. You can also catch him trading stocks. As a hobby, he reads about companies, learns technical analyses and analyses candlestick charts.

Having completed his BCom. (Hons.) from Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, he is looking at building a career in entrepreneurship after the completion of the Fellowship.

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