



Impact Assessment of Foundation For Excellence (FFE's) Scholarship and Beyond Scholarship Initiatives

An impact assessment study conducted by Sattva Consulting - Executive Summary



www.sattva.co.in



Source: FFE

Establishing the Need for Scholarship Support: FFE's Role in the Ecosystem



Challenges in pursuing Professional Higher Education (PHE) in India

1

India's youth: Education and Workforce

- Currently, India accounts for one fifth of youth population in the world but only 236 million youth i.e. 26.3% are enrolled in higher education.
- The India Skills Report (ISR) conducted an assessment for 3 lakh candidates nationwide who appeared for the WNET (Wheebox National Employability Test). The WNET data suggests that only 1 in 2 of the participating Indian youth were highly employable.

2

Higher Education: Expenditure and Challenges

- 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%.

3

Higher Education: Affordability of Access

- Expenses incurred to acquire higher education have increased by 5.83% from 2014 to 2018, creating financial barriers for the economically disadvantaged youth aiming for higher education.
- The expenditure on higher education for each student has increased by 5.83%¹. 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%).

4

Education: PHE Scholarship Trends

- 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.
- 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.

5

Professional course: Aspirational Enrollments

- 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).
- Compared to non-professional course graduates, the return on Investment is 3 to 4 times higher for engineering graduates and 4-5 times for medical graduates, making these courses lucrative for economic mobility.

6

Higher Education: Inclusion and Accessibility Challenges

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

¹December 2022, "IITs, IIMs, NITs got over 10% of Centre's total expenditure on education: Ministry of Education", Indian Express, New Delhi.
²June 2018, "Status of School Education in India", 75th Round, NSSO.

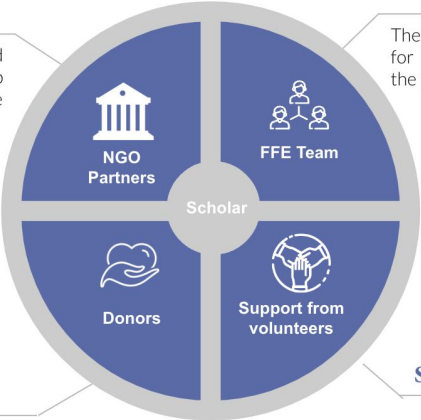
Foundation For Excellence, an NGO founded in 1994, aims to bridge the access gap to tertiary education for bright scholars across the country.

Foundation For Excellence (FFE) was founded in 1994 by Mr. Prabhu Goel and Mrs. Poonam Goel with the mission to help academically bright but underprivileged students in India complete their higher education by providing them with scholarships. In the last 28 years, FFE has supported **24,816 students and disbursed 71,342 scholarships amounting to INR 192 crores as of 2021.**

FFE orchestrates impact with a sustainable multi-stakeholder ecosystem that is invested in the mission and vision of the organisation. Till date FFE has engaged with **70+ corporates, 1800+ individual donors, 700+ volunteers and 18 foundations / trusts.**

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

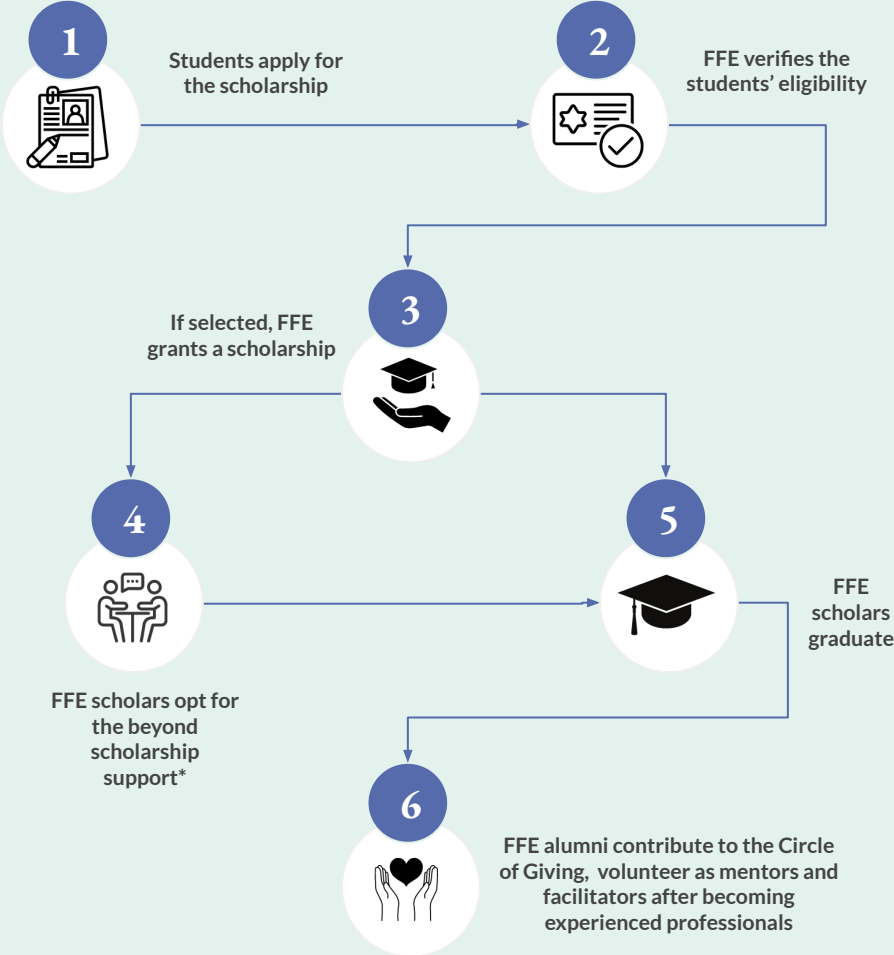
Fund the Programme

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 with FFE



*Mentoring and skilling support is provided to the scholar through beyond scholarship support.




Capturing 28 years of Impact: Objectives and design of the study



About the study: *Capturing 28 years of impact*

In order to evaluate FFE's Scholarship and Beyond Scholarship initiatives, Sattva conducted a retrospective impact evaluation study using the **OECD DAC framework** to assess the following:

Table 1: Areas of inquiry for the study

Area of Inquiry	Broad research questions	Indicators
 <p>Impact on scholars' lives</p>	How has FFE's support enabled scholars to pursue their professional courses?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > % of scholars who have completed their professional courses > % of scholars who report that the support from FFE was significant in helping them complete their graduation
	How has FFE contributed to an improvement in standard of living (employment, financial security, asset ownership) of the scholars?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > % of scholars who secured formal employment > % of scholars who report an increase in their family income
 <p>Impact of the skilling & mentoring support programmes</p>	How has the mentorship and skill training programmes added value to students' job search and placement?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > % of scholars who agree / strongly agree that the beyond scholarship support aided them with their job search and prepare for interviews
	What have been the outcomes of alumni engagement?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > % of scholars who volunteer with FFE as mentors and / or facilitators > Amount of funding raised through the alumni circle
 <p>Impact of alumni engagement</p>		

The study incorporated a descriptive cross-sectional design from a retrospective lens to provide a snapshot of the outcome and the characteristics associated with it at a specific point in time. Over the course of the study (September 2022 to February 2023), Sattva interacted with **500+ beneficiaries and 45 secondary stakeholders to gather a 360° perspective for the study.**

Table 2: Sampling framework followed for the study

Stakeholders	Quantitative surveys	FGD participants	IDI
Current and beyond 2017 scholars	326	31	8
Scholars prior to 2017	183	13	8
Parents of current scholars	-	-	4
Facilitators	-	9	1
Mentors	-	6	4
FFE Founders	-	-	1
Donors	-	-	8
Board Members	-	-	3
FFE programme team	-	9	-

Scholar Profiles and FFE programme components



Demographics



326
Recent Scholars

Gender Disaggregation



14.1%
females



85.6%
males



0.3%
gender
non-conforming

55.8%

respondents are
currently studying

44.2%

graduated between
2017-2022

Course Disaggregation



76.7%
BTech
respondents



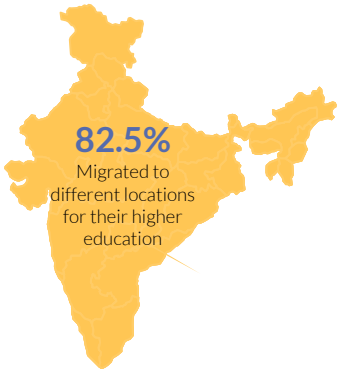
21.2%
MBBS
respondents



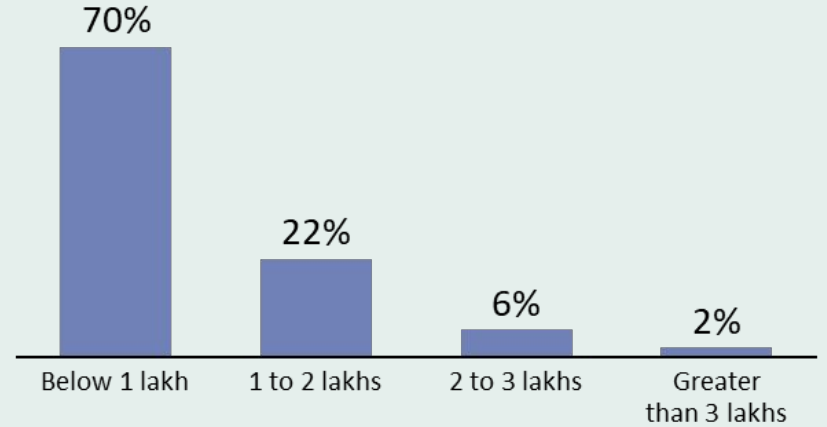
0.3%
B Pharma
respondents



1.8%
respondents
from other
courses



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.



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 **an income per capita of ₹49/day or \$0.6/day.**



70% (n = 326) of the scholars' parents had completed some degree of schooling. As revealed during qualitative interviews, parents deeply understood the crucial role played by education in the betterment of the family. 1 in 3 FFE scholars studied at a private-English medium school.

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

Scholars experience with FFE

FFE creates awareness of their scholarship and beyond scholarship initiatives through their network of facilitators and partnerships with schools and other organizations. The application process is entirely online, and students apply for the scholarship through FFE's website. **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 the scholars academic needs. They reported using the scholarship amount for purposes such as **paying college tuition (86.8%), living expenses (61.7%), books and other supplies (48.2%).**

“ *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.*

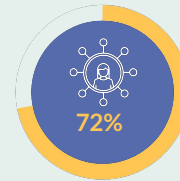
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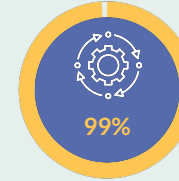
99%

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

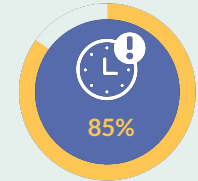
n = 326



of the recent scholars reported hearing of FFE through their **friends, seniors, and colleges**



of the recent scholars reported that the application process was **well defined**



of the recent scholars reported **no delays** in receiving the scholarship amount

n = 326

The scholarship accounts for

over half

of the total college tuition for professional courses such as engineering and medicine. Since FFE scholars came from financially disadvantaged backgrounds, multiple Central and State government schemes, waivers and scholarships may be available to them. 88.3% of FFE scholars reported requiring financial support from more than one source to fund their education and related living expenses, indicating a **need to create more systems of support for the scholars**



Skill training programme

To address the challenges faced by students in securing jobs through campus placements, in 2016 FFE conducted an internal assessment with scholars to understand the causes behind the low placement rates. Based on the findings of this study, FFE designed a skill training programme for scholars focusing on english language skills, technical knowledge and interview preparation to ensure that scholars are job ready. Since 2017, FFE has trained 1900+ scholars through their skill training programme.

“*Campus placements have 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.

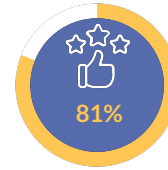
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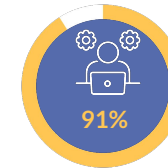
97%

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

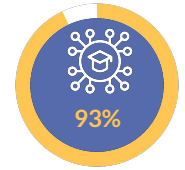
n = 210



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



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



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

n = 210

The technical support provided as part of the skill training initiative stood out as it gave scholars free access to highly renowned courses, helped them build their competency in new skills and improved their ability to crack technical interview rounds.

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



Mentorship programme

Recognising the need for individual and personalised guidance, FFE designed a mentorship programme for scholars focusing on their communication skills, time/stress management, etiquette, problem solving and decision making, interpersonal skills and career development. Experienced professionals and FFE alumni volunteer as mentors and handhold their mentees for a period of 4-6 months, where personalised guidance is provided through monthly 1:1 online sessions. Mentors and mentees are matched on criteria such as common language, gender, location and area of expertise. Till date, FFE has supported 700+ scholars through their mentorship programme.

“ *I want to switch my career from electronic engineering to computer science (CS). FFE accordingly allocated a mentor to me. Adding on to the mentorship curriculum, my mentor helps me manage my tasks to balance my current course and learn CS. She also routinely checks in with me*

- *Scholar, Engineering.*

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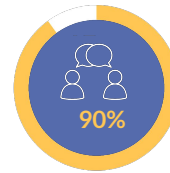


87%

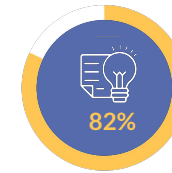
of the scholars who participated in the mentorship programme reported that they would **recommend the programme to other scholars**

n = 130

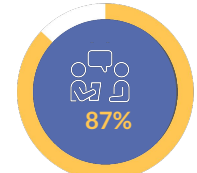
Mentors demonstrated high accountability for the success of their mentees, often going above and beyond to support them, especially during the placement period. Mentors believed that the mentorship programme improved their mentees' ability to be shortlisted for interviews, confidently participate in them and cope with rejections. Mentors reported that the matching criteria helped them easily build rapport with their mentees due to common areas of interest.



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



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



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

n = 130

Evaluating short-term outcomes of the FFE's programme



After graduation : Placement and income

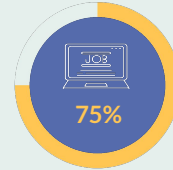
College placements took place towards the end of fourth year for engineering scholars. 81.9% (n = 144) of the graduated scholars reported receiving placement opportunities from their university. Of which, 75.4% succeeded in securing employment through campus placements and 12.7% secured employment outside of campus. However, 11.8% were unable to secure employment. Graduates secured jobs across sectors such as IT, FinTech, Consulting, Manufacturing, and Supply Chain Management amongst others, and worked at companies such as TCS, Capgemini, HCL, Reliance, L&T, Cognizant, Infosys, Tata, among others. The salary package secured by graduates ranged from ₹1.2 to ₹22 lakhs per annum. **On an average, scholars reported earning ~7 to 9 times their previous household annual income from their first corporate job.**

“

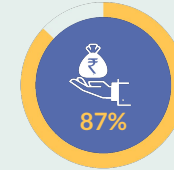
The scholarship not only helped my daughter complete her education, but it also improved the opportunity for my two younger children as I no longer needed to sell our land to support my daughter's education. I believe that scholarships have an ability to create long term impact not just on the individual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

- Parent

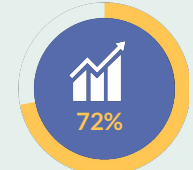
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of the recent FFE graduates who appeared for campus placements **secured employment independently or through campus placements**



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 **early signs of upward economic mobility** within a span of 0-3 years from graduation

n = 326



The current average annual salary of FFE scholars was

₹10.5 lakhs while the **average**

first salary of FFE scholars was ₹6.5lakhs. Scholars report being able to contribute to their family's monthly expenses, save / invest their income, and cover personal expenses.

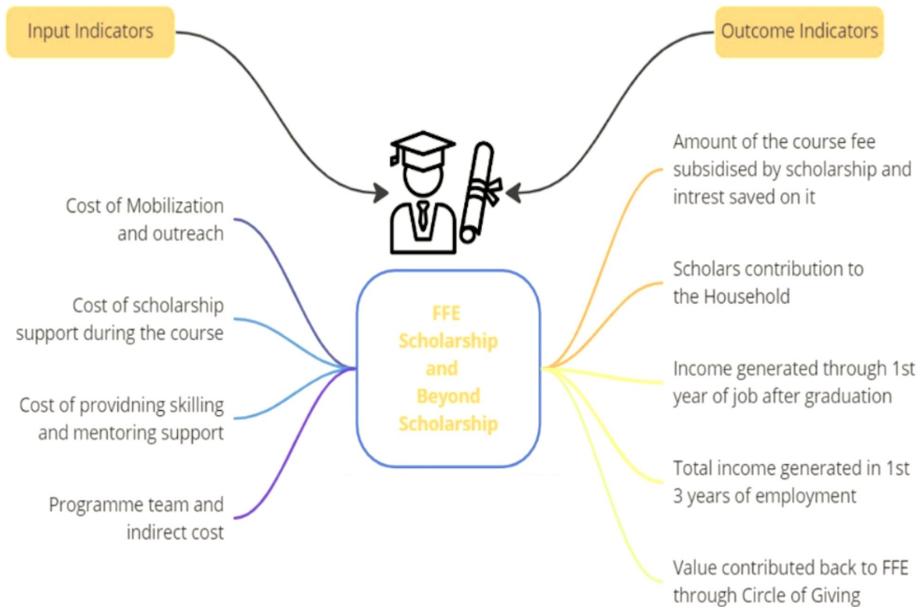
The financial burden experienced by households reduced as households transitioned from 1 to 2 member earning households. 100% of the employed FFE graduates reported contributing to their household's monthly expenses. As highlighted from IDIs with parents, parents experienced improvement in access to resources, reduced financial burden to educate their younger children, and improved social status due to the education and professional status of their children (FFE Scholars).



Social Returns on Investment (SRoI)

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.

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



- **Duration for SROI Calculation:** Social Return on Investment is calculated for FFE scholars from 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.



An average **2.56 x return** is generated of

₹ 5.49 lakhs

For **every FFE scholar** with an average **input of ₹214769**, 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.

Evaluating long-term outcomes of FFE's programme



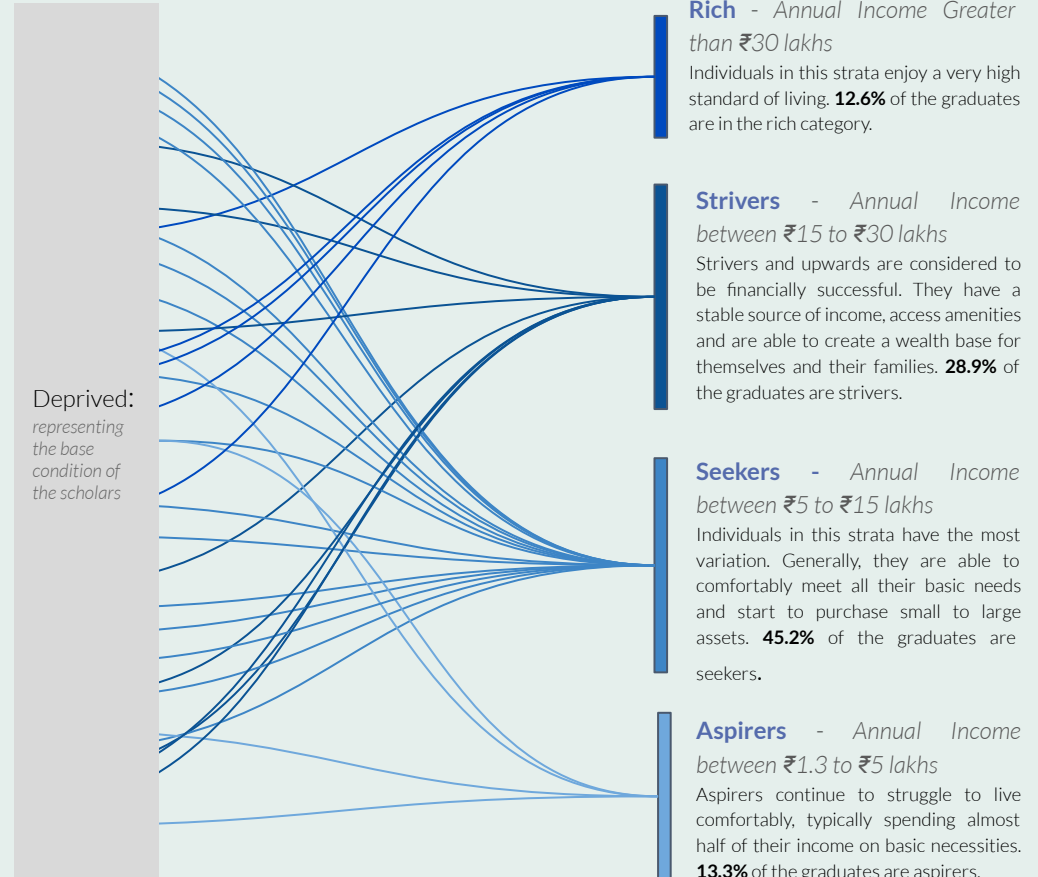
Economic mobility

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 income levels (prior to the scholarship and current) - deprived, aspirers, seekers, strivers and the rich. **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**

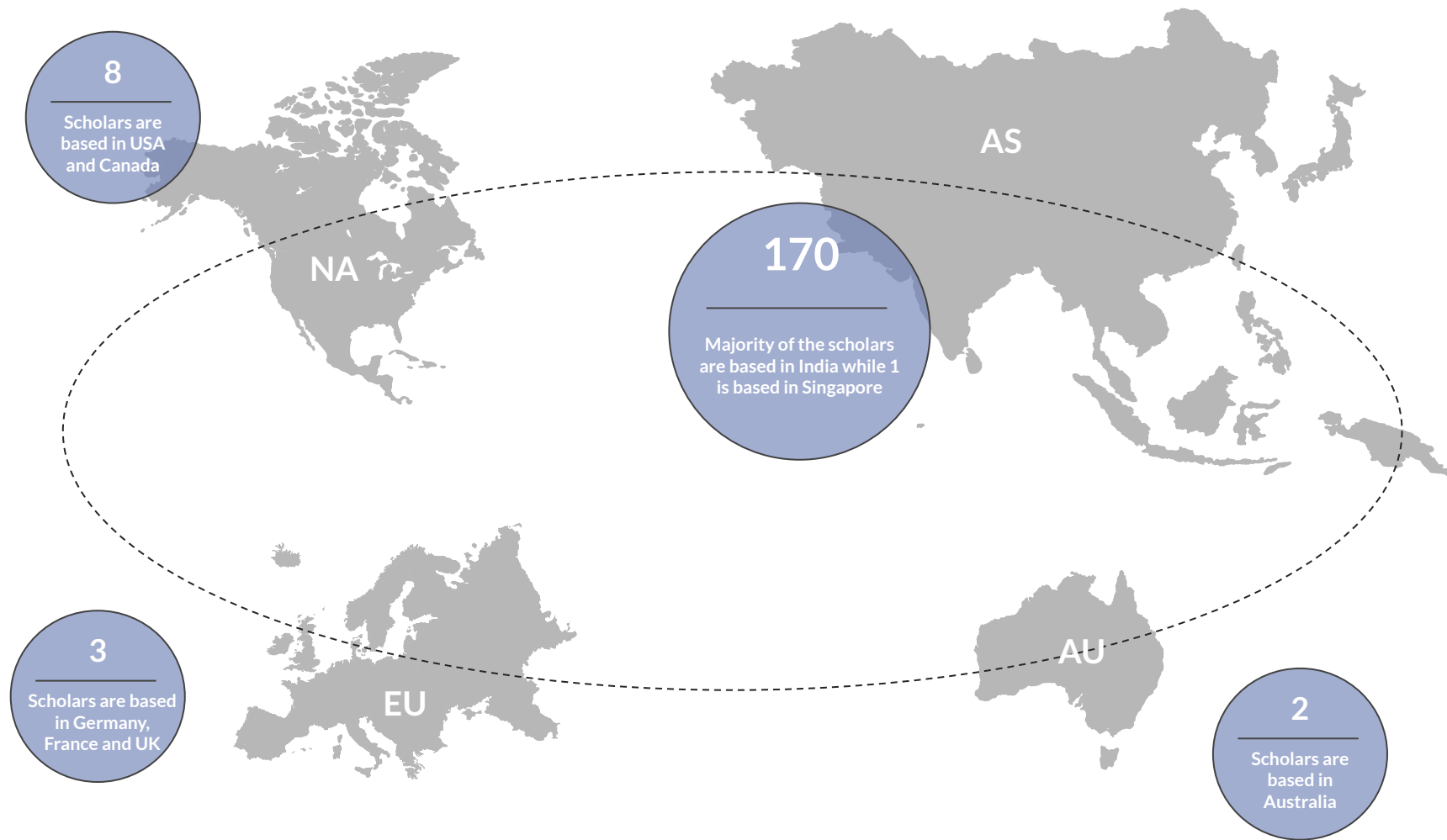


Within 4-6 months of graduation, I was able to secure a job at a multinational company, through which I got the opportunity to work abroad in Europe and South-East Asia for a couple of years. I have been able to invest in real estate, and own a house in my hometown as well. I am currently working on building my startup.

Alumnus, (2004 -08).



8% of FFE Alumni have migrated to different countries such as USA, Canada, Australia, Germany, France, UK and Singapore



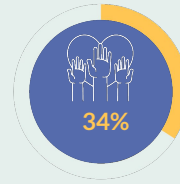
Alumni giving

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. As per FFE’s records, **direct alumni contributions to FFE during FY 2020-21 was INR 1.2 Cr under the Circle of Giving initiative.**

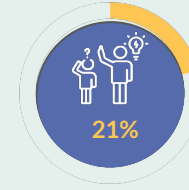
“*FFE has played an important role in my educational journey. In an effort to give back to FFE, I introduced them to my company’s CSR unit and shared my personal experiences. The company has sponsored 4 FFE scholars and invited them to the office to get a glimpse of corporate life. As a special invitee board member, I contribute to developing strategies to improve alumni connect.*”

- *Alumnus.*

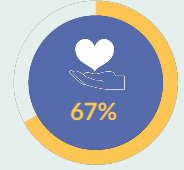
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of FFE Alumni volunteer with FFE as **facilitators**



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



of FFE Alumni **donate back to FFE**

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



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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