OCTOBER 2022 | ISSUE 03

SKILLवार्ता

Quarterly Newsletter Of MGNF



Himachal Pradesh | Uttar Pradesh | Assam | Mizoram

Mahatma Gandhi National Fellowship

Mahatma Gandhi National Fellowship (MGNF) is a flagship programme launched by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE). MGNF is a two-year certificate programme in Public Policy and Management with IIMs as an academic partner. The programme offers a blended approach of classroom sessions (Academic Module) with extensive field immersion at the district level (District Immersion). IIM Lucknow is the academic partner for four States- Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Mizoram, and Assam with 110 fellows deployed in various districts. At present, the fellows have completed three Academic Modules and are undergoing District Immersion 3 in their respective districts.

MGN Fellowship aims to create a cadre of individuals who can contribute towards the strengthening of the district-led skill ecosystem. This will help in supporting the district administration to improve skill development Programme delivery as well as develop a cadre of committed and competent development leaders. By the end of the program, the District Skill Committees must function as an effective organization being able to plan, implement and monitor skill development initiatives.



Programme Director's Message

It gives us immense pleasure to present you all with the third edition of "Skillवार्ता", the quarterly newsletter of MGNF, IIM Lucknow. The second edition of Skillवार्ता was released during Academic Module 3. Spanning over the course of 2 weeks, Academic module 3 was an incredibly enriching experience for the fellows because of the first complete on-campus module. The design of AM3 was more towards incorporating a practical approach in the training with speakers from a varied spectrum of organizations like MSDE, UNICEF, NSDC, NITI Aayog, TATA STRIVE, Azim Premji University, and others

As the programme is completing its first year of implementation, a major focus in the last two months has been to consolidate the learnings so far and draw an action plan towards better and more effective implementation of the programme in the coming year. Comprehensive feedback from various stakeholders including district officials and faculty mentors is being taken for the purpose. The engagement and performance of fellows form the essence of this assessment process.

The newsletter captures important initiatives at the district level while at the same time emphasizing the continuous academic support provided by IIM Lucknow towards the holistic and integrated development of fellows.

In our continued engagement with State Skill Development Missions, we appreciate the initiative of ASDM for organizing an in-person 2 day workshop with fellows in Assam. We also thank Mr. Ankur Jain, Mission Director of Assam Skill Development Mission, Government of Assam for sharing his experience on fellows' role in changing the skill discourse on the ground.

The collaborative engagement with MSDE, SSDMs, and District officials is the essence of this pogramme and we are committed to realizing its objectives on ground.

A special thanks to our fellow editors for their support in coming up with this edition. We wish for a very happy ending to this year and a great start to the next year which is just around the corner.

Happy Reading!



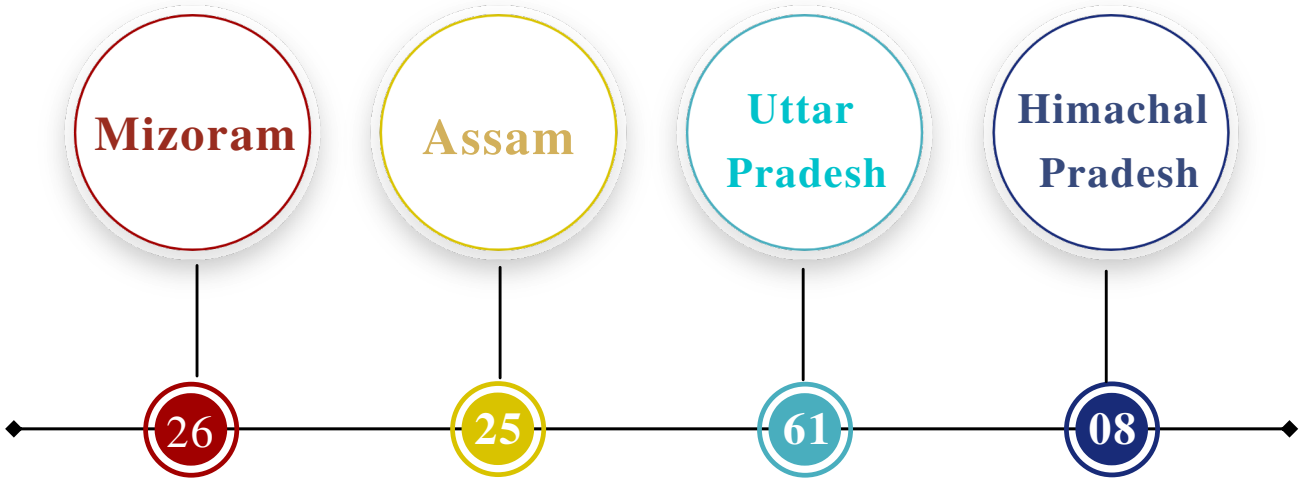
Prof. Ajay Garg
Programme Director
MGNF IIM Lucknow



Prof. Kshitj Awasthi
Programme Director
MGNF IIM Lucknow

FACTSHEET

NUMBER OF DSC MEETINGS (July - October 2022)







ACTIVITY SNAPSHOT

• Academic Support

1. Academic Module 3

Academic Module 3 was conducted in offline mode at the campus from July 18- July 30, 2022. The sessions of AM 3 were designed based on the feedback received from the fellows during AM - 2 and the mid-term review process. A practical approach to learning was followed with sessions ranging from National Education Policy, Development of Skill Development, Good Governance, Impact Evaluation, Sustainability in Project Development, Quality Assurance in Skill Development and Standardization. Besides the faculty from IIM Lucknow, sessions were conducted by speakers from a varied spectrum of organizations including MSDE, NSDC, UNICEF, MoSPI, NITI Aayog, Tata Strive, Azim Premji University, ATAL Tinkering Labs (ATLs) and others.





2. Meeting with Faculty Mentors

A meeting of faculty mentors with Programme Directors was organized to document learnings and identify course corrective measures that can be undertaken to strengthen faculty mentor mentee engagement.

3. Online session on SPSS

Based on the feedback of fellows, Prof. Debdatta Pal, Faculty at IIM Lucknow conducted an online session on 'Introduction to SPSS'.



4. Field visits by the programme for the assessment of the programme

Programme Team of IIM Lucknow conducted field visits to various districts and interacted with various stakeholders for the purpose of assessment of the fellows and programme. In addition to this, standard questionnaires were used online to collect comprehensive feedback from the concerned district officials and faculty mentors on the engagement and performance of fellows.

5. Session on Landscaping Social Impact Sector

An online session on “Landscaping Social Impact Sector" was conducted by Prof. Priyanshu Gupta. The discussion largely focused on understanding how the social impact sector works and collaborations with organizations including CSR. The session was conducted in continuation to the session conducted by Prof. Gupta on Sustainability in Project Development during AM 3.



6. Individual presentation by fellows regarding work done in the district

A series of presentations were conducted in which fellows individually shared updates on the work done in the district and their action plans.

• Special Initiatives

1. Engagement of Fellows on Atal Tinkering Labs

In continuation to the session conducted in the Academic Module 3 at IIM Lucknow, Atal Tinkering Labs team of NITI Aayog further interacted with fellows as a part of the ATL Huddle: Chapter 1 to identify areas of collaboration and address specific queries of the fellows in this regard.



2. Session with UPFC-OMRA

Interaction of Fellows deployed in Uttar Pradesh with UPFC Overseas Manpower Recruitment Agency (UPFC - OMRA) was organized at IIM Lucknow on July 25, 2022, to help them understand migration trends and specific job roles that are in demand in other countries.



3. Facilitating collaboration with alumni network

The programme team at IIM Lucknow has taken efforts to reach out to the alumni network of the institute for collaboration with the MGNF programme either through mentoring/ interactive sessions or any other means. Some encouraging responses have also been received from the alumnis, which will be further explored to facilitate best-suited collaborations in the programme.

4. Onboarding of Traditional Products on E haat of HCL Foundation

In an effort towards standardizing and providing market access to traditional crafts, IIM Lucknow has facilitated collaboration with Ehaat of the HCL Foundation. The registration is complete for all 19 districts selected in the first phase. The onboarding process for the products on the HCL Ehaat portal has been initiated.



5. Monitoring the presence of fellows in Districts

The attendance of fellows on the Kaizala app is taken on any random day of the month and the report is shared with NIMI. The cases where the discrepancy is found are specifically highlighted.

STATE ENGAGEMENT

1 . A two-day workshop by ASDM with MGN Fellows

A 2-day in-person workshop was conducted by Assam Skill Development Mission with MGN Fellows on strengthening the Skill Ecosystem and making a comprehensive action plan for Skill Development in Assam. Through some engaging brainstorming sessions, the workshop aimed at drawing a road map for skill development in the state.



2 . Meeting of Mizoram SSDM with Fellows

The newly appointed Mission Director of Mizoram SSDM, Ms Angela Zothanpuii had an online interaction with MGN Fellows posted across various districts of the state to get updates on projects, DSC meetings, and the key challenges experienced during district immersions.

TRANSFORMING SKILL LANDSCAPE

HIMACHAL PRADESH

1. MoU for 6 adventure sports courses signed with Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Mountaineering and Allied Sports to train local candidates in the Skiing, Rafting, Trekking, Search and Rescue and otherssports. (Kullu)

2. An exposure program for SHGs was organised in a 4 star hotel in Manali to set up stalls of traditional handicrafts and Sea Buckthorn (Lahaul & Spiti)

3. Three financial literacy camps conducted in three different blocks with a participation of nearly 300 candidates (Solan)



ASSAM

1. In collaboration with ICCO Foundation, Guwahati and Sasakawa Peace Foundation, Japan, two local entrepreneurs have been identified with support from DRDA, for Seed Funding of INR 10,000 each in order to recognize and support their venture.(Udalguri)

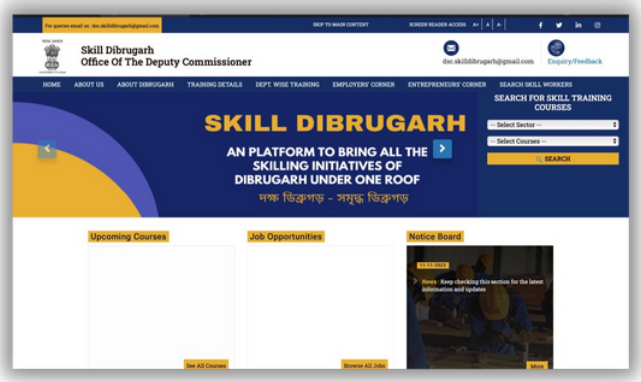


2. As part of the incubation program of the AIC Selco foundation, an innovator from Tinsukia has been identified and will be provided with seed money of 50,000 Rupees and incubation support. (Tinsukia)



3. 16 candidates were placed as part of the placement drive in PMKK center, (Darrang)

4. Website designed to consolidate all the skilling initiatives of the district (Dibrugarh).



TRANSFORMING SKILL LANDSCAPE

UTTAR PRADESH

1. A coffee table book Zayka-e-Rampur has been designed with all the popular cuisines and arts of Rampur along with the QR codes of the outlets and contacts of artisans of Rampuri chaaku, zari zardozi among others (Rampur)



2. A web-based application has been developed to integrate the district skilling ecosystem and ensure effective monitoring. (Shahjahanpur)



3. Session on skill development conducted in Observation Home for children in conflict with law to motivate students for training, resulting in an increase in enrolment numbers from 27 to 58. (Mau)



4. 343 candidates placed at the Mega Job fair organized at GITI Chandausi. (Sambhal)

5. In collaboration with an NGO called Mentor Together, the girls of UPSDM centre were mentored in regards to their career in District Kasganj of Uttar Pradesh. (Kasganj)



6. A Mega Employment Fair was organized at Gauriganj. The fair witnessed the registration of 2560 beneficiaries, and the candidates were trained at 12 training centers of UPSDM. (Amethi)

7. 9 workshops to promote self-employment were conducted for nearly 100 SHG members. Most of the members are engaged in agarbatti production. (Sant Kabeer Nagar)



TRANSFORMING SKILL LANDSCAPE

MIZORAM

1. An MOU has been felicitated between DSC Lunglei and ELF Learning Solutions (Chennai) for imparting free-of-cost English training to 2500 students in 50+ schools. (Lunglei)



2. DSCs of Lunglei and Aizawl have signed MOU with CSRBOX for providing free skill training to nearly 2000 students, offering more than 10,000 course related to technical professional and job-readiness skills. (Lunglei and Aizawl)

3. Pineapple festival conducted to provide Market linkage and build value chain of the product. The farmers bagged an order of 18MT of produce! (Khawzawl)



4. Fellows of 4 districts of Mizoram conducted awareness sessions on skill development in Govt. colleges (Champhai, Kolasib, Hnahtihal and Serchhip)

5. Collaboration with Haqdarshaq to identify 50 SHG women under NRLM to be trained as field agents who will support citizens by facilitating access to various government welfare schemes at door step. (Kolasib)



Assam Skill Development Mission



"MGNF Program is one of its kind, where bright minds are put to understand the real problems on the ground about the TVET sector in India. This nationwide fellowship will surely provide vital inputs to the decision makers to make Skill Development ecosystem more accessible and effective."

~Mr. Ankur Jain, IPS, MD, ASDM



TRADITIONAL CRAFTS - QUICK FACTS

MIZORAM

• Khumbeu:

Weaved out of waterproof wild Hnathial leaves, Khumbeu is a traditional Mizo hat and has a special place in Mizoram's culture. Presenting Khumbeu to guests is an age-old Mizo tradition. The ceremonial hat is a symbol of rich heritage and distinctive customs and is intricately woven out of fine bamboo. It is then lined with smoked Hnahthial leaves, to make it waterproof.



ASSAM

• Bellmetal Handicraft:



The bell metal artwork industry in Sarthebari, Barpeta, is the second-largest handicraft industry in Assam, employing over 3,500 people and over 500 units. It is a tough alloy used to make bells, kitchenware, musical instruments, and a variety of decorative things like cymbals, water pots, dishes, bowls, and sarai, which is a plate or tray mounted on a base. Despite being relatively costly, it has been able to earn an honourable position in the Assamese society.

TRADITIONAL CRAFTS - QUICK FACTS

HIMACHAL PRADESH

• Lahauli Pullas:



This GI tagged product from Lahaul & Spiti is one of the distinct ancient handicrafts of Himachal Pradesh. Pullas essentially refers to slippers, and are majorly woven out of wool in the state. Lahauli Pullas, however, are woven out of a special grass and sheep's skin. These are made out of stalks of wheat, barley and a special type of grass called sheelim. The stalks are first beaten into fine fibres which are then twisted by hands. The twisted fibres are then cut and sewn to make a shoe. The sale is made of goat or sheep skin.
Major colors used are Green and Red, that are dyed naturally. These slippers were essentially used in bedrooms by the locals and are available to the tourists in the local commercial markets.

UTTAR PRADESH

• Kalanamak rice:



Kalanamak rice is one of the finest quality scented rices in India. It gets its name from its black husk. It is popularly called the black pearl of Uttar Pradesh and was awarded the Geographical Indicator tag in 2013. This rice is rich in micronutrients such as iron and zinc. It is rich in antioxidants and has a high anthocyanin content that improves the health of the skin.

FELLOWS' EXPERIENCE

"The journey is overwhelming for me; from working in metro cities to coming to one of the most backward districts of the state. I got the opportunity to conduct DSC meetings, skill gap analysis and demand aggregation. I am also contributing for the establishment of the 'Maharaj Brand' an SHG led brand along with the efforts of NRLM departments."

~Sumit Raha, Maharjganj, Uttar Pradesh

"Based on my experience of visiting villages and observing the working of SHGs and FPO. I understood that rural India has the potential to improve the productivity of agricultural and horticultural crops and the profitability of rural-based industries. There is a need to build the right kinds of skills and provide support from various stakeholders involved."

~Megha, Kanpur Dehat, Uttar Pradesh

"After coming to Mizoram, I realized the true meaning of Diverse India. While I was learning Government functioning, report writing, and communication essentials at work, I found myself also imbibing resilience, positivity, and acceptance every day. I now hope to contribute to employment opportunities for Mizo Youth by Promoting entrepreneurship and Skill development in the district."

~Pallavi Dhiman, Kolasib, Mizoram

"MGNF has provided me with many opportunities to work and interact with government institutions, communities, NGOs, and marginalised sections of society. Through adjusting to the unique Mizo culture and different work ethos, I have learned to be accommodative and empathetic in my approach to development initiatives."

~Ajinkya Madkaikar, Lunglei, Mizoram

"Reflecting my journey in this fellowship, I have learnt how to unlearn, adopt a go-getter attitude and the need to diversify my work profile be it activating ATL, proposing special project on instilling entrepreneurship spirit among SHG women, or working on career counselling cells."

~Amisha Yadav, Solan, Himachal Pradesh

"One year with MGNF has been fulfilling and inspiring because I can not only help people optimise their skill but also make them more aware of the opportunities and possibilities. I came to really enjoy gaining access to the inner workings of district administration and realized that what matters the most is taking active initiative and person-to-person connection. "

~Divy Sharma, Kangra, Himachal Pradesh

"Being a researcher at heart, field surveys are one thing I look forward to in the programme. Meeting new people and gaining new perspectives is an added bonus."

~Sharna Chakraborty, Hailakandi, Assam

"One year into the fellowship and in my district, it has been a journey I will cherish throughout my life. I have initiated a project which targets grassroot tech innovators and entrepreneurs and their skill development through support of the administration and AIC Selco Foundation. It has been a learning experience to be part of India's skill development mission."

~Devdarshan Chetia, Tinsukia, Assam

MEET CHAMPION FELLOWS





Manish Kumar
(Khawzwal, Mizoram)

"MGN Fellowship has given me the opportunity to work for the ODOP of my district Khawzawl which is Pineapple by linking the district village economy to the world economic supply and value chain. Bringing in play the private players, government institutions and media has aided in creating a brand in Mizoram for its high quality products and tripling the farmers' income. Along with that, I have also been working for creating awareness in the district for entrepreneurship by engaging government institutions and top eight entrepreneurs of the state in district."

"In order to promote businesses & self-employment, I'm working on Information dissemination channels using Digital platforms and offline events like Chaupals to lead a series of Awareness campaigns for public of Deoria. This would lead the beneficiaries even in far flung areas to utilize and maximize benefits from several government Departments & private institutions, belonging to Skill/ Livelihood/ Agriculture & Allied activities. People would gain benefits from ongoing Schemes to promote their livelihood mostly in the form of self-employment. Being a leading district in Purvanchal region in terms of high emigration numbers, I'm also engaged in Counselling of the students & staff of ITI, Polytechnic & STT courses about In-Demand job roles abroad including Industry 4.0 within India, to facilitate them in exploring overseas employment opportunities."



Darpan Chib
(Deoria, Uttar Pradesh)

MEET CHAMPION FELLOWS





Neesha Kshettry
(Kullu, Himachal Pradesh)

"Understanding and transforming the skill ecosystem at the grassroot level is a rare opportunity. Learning about people and their skill requirements in order to develop long-term livelihood opportunities in the district has been a learning experience for me as well. The district's skill ecosystem is heavily reliant on tourism, horticulture, and handloom. My research revolves around these sectors, along with an effort to make these sectors more sustainable by providing them with the opportunity to create a market network. The dual aspects of the MGNF programme provide unparalleled tangible and intangible benefits."

"It has been a year of working with the Dibrugarh District Administration as a Mahatma Gandhi National Fellow. Considering myself 'lucky' to be assigned my home district makes me feel grateful as well as overwhelmed. My district mentor has been my strongest support in this journey of 12 months. His own zeal to work for 'skill development' influences my work on ground. It has been an extremely beautiful journey of creating impact through skill and entrepreneurship. Dibrugarh already has an established tea, hydrocarbon and healthcare industry, hence, skill development and entrepreneurship related initiatives have a big potential and need. I am excited and optimistic for the upcoming months as I get to implement my plans on ground and I am hopeful that my engagement would be fruitful in terms of having an improved skill ecosystem in the district, by the end of two years."



Isha Bhattarcharya
(Dibrugarh, Assam)

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