

Statement of Purpose
Mahatma Gandhi National Fellowship Program

I believe that competing in today's global economy is complex. Along with possessing technical and vocational skills, there is a need for a flexible workforce that can adjust to the demands and rapid shifts in the market. Therefore, investing in developing skills of the current workforce and creating opportunities to prepare the future workforce to cater to upcoming demands is absolutely vital to a country's economic growth and competitiveness. India is one of the youngest nations in the world with more than 62% of its population in the working age group (15-59 years), and more than 54% of its total population below 25 years of age¹. Currently, India faces a dual challenge of 1) scantiness of highly trained workforce and 2) non-employability of large sections of the conventionally educated youth, who possess little or no job skills. A skill gap study conducted by NSDC over 2010-2014, indicated an additional net incremental requirement of 109.73 million skilled manpower by 2022¹. This poses a formidable challenge as well as a huge opportunity for our country. There is an urgent need that India equips its workforce with employable skills and knowledge so that they can contribute substantially to the economic growth of the country.

I believe that the Mahatma Gandhi National Fellowship (MGNF) is an excellent platform for me to contribute towards the Skill Development Mission of our country and thus is my primary reason to apply for the fellowship. This fellowship also serves an opportunity for me to accomplish my long term goal of becoming a coach and helping people to build their skills and mind-sets and carve their path to success. I am keen on pursuing the Mahatma Gandhi National Fellowship (MGNF) for two reasons. First, the fellowship provides an excellent and unique challenging opportunity to work with the government at the district level to create an impact in the niche area of skill development. Second, the fellowship will provide me with an incredible opportunity to interact and get mentored by prominent faculty at IIMB and also put my skills into action.

¹ National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship 2015.

During childhood, my parents gave a lot of importance on my skill development through various activities, which helped me to develop curiosity and build confidence and decision making skills. In my previous role as a XXX at XXX, I was actively involved in research pertaining to coaching and skill development of school leaders. This role provided me an opportunity to leverage my research, evaluation, analytical, strategic planning and execution skills. For instance, I spearheaded impact assessments for 5 cities for over 100 schools and 10,000 students and two research projects at XXX impacting over 300 school principals. These involved a lot of cases which required considerable planning, background research and communication skills. Because of this, I grew patient in demanding and frustrating situations and developed a habit of reflection. Apart from this, I was responsible for setting up data management systems, monitoring the data collection for 5 cities and created dashboards and cyclic reports for donors. I extensively leveraged my data analysis, data visualization and reporting skills.

My experience as a XXX was a turning point in my career, as I decided to explore the education landscape by joining the XXX. I was responsible for improving the learning levels of 50 XXX students. Along with developing literacy and numeracy skills in students, my focus was always on building problem solving and relationship building skills along with increasing their self-awareness, curiosity, creativity. It was during XXX and working with students and teachers, I developed my interpersonal skills to a greater extent. However, I believe that, it was during my five years of my integrated master's program, I set the foundation of skill-set I possess today. I cultivated the necessary communication, research and relationship building skills. For instance, as per coursework, I was involved in conducting research projects, where I was responsible for designing and conducting experiments. This gave me a lot of exposure to leverage my planning, execution and communication skills and developed my critical thinking and analytical thinking skills in due course of time.

Over the years, I believe that all my experiences have helped me develop a growth mindset, build resilience and perform in a highly productive manner under critical situations, which makes me a deserving candidate for the fellowship.