University of Warwick & NIEPA Research Project

Widening Access to Higher Education in India: Institutional Approaches

Maharashtra State Report

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2026

How to cite this report:

Mahajan, D, Khandare, K, Patil, V (2026). Widening Access to Higher Education in India: Institutional Approaches (WAHEI): Maharashtra State Report. Coventry: Doctoral Education and Academia Research Centre (DEAR), University of Warwick. Available at: https://wrap.warwick.ac.uk/id/eprint/199105/ and https://www.niepa.ac.in/collab_university_of_warwick

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Accompanying resources for the project

In addition to this report, other resources about the project are available on the project website: www.warwick.ac.uk/WAHEI. This includes various project outputs such as project reports, training materials, and presentations, as well as other information about the project and the people involved.

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Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge and thank all people who offered their help from the beginning of this research work until the completion of the project report. Beginning with, Prof. Nidhi Sabharwal National Fellow at National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA), New Delhi for extending us the opportunity to be a part of the project. Prof. Emily Henderson, Prof. Ann Stewart and Mr. Matt Phillips from Warwick University, UK for their extraordinary coordination and guidance throughout the project work especially during the online discussion sessions and research methodology workshops held at NIEPA. We will cherish our memories of the learning sessions wherein we could get ample opportunities to learn from these scholars.

We thank all institutional leaders and faculty members of SU, GCID, GC-A and GC-B for offering their permission and support to collect data and taking active part in surveys, diary studies and interviews giving their valuable time. We also thank all student participants.

We thank our support staff Dr. J. G. Sable, Dr. Lakhan Suryavanshi, Mr. Rameshwar Tambe, Ms. Poonam Ubarhande, and Dr. Manisha Dhanedhar. We also wish to extend our gratitude towards our research scholars Dr. Vedant Deshmukh, Dr. Dattatray Gaikwad Mr. Akshay Mulate, Mr. Ravi Kadam, Ms. Shraddha Shirsat, Dr. Avinash Gayke and Pruthviraj Kolhe for helping us with data collection, conduction of the interviews, FGDs and data transcription and data management and analysis. We thank Mr. Gaurav Jadhav, Mr. Amol Madan and Dr. M.A. Raffe for their academic support and assistance.

We are indeed very happy to get significant constructive inputs from the teams from Kerala, Haryana, Assam, and Chhattisgarh during the workshop sessions and online sessions. We wholeheartedly express our gratitude towards Prof. Vijay Fulari, the Vice Chancellor of our University for his support and encouragement through the research work and also for his timely approvals.

We thank the institutional leaders at National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA), New Delhi, Fair Chance Foundation and Warwick University, UK for conducting the research on a very relevant and important educational issue. We are delighted

to be a part of this constructive research work that is going to help millions of students in India to have choice and access to HE. We thank all support staff at NIEPA Ms. Chandrika and Ms. Arushi and support staff of WAHEI both at NIEPA and Warwick.

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List of Acronyms/ Abbreviations

ABC	Academic Bank of Credits
AISHE	All India Survey on Higher Education
AICTE	All India Council of Technical Education
BA	Bachelor of Arts
BBA	Bachelor of Business Administration
BCA	Bachelor of Computer Application
BJ&MS	Bachelor of Journalism and Mass Communication
B.Sc	Bachelor of Science
B.Com	Bachelor of Commerce
B.Voc	Bachelor of Vocational Education
CBCS	Choice Based Credit System
DBT	Direct Benefit Transfer
EWS	Economically Weaker Section
FM	Faculty Member
GER	Gross Enrollment Ratio
GCID	Government College – In Depth
GC	Government College
HE	Higher Education
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
ICSSR	Indian Council of Social Science Research
IIT	Indian Institute of Technology
IL	Institutional Leader
IIM	Indian Institute of Management Studies
ITI	Industrial Training Institute
MPhil	Master of Philosophy
MA	Master of Arts
MBA	Master of Business Administration
NAAC	National Assessment and Accreditation Council
NCC	National Cadet Corps
NSS	National Service Scheme
NT	Nomadic Tribe
NET	National Eligibility Test
NEP-2020	New Education Policy – 2020
NSQF	National Skill and Qualification Framework
OBC	Other Backward Class
PG	Postgraduate
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
PMUSHA	Pradhan Mantri Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan
PMUSP	Pradhan Mantri Uchchatar Shiksha Protsahan
PUC	Pre University Course
RTE	Right to Education
SC	Scheduled Caste
ST	Scheduled Tribe
SSC	Skill Sector Councils

SEBC	Socially and Economically Backward Class
SBC	Special Backward Class
SEDGs	Socially and Economically Disadvantage Groups
SU	State University
SET/SLET	State (Level) Eligibility Test
UGC	University Grants Commission
UG	Undergraduate
VR	Valid Response

About this report

This report is a final State Report for the University of Warwick and NIEPA collaborative research project entitled Widening Access to 'Higher Education in India: Institutional Approaches' (WAHEI). The WAHEI project explored the role of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), Institutional Leaders, and Faculty Members in enhancing informed choice for young people as they make decisions about higher education. The project focused, in particular, on rurally situated and rural-serving, publicly-funded universities and colleges, given the role of these institutions in providing higher education to socio-economically disadvantaged students. Of key importance has been enhancing the familiarity of the term 'higher education outreach' in the terminology in higher education in India, within the scope of the study, as a key term denoting the activities that HEIs can undertake to guide and inform young people and their families about their higher education choices and admissions processes. WAHEI included a large-scale, multimethod empirical research study to explore existing higher education outreach practices across states and regions of India, followed by the co-development, implementation, and evaluation of a professional learning module for faculty members to learn about higher education outreach, and final dissemination of project findings and recommendations.

Project outputs can be accessed from the WAHEI website: www.warwick.ac.uk/WAHEI . The explanation of the background and rationale for the project can be found in CPRHE-NIEPA Research Paper 20, 'The Role of Higher Education Institutions and Faculty Members in Higher Education Outreach in India': https://cprhe.niepa.ac.in/assets/papers/CPRHE_Research_Paper_20.pdf.

The project is a four-year research project (2022-2026) funded by the Fair Chance Foundation and hosted by the University of Warwick's Doctoral Education and Academia Research Centre (DEAR). The DEAR Centre conducts specialist research on topics relating to doctoral education and the academic profession, with a focus on inequalities and inclusivity (www.warwick.ac.uk/DEAR).

The project has been led by Professor Emily F. Henderson (University of Warwick) and Dr Nidhi S. Sabharwal (NIEPA) as Co-Principal Investigators, and Professor Ann Stewart (University of Warwick) as Co-Investigator. The project has been coordinated by Matt Phillips and the project

has been supported by a number of colleagues, most substantially S. Arokia Mary, Arushi Painuly, Chandrika, Ragini Khurana, Denisse Lillo Sierra, Sejjal, Evan Zheng, Susan Deeb. The project has involved a significant empirical phase across HEIs located in five states of India: Assam, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Kerala, and Maharashtra. In each state, a team of three faculty members has led the empirical component, including collection, analysis and interpretation of data. Each State Research Team has consisted of two faculty members from a State University – the team lead and an early career faculty member, and a faculty member from a college in the same state (publicly-funded or aided, rurally located where possible). The State Research Teams were supported in the process through three two-day residential workshops at NIEPA which focused on (i) instrument development and data collection, (ii) analysis processes, and (iii) presentation and peer review of draft report material. In addition, field visits and monthly online meetings were held to bring together all team members across the central and state teams during the empirical phase.

This report showcases the State Research Team findings as part of a series of five State Reports for the WAHEI project. Links to access the reports include: www.warwick.ac.uk/WAHEI and https://www.niepa.ac.in/. The report has been entirely produced by the State Research Team, based on the empirical research conducted for the WAHEI project. The report structure and contents were guided by the central team to bring continuity between the reports. All chapters of the report have been thoroughly peer reviewed by Professor Emily F. Henderson and S. Arokia Mary, and additionally, a chapter of the report has been reviewed by team members of one of the other State Research Teams. The report was revised in response to the peer review process.

The final contents of the report have been prepared and finalised by the State Research Team, with editing support from Matt Phillips and Emily Henderson, Robyn Shreeve and Ann Stewart, and as such responsibility for the contents therein remains with the report authors.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Context of Higher Education Access and Choice in Maharashtra

Higher Education in Maharashtra:

Maharashtra is a leading state in terms of availability of higher education infrastructure. All India Survey of Higher Education (AISHE) published data for the year 2021-22. The report highlights an increase in overall enrolment in higher education institutions followed by an increase in gross enrolment ratio. As per the census of India, 2011, literacy rate in Maharashtra was 82.3%, which is greater than the national average of 74.04%.

The population in Maharashtra which falls in the 18 to 23 age group, which is the target group for enrolment in higher education comprises 9.4% of India's corresponding population. In case of Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER), there is gender disparity in favour of females in Maharashtra which is reflected in GER in Higher Education for females leading at 33.3% and males 31.1% which is better than the corresponding all India percentage of 28.4 % and 28.3% for females and males respectively.

Higher education infrastructure availability is key to access to higher education for men and women. Maharashtra has a robust higher education infrastructure with a network of 74 universities which includes 23 state public universities, 21 Private universities and seven Institute of national importance. There are 4692 colleges of which 93.5% are affiliated colleges.

Higher education institutions in the private sector play a dominant role in Maharashtra as more than 63.52% of the higher education institutions (unaided colleges) in the state are in the private sector. However, these private institutions have attracted only 42% of the enrolment which reflects students' preference for higher education institutions supported by the government. Enrolment in UG courses in Maharashtra was 2,726,229 in 2017-18, which has gone up to 3,498,728 in 2021-22. While the pupil - teacher ratio at national level is 26 students per teacher, it is 27 in Maharashtra.

Hostel facility is key to ensure access to higher education for students coming from rural areas. However, the AISHE report highlights that there is underutilization of available hostel

accommodation in Maharashtra as while 342,891 seats are available for boys only 158,054 boys are accommodated. For girls, the available seats are 388,848, which are accommodated by only 177,621 girls. This can possibly reflect issues related to affordability, safety or location constraints.

1.2 Context of Higher Education Access and Choice in Maharashtra

Maharashtra is a progressive state having a legacy of social reformers who ignited aspirations for social and economic progress through their initiatives for enlightenment of society and for inclusion of women and men belonging to deprived castes to gain access to education. Inclusive education for girls and deprived sections of society received top priority on the agenda of veteran social reformers in Maharashtra. Dr. B R Ambedkar, Mahatma Phule and Savitribai Phule are well known for their efforts to fight for access to education for women who were denied the opportunity of education due to patriarchy and all the disadvantaged groups in society who remained deprived of education due to caste system.

The state of Maharashtra has come a long way since independence in widening access to higher education for the deprived and women and men belonging to different social groups.

1.2.1 Distribution of Higher Education Institutions in Maharashtra

Maharashtra hosts a total of 4,532 higher education institutions, including universities, colleges offering higher education and standalone higher education institutions (AISHE 2021-22). However, there is a notable concentration of higher education institutions in urban areas:

- **Urban Centers:** Cities like Mumbai, Pune and Nagpur have a high density of institutions offering diverse programs and better infrastructure.
- **Rural and Tribal Areas**: Regions such as Vidarbha and Marathwada have fewer institutions, leading to limited access and choices for local students.

1.2.2 Access to Higher Education

The AISHE report 2021-22 mentions the following hurdles in access to higher education:

- **Physical Accessibility:** In Maharashtra, approximately 35% of rural students report challenges in commuting to educational institutions, underscoring the need for improved transportation facilities and local campuses of higher education institutions.

- **Digital Divide:** During the COVID-19 pandemic, only 45% of students in rural areas of Maharashtra had access to reliable internet, highlighting disparities in digital infrastructure as per the AISHE report, 2021-22.

1.2.3 Choice and Availability of Courses

In urban regions of Maharashtra, students have access to a wide array of programs, including professional and vocational courses. Conversely, rural students often have limited options, primarily in Arts and Basic Sciences, affecting their employment prospects.

1.2.4 Government Initiatives

The Government of Maharashtra has taken several initiatives to improve access and equity in higher education, including free education and Right to Education (RTE).

- **Free education:** The Maharashtra government announced free higher education for girls from Economically Weaker Sections (EWS), Other Backward Classes (OBC) and Socially and Economically Backward Classes (SEBC[1])-.
- **Tuition and exam fees** are waived for orphaned students of both genders.
- **Academic Bank of Credit (ABC):** ABC is a digital platform launched under NEP 2020 allowing students to accumulate, transfer and redeem academic credits earned at recognized HEIs which was rolled out in Maharashtra in 2022. It is an initiative that allows students to accumulate and transfer academic credits across different colleges and universities. ABC helps students customize their learning pathways and explore interdisciplinary subjects.
- **Maratha reservation (SEBC):** The Maharashtra government's reservation policy for higher education includes reservations for Socially and Educationally Backward Classes (SEBC), Economically Weaker Section (EWS), and other categories. The Maharashtra State Reservation (of seats for admission in educational institutions) for SEBC Act, 2018 provided 16% reservation for SEBCs, including the Maratha community[2].
- **EWS:** 10% of seats are reserved for Economically Weaker Section candidates.

[1] SEBC is a state specific reservation category created for the first time in 2024 for the Maratha community in Maharashtra

[2] According to Maharashtra Gazette, the Maratha community is a prominent caste in the state of Maharashtra comprising of 35 to 40 % of the state population. The Maratha community is offered 10% reservation in education and Government jobs under the Socially and Economically Backward Class (SEBC) category. (Maharashtra Act No. XVI of 2024 published on 26 February, 2024)

- **Other categories**: 5% of seats are reserved for children of ex-service personnel. 5% of seats are reserved for candidates with a minimum 40% disability. 1% of seats are reserved for orphan candidates. 30% of seats are reserved for female candidates.
- **Other reservations**: Reservations are also made for Scheduled Castes, Other Backward Classes, and Scheduled Tribes.

There are 74 Universities in Maharashtra according to AISHE report 2023. This includes one central university and 23 State Public Universities, out of these 74 universities majority (37) universities provide traditional courses. There are 542 government colleges in Maharashtra besides 4,143 private colleges i.e. a total of 4,685 colleges. About 88% of the total colleges in the state are private colleges. The number of colleges per lakh population in Maharashtra is 36 which is greater than all India of 30. The average enrolment per college is 685 in Maharashtra.

1.2.5 Enrolment by Social Groups

- **Scheduled Castes (SCs):** Scheduled Castes students constitute 12.71% of the total enrolment in higher education in Maharashtra, which is less than their proportion in state's population highlighting the need for targeted interventions.
- **Scheduled Tribes (STs):** Scheduled Tribes students account for 4.51% of the enrolment in UG courses, reflecting the impact of reservation policy of Government of Maharashtra.
- **Minorities:** Data indicates that minority communities have an enrollment share of around 7% suggesting role of socio-economic factors adversely influencing their participation in Higher Education.

1.2.6 Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER)

The Gross Enrollment Ratio indicates the level of participation in education. According to the AISHE report for the academic year 2021-22, Maharashtra's GER in higher education for the age group 18-23 years (using 2011 census data) is 35.3% surpassing the national average of 28.4%. Following Table 1.1 shows GER in Higher Education for the age group 18-23 years.

Table 1.1: GER in Higher Education in Maharashtra (Age group 18-23 years)

Particulars	Maharashtra (%)	All India (%)
All Categories	35.3	28.4
Male	31.1	28.3
Female	33.3	28.4
Scheduled Castes	36.3	25.9
Male	37.6	25.8
Female	34.9	26.0
Scheduled Tribes	17.3	21.2
Male	19.4	21.4
Female	15.2	20.9

Source: AISHE Report (2021-2022)

From Table 1.1 we observe that Maharashtra's GER in higher education for the age group 18-23 years surpasses the national average for all categories together and for SCs as well. However, GER for ST category in Maharashtra is below the national average.

Though GER of the SCs in Maharashtra is above the national average, considering the fact that there are 59 sub-Castes within the SCs in Maharashtra (as per Census of India, 1991) treating all SCs as a homogenous category has been questioned in one national level study (Wankhede, 2001). The fact that the SCs are not a monolithic group and have a social hierarchy and practice untouchability among themselves (Wankhede, 2001: 84) calls for inquiry into the micro aspects of widening access to higher education for sub-castes amongst the SCs in India (as there are 1,092 sub castes in India and 59 sub castes in Maharashtra amongst the SCs).

1.2.7 Gender Parity Index (GPI)

The Gender Parity Index (GPI) measures relative access to education of males and females. Following Table 1.2 shows the Gender Parity Index in Higher Education in Maharashtra and India.

Table 1.2: Gender Parity Index in Higher Education

	Maharashtra	India
All Categories	0.90	1.01
SCs	0.93	1.01
STs	0.78	0.98

Source: AISHE Report (2022)

It is obvious from the above table 1.2 that the GPI in Higher Education in Maharashtra is below national average for all categories for both the SCs and for the STs, which calls for policy intervention to improve the GPI.

1.2.8 Prejudice Index (Opportunity of Access to Higher Education)

To measure the opportunity of access to higher education to women, we can use the prejudice index method.

To measure prejudice against women in access to Higher Education, we find the sex ratio of enrolment in Higher Education which is divided by the sex ratio for population in age group 18-23 which is multiplied by 100.

Table 1.3: Prejudice against Women in Opportunities of Education in Maharashtra

Year 2021-22	Sex Ratio for Population in age group 18-23	Sex Ratio for Student Enrolled for Higher Education (2021-22)	Prejudice Index
All Categories	893	800	90
SC	924	858	93
ST	1003	786	78

Source: Based on AISHE Report (2021-2022), Table 10 and Table 14

Table 1.3 shows the prejudice index in opportunity of access to higher education for women (for 2021-22) belonging to SC and ST categories and all categories together for Maharashtra.

The unity figure 100 of prejudice index shows that there is no prejudice against men or women. Any number below 100 indicates prejudice against women. Prejudice index for Maharashtra was 90 for all categories together, 93 for SCs and 78 for STs, showing highest prejudice against women belonging to the ST category in access to opportunity of higher education. Prejudice index for all categories (90) indicates that generally (irrespective of category) all women in Maharashtra have 10% less chance of getting access to higher education while the women in SC category have 7% less chance and women from the ST category have 22% less chance of getting opportunity of access to higher education in Maharashtra. This data may be considered to call for policy measures to bring gender parity in opportunity of access to Higher Education by eliminating any prejudice against women in the state.

1.3 Rationale of the Study

1.3.1 Background

WAHEI emphasizes the critical role of rural-serving state universities and government colleges in Maharashtra, particularly those located in rural and semi-urban areas, as catalysts for

widening access to higher education. These institutions, envisioned as “higher education (HE) knowledge hubs” are pivotal in addressing the equity and social justice agenda of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

The concept of “HE knowledge hubs” involves actively engaging with communities to raise awareness about educational opportunities and options. This role becomes essential in rural and semi-urban areas, where limited exposure to higher education creates significant gaps in awareness. In such communities, decisions about higher education are often based on informal networks or hearsay, which benefits only those who already have prior exposure through family or community connections. For first-generation learners, this lack of knowledge may become a substantial barrier to accessing higher education. Our study also recognizes that the institutional culture and practices of higher education institutions (HEIs), as well as state and national policy frameworks, significantly influence the effectiveness of outreach initiatives. These factors must be considered to empower institutions to fulfil their potential as knowledge hubs.

Aligned with NEP 2020, this study seeks to enhance equitable access to higher education, particularly for socially and economically disadvantaged groups (SEDGs). The policy highlights the need for targeted interventions to overcome barriers such as the lack of awareness about higher education opportunities and the complexities of admission processes. NEP 2020 identifies government colleges as strategic sites for fostering high-quality, localized HE provision, which is especially relevant for disadvantaged groups striving to access education.

Our research aims to assess the role of HEIs, particularly through the efforts of faculty members and institutional leaders, in providing effective guidance on higher education access and choice. By doing so, we seek to ensure that young individuals - many of whom are first-generation learners - are equipped to make informed decisions about their educational futures. Moreover, the project underscores the significance of bridging the gap between HEIs and the communities they serve, thus contributing to the broader goals of equity and inclusion in higher education.

1.3.2 Review of Literature

Education is one of the three dimensions of human development index, the other two being income and health. Education can be viewed as the basic opportunity that contributes immensely to building human capabilities. In the words of Amartya Sen "the idea of capability... gives a central role to a person's actual ability to do the different things that she values doing" (Sen 2010: 253). Education has a great influence on all types of human development outcomes. Benefits of education may accrue from one generation to another.

Inadequate budgetary allocation for education has been pointed out as the causes of neglect of education in India resulting in "education poverty" manifest through unequal access to education (Tilak 2002:b). In Maharashtra, the distribution of education is extremely skewed, particularly in the rural region and especially among the socially backward sections. The inequality in spread of education is much higher in females than in males in both rural and urban Maharashtra. In rural areas of Maharashtra, where an overall population of illiterates is very high, the base of higher education is very narrow (Paranjape 2007: 213). Despite the long tradition of social reform in Maharashtra and the educational movements spearheaded by Dr. Ambedkar, the SCs in Maharashtra lag visibly behind others in education. They continue to be so-called backward in terms of quantity and quality of education they receive. The SCs in Maharashtra are not a monolithic group and have a social hierarchy and practice untouchability among themselves. Therefore, treating the SCs as a homogenous category is questionable as there are 1,092 sub categories of SCs in India and 59 in Maharashtra (Wankhede 2001: 84). In a study (ibid.) carried out in five districts of Maharashtra state viz. Nagpur, Osmanabad, Jalgaon, Sindhudurg and Mumbai, it was found that the SC students find it very difficult to access higher education and cope with the situation in the institutions after they gain admission. A majority of the SC students are first generation learners and hence suffer from multiple handicaps. These students are unaware of the facilities provided for them and thus believe that they do not get any guidance and support. The study (Wankhede 2001:86) also stresses the need to evolve special mechanisms to improve educational awareness, motivation, access and performance. It also states that teachers, fellow students and government officials should be sensitized about the educational and social problems faced by SC students.

1.4 Objectives and Research Questions

1.4.1 Project Aim

To explore the potential for HEIs, their faculty members and leaders in rural and semi-urban India to contribute to enhancing knowledge of HE in local disadvantaged communities and therefore contributing to the social justice mission of public HE.

1.4.2 Project objective

To document, via meaningful, robust, mixed methods fieldwork in the state of Maharashtra, current HE outreach practices and motivations and / or resistance of various HEIs stakeholders, such as the faculty members and institutional leaders, to contribute to HE outreach in the local communities surrounding the colleges.

1.4.3 Research Questions

RQ1: What is the current and potential role of HEIs based in rural/semi-urban Maharashtra, their faculty members and institutional leaders, to engage in gender-equitable, socially just HE outreach for students in their local communities?

- RQ1a: Who is delivering HE in colleges and universities in rural and semi-urban locations? Who are the faculty members and the institutional leaders?
- RQ1b: What do faculty members in rural and semi-urban areas currently perceive to be the role of HEIs and their role/s in facilitating access to HE and HE choice in the localities of their workplaces? What are the existing practices of HE outreach?
- RQ1c: What do institutional leaders of rural and semi-urban colleges and universities perceive to be HEIs' role, their role and their employees' role in relation to facilitating access to HE and HE choice?
- RQ1d: Which students are receiving HE in rural/ semi-urban colleges? How do they perceive the role of faculty members in facilitating HE access and choices?

1.5 Methodology & Sources of Information

1.5.1 Methodology

One State University (SU) was chosen from Maharashtra state by NIEPA. One Government College- in Depth (GCID) and two other Government Colleges - GC-A and GC-B were chosen.

A three-member state research team was constituted at the State level. In the state team, two members are from university department and one team member is from Government Gollege in depth (GCID).

Census Survey:

We carried out census survey of a total of 115 faculty members (UG teachers) from SU and from GCID. We conducted census survey of 163 UG students from SU and 642 UG students from GCID (i.e. a survey of 805 UG students).

Semi Structured Interviews and Diary Study:

We conducted semi structured interviews of 4 Institutional Leaders (ILs) – one each from SU, GCID, GC-A and GC-B. Semi structured interview of 20 Faculty Members (5 each from SU, GCID, GC-A and GC-B) were carried out in addition to diary study according to which 5 faculty members each from SU and GCID were requested to maintain a solicited diary to record their actions and perceptions about widening participation of students in HE- particularly first generation learners, rural students and students belonging to the deprived sections of society. Each faculty member chosen for diary study from the SU and GCID responded to two semi structured interviews- one was pre-diary and another was post-diary interview. For these semi structured interviews (pre-diary and post-diary in the case of SU and GCID), faculty members were chosen ensuring participation of SC, ST, OBC, General, and EWS categories. Among these we ensured 50% representation of female faculty members. In case of institutional leaders, we interviewed Vice-Chancellor in the case of SU and the Principal and the Vice-Principal in case of GCID, GC-A and GC-B.

Focus Group Discussion (FGD):

Two FGDs each were conducted in SU and GCID in which 10 students each were purposively selected ensuring the representation of SC, ST, OBC, General, Physically Challenged and EWS categories. Among these, we ensured 50% representation of female students.

Interview of Students:

For interview, we identified three students from each group who were not very vocal during the FGDs. Thus, we conducted interview of six students from SU and six students from GCID.

1.5.2 Sources of Information

The Report has been developed from the following sources:

Institutional Information:

For SU, we collected administrative data from the office of the Registrar while for GCID, GC-A & GC-B, we obtained administrative data from the office of the Principal. We also consulted institutional profiles and AISHE report 2021-22.

Institutional Leaders (ILs)

Semi structured interview of ILs in each sampled Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) was conducted. In case of institutional leaders, we interviewed Vice-Chancellor in the case of SU and the Principal and the Vice-Principal in case of GCID, GC-A and GC-B.

Table 1.4: IL interview participants- basic information

HEI: (state code)	Title and Pseudonym	Gender	Caste/Social group	Religion
SU:5.1	Nana	Male	OBC	Hindu
GCID: 5.2	James	Male	General	Hindu
GC-A: 5.3	Dr. Yashwant	Male	SC	Buddhist
GC-B: 5.4	Vitthal	Male	General	Hindu

IL Group Characteristics:

We conducted semi-structured interview of four ILs of which two were Professors of Physics while two belonged to Humanities stream (one was professor of English and the other IL was Professor of Marathi). All four ILs belonged to the age group 41-59. None of the ILs were disabled and all were male, all were married and had children. All ILs were Indian and all of them resided in urban area. Mother tongue of all ILs was Marathi. All worked for less than five years as IL. Of the four ILs, one was Vice-Chancellor (VC), two were Principal and one was Vice-Principal. One of the ILs was with his institution for less than five years. Two of the ILs were Professors and one IL was an Associate Professor.

All ILs were recruited through direct recruitment call to their respective HEI. One IL who is the Vice-Chancellor, was appointed on a tenure post while the other three ILs were appointed on regular basis.

1.5.3 Faculty Members (FMs)

We conducted 20 semi-structured interviews of 5 faculty members each form SU, GCID, GC-A and GC-B.

Table 1.5: FM interview participants- basic information

HEI: (state code-)	Title and Pseudonym	Gender	Caste/Social group	Religion
SU:5.1	Dr. Shri	Male	General	Hindu
SU:5.1	Dr. Vibha	Female	SC	Buddhist
SU:5.1	Dr. Radha	Female	General	Hindu
SU:5.1	Abhinay	Male	ST	Hindu
SU:5.1	Dr. Kavya	Female	OBC	Hindu
GCID: 5.2	Mr. Shaw	Male	OBC	Hindu
GCID: 5.2	Dr. John	Male	General	Hindu
GCID: 5.2	Mary	Female	General	Hindu
GCID: 5.2	Andy	Male	ST	Hindu
GCID: 5.2	Smith	Male	SC	Hindu
GC-A: 5.3	Dr. Deva	Male	OBC	Hindu
GC-A: 5.3	Dr. VCK	Male	General	Hindu
GC-A: 5.3	Dr. Lata	Female	General	Hindu
GC-A: 5.3	AMU	Male	SC	Hindu
GC-A: 5.3	Gaju	Male	ST	Hindu
GC-B: 5.4	Dr. Falguni	Female	General	Hindu
GC-B: 5.4	Sharmishtha	Female	ST	Hindu
GC-B: 5.4	Sumit	Male	SC	Hindu
GC-B: 5.4	Thomson	Male	NT-D	Hindu
GC-B: 5.4	Edison	Male	OBC	Hindu

FM Profile

Out of the 20 FMs, whom we interviewed, two each belonged to English, Marathi, Performing Arts and Commerce while three belonged to Chemistry and one each was from the following departments: Fine Arts, Sociology, Management Science, Chemical Technology, Political Science, Environmental Science, Botany, Zoology and History.

Three faculty members belonged to the age group 29 - 58 years. One faculty member was physically disabled. Out of these 20 faculty members, 13 were male and 7 were female faculty members. Only one faculty member was divorced and the rest of the faculty members were married. Out of these 20 FMs only one FM had no children while 5 FMs had one child and 14 FMs had 2 children. All these FMs were born in Maharashtra and of the 20 FMs, 3 resided in rural area while 17 resided in urban area as per their permanent address mentioned in the profile. Marathi is the mother tongue of all the FMs. 19 of the FMs served their current institution for more than

5 years, while 1 FM served his current institution for less than 5 years. Of these 20 FMs, 3 were Professors, 5 were Associate Professors and 12 were Assistant Professors. All were recruited directly through advertisement and worked on regular posts in their respective HE institutions.

Diary Study

We conducted 5 solicited diary studies each in SU and GCID with the same FMs as the interview. We also conducted 5 post diary interview each in SU and GCID with the same FMs as the interview and diary.

FM Survey

Census survey of all FMs who teach in UG departments in the SU (N=15) and census survey of all FMs who teach UG student in the GCID (N=100) was conducted. Administrative data about FMs has been consulted in SU, GCID, GC-A and GC-B.

1.5.4 Undergraduate Students

We conducted 2 focused group discussions each in SU and GCID with 5 student participants in each group (i.e. a total of 20 students participated in FGD).

Table 1.6: FGD and interview participants- basic information

HEI:(state code)	Title and Pseudonym	Gender	Caste/Social group	Religion	Interviewed (yes/no)
SU:5.1	Ram	Male	ST	Hindu	Yes
SU:5.1	Adishri	Female	OBC	Hindu	Yes
SU:5.1	Rohit	Male	General	Hindu	Yes
SU:5.1	Vihan	Male	OBC	Hindu	Yes
SU:5.1	Adinath	Male	ST	Hindu	Yes
SU:5.1	Drishti	Female	General	Hindu	Yes
GCID: 5.2	Tom	Male	General	Hindu	Yes
GCID: 5.2	Yuki	Female	OBC	Hindu	Yes
GCID: 5.2	Rahul	Male	General	Hindu	Yes
GCID: 5.2	Harshali	Female	General	Hindu	Yes
GCID: 5.2	Vicky	Female	OBC	Hindu	Yes
GCID: 5.2	Shivansh	Male	ST	Hindu	Yes

Profile of UG students who participated in the FGD

Of the 20 students who participated in FGD, seven were enrolled in the BVOC course in SU, one was studying B. Tech and 2 students were pursuing BJMCJ (Mass Communication and Journalism), 4 students pursued BA, 5 pursued B.Com and 1 was doing B.Sc. The age group was 18-21. None of the students had any disability. Of these 20 students, 10 were male and 10 were female students (we had ensured that 50% of these students should be female students as we

have chosen these students purposively). Only one of these students (female) was married and 19 were unmarried. None of the student had any children.

All were born in Maharashtra and 8 students resided in urban area, while 12 students resided in rural area. One student each stated his/her mother tongue as Urdu, Persian and Gondi. Hindi was mother tongue of 2 students and Marathi was mother tongue of 15 students. Census Survey of 805 UG students has been conducted of which in SU (N=163) and in GCID (N=642).

1.6 Chapter Scheme

The report is divided into 8 chapters.

Chapter 1: Introduction. In this chapter we have discussed about the state of HE in Maharashtra based on latest AISHE report 2021-22 published in 2023. This chapter contains rationale of the study, objectives and methodology. It also includes basic information of sampled ILs, FMs and UG students.

Chapter 2: Profile of HE and Academic Profession in Maharashtra. This chapter outlines profile of Maharashtra in terms of access to HE and reservation policy of government of Maharashtra regarding student admission and faculty recruitment.

Chapter 3: Profile of the Case Study Institution. Administrative data of case study institution is presented in this chapter besides institutional outreach strategies and activities.

Chapter 4: Who are the Faculty Members. This chapter describes demographic, educational, family and professional backgrounds of FMs and ILs in the sampled institution.

Chapter 5: Institutional Leaders, Faculty Members and HE Outreach: Practices and Perspectives. The fifth chapter discusses ILs' and FMs' initiatives for widening access to HE for rural and deprived students.

Chapter 6: Who are the Students? Chapter six is devoted to description of demographic, educational and family background of the sampled students and their experiences of and perspectives on role of HEIs, FMs and ILs for HE outreach.

Chapter 7: Discussion. The seventh chapter is a synthesis of all the above chapters with focus on suggestions on maximizing potential contribution of rural FMs for fair HE access and choice with policy-oriented suggestions regarding role of FMs.

Chapter 8: Conclusion. The final chapter draws conclusions from the analysis of the primary and secondary data. It relates findings of the research with the educational policies and contemporary academic and educational practices for access and choice. It offers recommendations and suggestions for promotion of access and choice in HE focusing on HE outreach and role of HEIs, FMs, policy makers, etc.

Chapter 2: Profile of HE and Academic Profession in Maharashtra

2.1 Introduction

The present chapter deals with the profile of Maharashtra state in terms of HE and equity in relation to access to socially and economically disadvantaged groups across all categories and sections. It offers information on the focus of the policies of the Government especially concerning to the SEDGs, formulated through the efforts of the Government with the implementation of the National Education Policy-2020. It also discusses the efforts of the state through several outreach strategies and activities in the form of financial support schemes and provision of facilities to ease choice and access to HE. The final section deals with the academic profession in the state with data on policies, composition of FM, recruitment, details of redeployment of FMs and ILs of both rural and urban colleges and universities. It also offers details on the policies and practices regarding professional development of FMs and different initiatives undertaken by Government of Maharashtra.

2.2 Profile of the State in Terms of HE and Equity

The Government of Maharashtra is committed to address the issues of exclusion, disparities and access in terms of education across all levels as envisaged by NEP–2020. It has declared to achieve the objectives in line with the policy focusing on enhancing GER in HE to 50% by 2035, offering UG education with 'multiple entry & exit[3]' options, establishing 'academic bank of credit'[4] (ABC), enhancement of multidisciplinary education, fostering strong research culture, and setting up Gender Inclusion Fund and Special Education Zones for disadvantaged regions and groups. There are several schemes of Government of India that support students from disadvantaged groups and they are effectively implemented by the state, along with several initiatives of the state that assist and encourage the students from socially and economically disadvantaged groups (SEDGs). The following table indicates the GER and Gender Parity Index of Maharashtra for the year 2021–2022 and 2022–2023.

[3] Multiple entry and exit is an initiative under NEP-2020 allowing students to enter and exit academic programs at various points, earning certificate, diploma, or degree based on their accumulated credits as per UGC guidelines. https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/upload_document/abc_doc.pdf

[4] Academic Bank of Credit (ABC) is a digital initiative aligned with NEP-2020 supporting flexible learning, multiple entry-exit points, interdisciplinary learning, and lifelong education by enabling seamless credit mobility. https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/upload_document/abc_doc.pdf

Table 2.1: GER and Gender Parity Index of Maharashtra

Particulars	2021-2022	2023-2024
Gross enrollment ratio (18-23 years of age)		
a) All categories	35.3	37.17
b) SC	36.3	38.34
c) ST	17.3	14.19
Gender Parity Index (18-23 years of age)		
a) All categories	0.90	0.83
b) SC	0.93	0.90
c) ST	0.78	0.82
Number of Teachers (lakh)	1.68	1.74
Pupil Teacher ratio	27	27

Source: Economic Survey of Maharashtra – 2024–2025

GER in Maharashtra in case of SC and all categories is higher than the average GER at national level except in case of ST which is less than the national level GER i.e. 21.2%. A GPI of one indicates parity between the sexes; a GPI that varies between zero and one typically means a disparity in favour of males; whereas a GPI greater than 1 indicates a disparity in favour of females. GPI at All India level is 1.01 and for SC and ST categories, the GPI is 1.01 and 0.98 respectively. (AISHE–2021–22:26–27). The numbers of Gender Parity Index of Maharashtra show concern when compared with national data.

The GPI in case of all categories, SC and ST indicates disparity in favour of males. The positive growth in girl students' enrolment has been seen in the state, although the state has also suffered from large cases of female feticide and early marriage problems in the last decades.

Economic Survey of Maharashtra records that the Government of India's efforts to enhance GER in higher education are to be seen in increasing number of self–financed universities. Government is thus 'involving the private sector in infrastructure development related to higher education' and encouraging 'private participation to enhance access, excellence, inclusion and research in the field of higher education by creating best class infrastructure facilities' (Economic Survey of Maharashtra–2024–2025:202). As a result of this initiative, during the year 2022–2023, the total enrollment in 21 self–financed universities in Maharashtra was 76,410 of which 30,726 were female students. Besides it, Government of India launched *Pradhan Mantri Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan* (PM–USHA) formerly known as *Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan* to attain higher levels of access, equity and excellence in higher education in the year 2013. During the year 2024–2025, the Government spent Rs. 501.56 crores. PM–USHA offers

grants to colleges and universities for development of infrastructure, research, skill programs and academic activities.

Launched in 2008, the central Government's Central Sector Scheme of Scholarship for College and University Students currently known as *Pradhan Mantri Uchchatar Shiksha Protsahan* (PMUSP) offers financial support to meritorious students belonging to reserved categories, weaker sections, minorities, etc. from low-income families taking higher education. PMUSP is run by Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education. It covers students pursuing UG, PG and professional courses with a maximum duration of 5 years and with scholarship amount of Rs. 12000 per annum for UG level studies and Rs. 20000 per annum for PG level studies. Annually, about 82,000 scholarships are offered under the scheme. Like all other Central Government Scholarship schemes, eligible students are required to register on the central government scholarship portal and the amount is disbursed directly to the saving account of the students through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) mode.

Similarly, there are Central Government Post-Matric Scholarship Schemes for SC students launched in 1944. Central Government Post Matric Scholarship Scheme for ST students was launched during 1944-45 and PM-YASASVI Post-Matric Scholarship for OBC, EBC and DNT Students was launched during 2021-2022. Those schemes by the Central Government are operated through similar modes of execution as PMUSP. Students access support through the online portal.

National Overseas Scholarship provides financial assistance to SC, de–notified, nomadic, and semi–nomadic tribes students to take higher studies abroad. The program like Free Coaching for SC and OBC Students offers them free coaching to prepare for public and private sector jobs. Post–Matric Scholarship provides financial assistance to complete graduate and post graduate studies.

Besides these schemes, Central Government, through its Department of Science and Technology (DST) offers Scholarship for Higher Education (SHE) under its Innovation in Science Pursuit for Inspired Research (INSPIRE) program. It aims to enhance rates of attachment of talented youth to undertake higher education in science intensive programs, by providing

scholarships and mentorship. The scheme offers 10,000 scholarships every year at Rs 80,000/- per year for the talented youth in the age group 17-22 years, for undertaking Bachelor and Masters level education in natural sciences. The main feature of the scheme is the mentorship support provided to every scholar. Students are selected based on their performance in Class 12th board exams (top 1%) or through specific competitive exams like JEE (Main/Advanced), NEET (AIPMT), and KVPY, provided they secure admission in a science stream within the identified 18 subjects.

Government of Maharashtra offers Post-Matric Tuition Fee and Examination Fee (Free ship) Scheme for SC category students. Commenced during 2006-2007, the scholarship is offered under Social Justice and Special Assistance Program to assist the students enrolled in higher education including professional, technical, agricultural, vocational and traditional undergraduate programs. In 2003, Maintenance Allowance for Student Studying in Professional Courses Scheme was launched to offer financial support towards food and accommodation expenses of SC students who don't get admission to Government Hostels. Rajarshri Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj Shikshan Shulk Shishyavrutti Scheme and Dr. Punjabrao Deshmukh Hostel Allowance Scheme were launched during 2019-2020. Students belonging to VJNT, OBC, SBC and SEBC are the beneficiaries of the schemes and receive hostel expense allowances, they are also exempted from tuition and exam fees at undergraduate level programs. Based on the INSPIRE scheme of the central Government, Maharashtra Government offers State Government Open Merit Scholarship since 1964 through Directorate of Higher Education to meritorious students admitted to undergraduate programs – arts, science, commerce and law in the state. About 1208 students securing at least 60% of marks in 12th standard are offered the support on merit basis. The state also offers Post-Matric Scholarship for Persons with Disability since 1990 to support such students pursuing higher education. The state Government launched State Minority Scholarship during 2008-2009 to offer financial assistance to the students belonging to minority communities like Jain, Muslim, Buddhist, Christian, Sikh, Parsi and Jew. Through the scheme, the minority students are given financial support of Rs. 5000 annually for pursuing higher education in both traditional and professional courses. Introduced in 2024, Dnyanjyoti Savitribai Phule Aadhaar Scheme offers financial assistance of Rs. 60,000 as a lump sum to students from OBC, VJNT, NT and SBC categories who are pursuing higher education at UG level, covering food, residential and livelihood expenses. Launched during

2024-2025, the Tuition and Exam Fee Waiver Scheme for girl students pursuing higher education aims at increasing number of girl students taking higher education in the state. With family income less than Rs. 8,000,00 per annum, Students can apply for assistance under the scheme if their family income is less than Rs. 8,000,00 per annum - it covers both traditional as well as technical courses.

2.3 HE Access and Choice Strategies at the State Level

As far as promotion of higher education enrolment is concerned, there are certain schemes that aim at ensuring financial assistance to economically challenged students, support to girl students, and creation of infrastructure for accommodation of students. However, there are no significant schemes launched by central and state government that specifically promote enrolment in higher education. NEP–2020 does signify taking the GER to 50% in 2035 with promotion of skill and outcome-based education, it does not include any program to bring about awareness among different stakeholders about enrolment in higher education. The latest schemes like *Pradhan Mantri Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan* function to support already established institutions and students already enrolled in them.

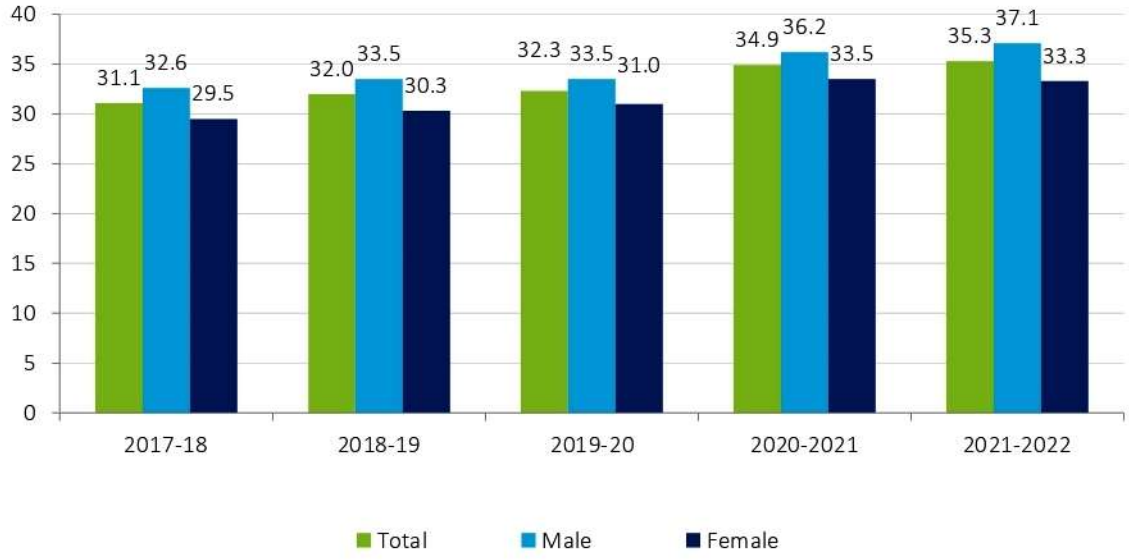
However, there are several activities and programs conducted under National Service Scheme (NSS), National Cadet Corps (NCC), NEP–2020 Awareness Program, *Unnat Bharat Abhiyan*, School Connect Program, *Career Katta* that indirectly promote importance of higher education. School Connect Program was launched by Government of Maharashtra in 2024 to sensitize 10th and 12th standard students about implementation of NEP-2020 at higher education level. The program has an aim of increasing GER of higher education by encouraging and informing the students about higher education program and career option. Similarly, Career Katta, encourages students pursuing higher education to seek various career development opportunities through online courses, it also aims to sensitize pre-degree students about career opportunities of skill development while pursuing higher education. The programs like school–connect, residential camps in villages under NSS, NCC and *Unnat Bharat Abhiyan* create interest among the students of the village to consider higher education.

Since 2020, the Government of India and Maharashtra have encouraged organization of different awareness programs like rallies, seminars, training sessions, lecture series, conferences, expert talks, and workshops at school, college and university level. Politically,

there has been an agenda of the government to promote their education schemes ensuring free and skill education through newspapers, radio and television advertisements. These advertisements and promotional materials have created awareness among people on support their children can receive to pursue their higher education. The report of the Maharashtra Government's task force for implementation of NEP–2020 also states its commitment to "enablement of frameworks for inclusive access for all" (Mashelkar, 2021:14).

As we look at the following numbers of GER in the state during 2017 to 2022, we can see gradual growth in the numbers, however, with no significant jump. The reasons of the sluggish growth of GER are possibly due to the absence of policies and promotional strategies and programs for HE enrolment by the Government, colleges and Universities.

Figure 2.1: GER during the last five years (2017-2022)



Source: Annual Status of Higher Education (ASHE)-2024

The total number of universities in Maharashtra is 78 and there are 5725 colleges and 2182 stand–alone institutions. These stand-alone institutions provide a wide range of different programs under the faculty of medical and pharmacy, paramedical, agriculture, engineering & technology, management, legal studies, multidisciplinary education, , polytechnic, , etc. After 12th standard, students can choose any stream to pursue their higher education.

Recently, state government has launched a scheme to create clusters of colleges to be recognized as a University. With these initiatives, the state aims at providing more choices of

multidisciplinary education under one roof. The academic freedom offered to these institutions will be instrumental in giving choice and access to students from different age and income groups.

2.4 State of the academic profession at state level

As reported in AISHE 2021–2022, there are 15,97,688 faculty members serving in the higher education field in India. Out of these, there are 56.6% male faculty members and 43.4% female faculty members. This total includes 89,770 (5.6%) that are Muslim Minority teachers and 1,40,205 (8.8%) are other minority faculty members. Maharashtra is the third state that has largest number of teachers serving higher education at 10.5% of the total.

There are 704 male and 385 female faculty members who are reported as persons with disability. There are 8,488 teachers from the Muslim community and 13,113 faculty members belonging to other minority communities. There are a total 16,188 professors & equivalent position staff teaching in various colleges and universities in Maharashtra whereas the number of faculty members with position of reader & associate professor is 18,265. There are 111,647 faculty members at the level of lecturer/Assistant Professor and 7,990 are demonstrators/tutors. 167,692 teachers in Maharashtra work as temporary and visiting faculty members.

Universities in Maharashtra offer programs in engineering & technology, law, commerce & management, humanities, fine arts, agriculture & animal husbandry, medicine and pharmacy at diploma, undergraduate, post–graduate and Ph.D. level. The universities fall under five categories i.e. state universities, deemed universities, private universities, central universities and cluster universities. The programs are regulated by different regulating bodies in India. Engineering and technology programs are regulated by All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE), medical programs by Medical Council of India (MCI) and pharmacy by Pharmacy Council of India (PCI), law programs by Bar Council of India (BCI) and programs in arts, commerce, management, fine arts, etc. are governed by University Grants Commission, New Delhi. The initial recruitment level in these institutions is assistant professor and then associate professor and professor or equivalent in ascending order. For the programs under MCI and PCI, the initial recruitment level is demonstrators and tutors.

For recruitment in these institutions under UGC, BCI and AICTE, a Ph.D. degree is necessary and teachers qualifying National Eligibility Test (NET) or State Eligibility Test (SET) are also eligible. In case of programs under MCI and PCI, post-graduation is a minimum qualification. However, the qualification for the positions like associate professor and professor varies as the regulating bodies in terms of years of experience and qualification like degree of Ph.D. and research work.

Recruitment of these positions is done by advertising through different local and national level newspapers. Suitable candidates are interviewed by colleges and universities following the rules and regulations laid down by the concerned regulating body. Redeployment of these faculty members is done among various constituent colleges under the universities and also the members are assigned with administrative duties as directors, deans, coordinators and in–charge of different schools, study centers, committees, cells and units functional in Universities. Promotion of teachers in colleges from the level of assistant professor to associate and professor level is done through UGC regulations of Career Advancement Scheme (CAS). Direct recruitment to the position of associate professor and professor is exercised only in Universities. There are no changes in the rules and regulations in terms of recruitment, promotion, training and redeployment for rural and urban institution teachers.

Teachers in higher education are offered professional development through UGC–Malaviya Mission Training Centre (UGC–MMTC) formerly known as Human Resource Development Centre (UGC–HRDC) functional at different state and central university campus across India. Teachers are offered orientation, refresher, professional development courses and short-term courses at these centers. These training programs range from one week to four-week duration and are fully sponsored by central Government. The Government of Maharashtra launched the Maharashtra State Faculty Development Academy in 2019 to achieve professional development of teachers in higher education in Maharashtra. They have offered 58 programs so far with participation of 13124 teachers from 1773 colleges and universities. Various training centers under the program concentrate on multidisciplinary curriculum and pedagogy, innovation & cutting–age technology, inclusion & diversity, leadership development, evaluation & assessment and resources. The professional development programs organized under the academy do not necessarily address the issues pertaining to HE outreach activities. However,

the programs sensitizing and orienting faculty members on effective implementation of the NEP-2020 also do talk about the need of increasing GER in higher education and making teaching and learning process more engaging for students.

2.5 Summary and Conclusion

With exception of the schemes like *Pradhan Mantri Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan,* there have been very little efforts made by the central as well as the state Government to increase GER and choice in higher education.

The schemes introduced by the central and state government are of assistance to the students who are already enrolled. There is a lack of formal program that is envisaged and designed to promote access and choice in HE. With NEP–2020's focus on skill education and outcome-based education ensuring employability, it is believed that the drop out, especially after higher secondary classes, can be reduced and positivity among the learners can be created to believe taking up higher education would equip them with necessary skill set and offer them employment. The state Government is trying its best to achieve this goal. Introduction of Maharashtra State Faculty Development Academy is one of such positive steps taken by the state Government concentrating on the issues like inclusion in higher education as its one of the core areas.

Chapter 3: Profile of the Case Study Institutions

3.1 Introduction to the Institutions

The city is an urban place where the SU and GCID, GC-A and GC-B are situated. All the institutions are accredited by National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) with A+ grade with 3.38 CGPA, A++ grade with 3.59 CGPA, B+ grade with 2.64 CGPA and B grade with 2.43 CGPA respectively. SU is established by the special bill passed in Indian parliament and the state assembly and is governed by the Maharashtra Public University Act 2016. Managed by trusts, GCID, GC-A and GC-B are registered at Charity Commissioner & Registrar of Societies, Bombay State, under The Societies Registration Act, 1860 (Act XXI of 1860) and are affiliated with the SU. They are governed by College Development Committee as per by the Maharashtra University Act-2016. The major sources of grants for the institutions for research, training, academic activities and students support are Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), UGC, New Delhi, State Women Commission, Maharashtra, Department of Science and Technology (DST), *Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan* (RUSA), etc. SU also offers financial support to GCID, GC-A and GC-B for undertaking research projects, organization of workshops, seminars, conferences and outreach activities through NSS.

SU, GCID, GC-A and GC-B are dependent on the state Government for salary of teaching and non-teaching staff of undergraduate grant-in-aid programs i.e. arts, science and commerce. They generate fund from the self-financed programs. In absence of non-salary grants, the colleges make use of funds generated through the courses for its infrastructure and academic development.

3.1.1 State University (SU)

Established in 1958, the SU is one of the prominent institutions in Maharashtra. The city, where the university is located, carries a rich history of educational development created by the SU. It became the center of activism and social change. The region where the SU is situated was affected by the tyranny of the rule of *Nizam* of Hyderabad and age long poverty and ignorance. The SU played an important role in creating awareness among the people about knowledge, human values, freedom, democracy and development.

The SU monitors the academic processes in its campuses and its 473 affiliated colleges spread across four districts. The University operates with seventeen statutory authorities, including bodies like the Senate, Management Council, and Academic Council, as well as ten committees/councils. The Chancellor of the university is the Hon'ble Governor of Maharashtra, as the Head of the University. Other key leaders include the Vice-Chancellor, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Registrar, and Deans of Faculties. The university hosts 52 academic departments offering 5 UG, 75 PG and 46 doctoral programs, 25 diplomas, advanced diploma, PG diploma, and certificate programs. The UG programs are professional ones and are introduced during the last 10 years to address the need of professional education at UG level in the areas of management, vocational education and technology. The course in Chemical Technology on the SU campus however is one of the oldest programs run under AICTE.

The Government of Maharashtra provides grant-in-aid towards salary of teaching and nonteaching staff. SU receives donations under corporate social responsibility (CSR) for its various student support activities and development of infrastructure. It also receives grants from international sources under Erasmus+ program, an initiative by the European Union to support faculty and student exchange and research programs.

3.1.2 Government College in-depth (GCID)

GCID, located in an urban area, a few kilometers away from the SU is one of the oldest colleges in the region established in 1960. It is one of the affiliated colleges of the SU. More than 60% students taking admission to UG courses in GCID belong to rural areas around the city (although many also come from different districts in Maharashtra). The President and Secretary of the GCID are the key positions elected by the members of the trust and they lead the Executive Council of the trust. The president and secretary of the trust lead the committee and the Principal of the college is member secretary of the committee. The Principal is the administrative head of the college, assisted by three Vice Principals. The college offers 16 undergraduate, 25 postgraduate and 12 Ph.D. programs. It also runs 21 short term certificate courses and 02 diplomas.

3.1.3 Government College-A (GC-A) and Government College-B (GC-B)

Government College-A (GC-A):

GC-A, founded in early 1970s, aims at fulfilling its vision of disseminating knowledge and skills among deprived and marginalized classes and achieving academic growth by offering state-of-the-art facilities to run undergraduate and postgraduate programs. It also aims at providing education to women and the section of the society that was traditionally denied the opportunity of education. It has similar structure of the trust as GCID with a Principal as the key administrator. The college offers 5 undergraduate and 1 postgraduate program. It also runs 03 short term certificate courses.

Government College-B (GC-B):

Founded in early 1970s with the vision and mission to transform students into noble human beings and create self-reliance among them, GC-B aims at imparting knowledge to excel in the modern world. It has the similar administrative structure like that of GCID. Principal is the administrative head of the college assisted by Vice Principals.

The college offers 05 undergraduate, 16 postgraduate and 08 Ph.D. programs. It also runs 13 short term certificate courses and 02 diplomas. The college received B grade with 2.43 CGPA in the third cycle of assessment and accreditation by NAAC in 2021.

3.2 Profile of Institutional leaders and faculty members: faculty strength and composition

The administrative structure of the SU is different from that of GCs. SU has Vice Chancellor, ProVice Chancellor and the administrative responsibilities are further distributed among deans of different faculties like science & technology, humanities, commerce and management and interdisciplinary studies. The Registrar of the university looks after administrative affairs of the SU. In case of GCs, the Principal is the head of the institutions and there are positions of Vice Principals, the number of which varies college to college. Departments are led by Head of the Department in both the cases i.e. SU and GCs.

3.2.1 State University (SU)

The SU has a total of 261 teachers currently working on permanent and non-permanent positions. It has 134 permanent faculty members recruited as per the Maharashtra State

University Act. Out of 134, there are 105 assistant professors, 28 associate professors and one professor directly recruited. There are 127 non-permanent teachers recruited as contractual (usually appointed for the period of 11 months) against the vacancies of permanent teachers. There are 149 vacant teaching faculty positions. The recruitment of permanent faculty is made at the levels of assistant, associate and professor. However, the recruitment of the contractual non-permanent faculty members is made at only assistant professor level.

Table 3.1: Social category distribution of the teaching faculty working in the SU

Type	General	Scheduled Caste (SC)	Scheduled Tribe (ST)	Other Backward Classes (OBC)	EWS	Total Faculty
Permanent	79	22	11	22	00	134
Contractual	49	16	09	41	16	127
Total	128	38	20	63	16	127
Percentage	**49%**	**14.55%**	**7.66%**	**24.13%**	**6.13%**	**261 (100%)**

Representation of FMs from SC, ST and OBC categories in the SU is positively higher than the overall representation of the categories at state level. There are 11.65% FMs recruited from SC category, 1.72% are ST and 22.36% are from OBC (AISHE-2021-2022: T-21(a).

Out of 134 permanent faculty members 106 are Hindu, 5 Muslims, 2 Christian and 22 Buddhist. Out of the permanent faculty 88 (66.67%) are male and 46 (34.33%) are female teachers. There are 3 faculty members (2.24%) who are differently-abled. 91 teachers hail from rural areas (67.91%) and 43 (32.09%) belong to urban residential location. At the state level, there are total 5.03% of FMs from Muslim community and 0.64% FMs are from differently-abled category and 7.81% FMs are from other minority sections. At the state level, 57.11% are male FMs and female FMs are 42.88% (AISHE-2021-2022: T-21(b).

3.2.2. Government College in-depth (GCID)

The GCID has a full time Principal who is the administrative leader of the college and he is assisted by three Vice Principals. There is a position of Registrar who looks after administrative work. There are 54 permanent teachers and 202 temporary teachers appointed on contractual and Clock Hour Basis (CHB). Out of the 54 permanent teachers, there are 21 assistant professors, 15 associate professors and 18 professors. Like SU, the temporary teachers are

appointed on assistant professor position only. There are 38 teaching positions vacant in the college.

Table 3.2: Social category wise distribution of the teaching faculty working in the GCID

Type	General	Scheduled Caste (SC)	Scheduled Tribe (ST)	Other Backward Classes (OBC)	EWS	Total
Permanent	28	07	02	12	05	**54**
Contractual	116	28	03	34	21	**202**
Percentage	**56.25%**	**13.67%**	**1.95%**	**17.96%**	**10.15%**	**100%**

Out of 54 permanent faculty members 47 are Hindu (87%), 07 Buddhist (12.96%). Out of the total 38 (70.37%) are male and 16 (29.62%) are female teachers. 50 (92.59%) teachers hail from rural areas and 04 (7.40%) come from urban residential location.

3.2.3 Government College-A (GC-A) and Government College-B (GC-B)

Government College-A (GC-A)

The GC-A has a full time Principal who is the administrative leader of the college. There are total 23 permanent teachers and 09 temporary teachers appointed on Clock Hour Basis (CHB). Out of the 23 permanent teachers, there are 06 assistant professors, 05 associate professors and 12 professors. Like SU, the temporary teachers are appointed on assistant professor position only.

Table 3.3: Social category wise distribution of the teaching faculty working in the GC-A

Type	General	Scheduled Caste (SC)	Scheduled Tribe (ST)	Other Backward Classes (OBC)	Total
Permanent	08	04	02	09	**23**
Temporary	04	05	00	00	**09**
Percentage	**37.50%**	**28.12%**	**6.25%**	**28.13%**	**100%**

Out of the total 32 faculty members, there are 23 (71.88%) male and 09(28.13%) are female teachers.

Government College-B (GC-B)

The GC-B has a full time Principal who is the administrative leader of the college and he is assisted by two vice principals. There is a position of Registrar who looks after administrative work. There are total 40 permanent teachers and 29 temporary teachers appointed on contractual and Clock Hour Basis (CHB). Out of the 40 permanent teachers, there are 06 assistant professors, 11 associate professors and 23 professors. Like SU, the temporary teachers are appointed on assistant professor position only. There are 21 vacant teaching positions in the college.

Table 3.4: Social category wise distribution of the teaching faculty working in the GC-B

Type	General	Scheduled Caste (SC)	Scheduled Tribe (ST)	Other Backward Classes (OBC)	Total
Permanent	20	06	01	11	**40**
Temporary	19	06	00	04	**29**
Percentage	**56.52%**	**17.39%**	**1.44%**	**21.73%**	**100%**

All faculty members are Hindu. Out of the total faculty members, 52 (75.36%) are male and 17 (24.63%) are female teachers. The domicile of all teachers is the state of Maharashtra.

3.3 Faculty professional development opportunities

All faculty members, except those on temporary contracts, need to attend orientation/induction, refresher and short-term faculty development programs in order to be eligible for promotion under career development scheme (CAS) as per UGC guidelines. These promotions are made from the position of assistant professor to associate professor and professor. However, there are several workshops and faculty development programs that are organized by different institutions aiming at training and development of faculty in certain areas of knowledge and academic practice.

The survey data collected from SU and GCID indicates the percentage of FMs completing professional development programs (FDP). 56.3% FMs from SU completed professional development programs whereas 42.6% FMs from GCID successfully participated in such programs. The percentage of FMs not attending the programs is higher in GCID compared to SU. Following are the details of the FMs from SU and GCID attending different types of professional development programs (FDPs).

Table 3.5: Details of FMs Attending Professional Development Programmes

Type of the FDPs	SU		GCID	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Orientation Programmes	8	1	42	29
Refresher Courses	5	4	40	31
Staff Training (FIPs, FDPs)	7	2	46	25
Writing and Publication Workshops	4	5	36	35
Summer/winter School Workshops	3	6	20	51
Short Term Course (STCs)	7	2	31	40

FMs from SU appear to have completed orientation, staff training and short term courses more compared to other types of the programmes. In case of GCID, it is orientation, refresher and staff training programmes like FIPs and FDPs are attended more by FMs.

3.3.1 State University (SU)

The SU has dedicated faculty training center named University Grants Commission Malaviya Teacher Training Centre that organizes different induction, refresher and short-term faculty development programs throughout the year.

All of 134 permanent faculty of the SU have completed different faculty development programs in the different stages of their academic growth.

As an assistant professor, FM's have to complete orientation/induction programs and then one refresher program (two weeks) in order to be eligible for promotion under UGC's Career Advancement Scheme (CAS) and further to be able to be promoted to the position of associate professor, one needs to complete one refresher course and one short term faculty development program (FDP). Besides the UGC's faculty development programs offered through UGC-Malaviya Teacher Training Centers in the state and central Universities across all states in India, the teachers of the SU have participated in different workshops, seminars, conferences and short-term faculty development programs organized by University departments, colleges, state centers like Maharashtra State Faculty Development Academy.

3.3.2 Government College in-depth (GCID)

As a part of the policy, all permanent and temporary faculty members in GCID were encouraged to attend different induction, refresher and short-term faculty development programs. All teachers completed refresher and short-term courses organized by UGC's faculty development programs offered through UGC-Malaviya Teacher Training Centers in different state and central Universities, except the teachers promoted as professors.

The trust of the GCID organizes one day faculty development for the teachers teaching at different senior colleges of the trust and these programs are organized subject wise. The GCID also ties up with one of the UGC-Malaviya Teacher Training Centers and organizes a dedicated faculty development program for the teachers of the college covering all permanent and temporary teachers in the college. Besides this, the teachers also attend different online and offline seminars, workshops and faculty development programs organized by different institutions. These programs in recent times have addressed the issues like NEP-2020, skill education, outcome-based education strategies, interdisciplinary studies, innovation, incubation and use of ICT in teaching and learning, etc.

3.3.3 Government College-A (GC-A) and Government College-B (GC-B)

The teachers of GC-A and GC-B have successfully completed different orientation/induction programs, refresher courses and short-term faculty development programs organized by UGC's faculty development programs offered through UGC-Malaviya Mission Teacher Training Centers in different state and central Universities. Induction programs are designed to train the newly recruited teachers in the senior colleges.

The faculty members of the GC-A and GC-B also attend different online and offline seminars, workshops and faculty development programs organized by different institutions. These programs are either sponsored by the affiliating university, NAAC, UGC or agencies like Indian Council of Social Science Research, New Delhi. The training programs and faculty development programs address the contemporary issues in the field of higher education and process of teaching and learning.

3.4 Student strength and composition

3.4.1. State University (SU)

The SU offers five undergraduate programs and these programs and numbers of students admitted in these programs are less than the numbers of students and programs at PG level. There are 163 students enrolledin the undergraduate programs offered by SU on the campus. 21.47% are female students. This is less than the overall percentage of female students taking education in all SUs in the state i.e. 40.16%. (AISHE-2021-2022: T-10). There are 63.19% students that belong to reserved categories like SC, ST, OBC and Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) and this percentage is higher than the state data i.e. 49.04%. (AISHE-2021-2022: T-14).

Table 3.6: Social Category vs Gender (Enrolment in UG courses in SU)

Caste / Gender	SC	ST	OBC	GENERAL	EWS	Total
Female	11	0	8	12	4	35 (21.47%)
Male	32	4	34	48	10	128 78.53%)
Total	43 (26.38%)	4 (2.45%)	42 (25.77%)	60 (36.81%)	14 (8.59%)	163 (100%)

The number of students hailing from rural areas is comparatively less than the students coming from urban areas to the SU for education. Out of total 163 students in the SU, 71 (43.56%)come from rural places in the state and 92 (56.44%) students are from urban areas and 21.47% are female and 78.53%are male students. .

3.4.2. Government College in-depth (GCID)

There are 7733 (2022-23) students taking education at UG and PG programs in GCID. Out of the total students, 3372 students are in the first year of the undergraduate programs.

Table 3.7: Category wise Representation of the students studying in the first year UG program in GCID

Category	SC	ST	OBC	General	Total
Number	688	93	1044	1547	3372
Percentage	**20.40%**	**2.76%**	**30.96%**	**45.88%**	**100%**

The percentage of students from reserved categories in GCID was slightly higher than the average percentage of the state data. There were 2137 seats earmarked for reserved category and 1825 students were admitted to these seats and the percentage of this enrolment was 85.40. On an average, 45% of students enrolled are female and the percentage is almost the same compared with state data of female enrolment in colleges in the state of 46.25% (AISHE2021-2022:T-10). and more than 60% students come from rural or semi-urban areas in the state. Maharashtra has been divided into four prominent regions i.e. *Marathwada*, *Vidarbha*, *North Maharashtra* and *Konkan*. In the GCID, students from the *Marathwada* region are in majority and the students coming from *Vidarbha* and *North Maharashtra* are more compared to the students coming from *Konkan* region of Maharashtra.

3.4.3 Government College-A (GC-A) and Government College-B (GC-B)

The following Table 3.8 shows the number of students across all UG program including all three years of undergraduate studies enrolled in GC-A. The students taking admission from SC category and general categories are more than other categories. There are 366 female students and 544 male students in the college. This indicates that there are about 40% girl students taking education across all programs, less than the average enrolment at the state level.

Table 3.8: Category wise Representation of the Students in GC-B

Category	SC	ST	OBC	NT	SBC	General	Total
Number	269	25	154	177	05	278	908
Percentage	**29.62%**	**2.75%**	**16.96%**	**19.49%**	**0.55%**	**30.61%**	**100%**

GC-A is located in the east part of the city and students coming from the eastern part of the city prefer to seek admission in the college. There are about 60% of total students who come from rural places to the college.

GC-B is one of the prominent colleges in the city with total 1678 students getting admitted to the undergraduate first year programs. Like GC-A, the number of students from the general and SC category are more than the other categories. However, GC-B is the college wherein the number of ST and OBC students is comparatively more.

Table 3.9: Category wise Representation of the Students in GC-A

Category	SC	ST	OBC	General	Total
Number	471	254	273	680	1678
Percentage	**28.06%**	**15.13%**	**16.26%**	**40.52%**	**100%**

There were 3630 seats allocated to different categories including general category. However, only 1678 students were admitted across all the programs during 2022-2023. About 55% students in the college come from rural places and there were more than 45% of female students enrolled in the college. In case of both GCs, the students admitted from reserved categories like SC, ST, OBC and EWS is higher than the average percentage of the state data.

3.5 Existing Institutional HE outreach strategies and activities

The coverage of various academic activities undertaken in SU, GCID and GCs in the local newspapers offers to parents and students motivating them to opt for HE. The news items offer useful information of choice and access to HE.

In case of SU, activities under Lifelong Learning Centre, Incubation Centre, Aavishkar Cell, Student Development Cell, Tarabai Shinde Women's Study Centre, particularly are more effective in disseminating information about the higher education opportunities available in the SU through its different programs that connect with society regularly as they organize different exhibitions, talks and seek wide publicity of the activities. The community radio in the campus also creates awareness among the local communities.

GCID creates awareness about career opportunities for students studying in XI and XII standard and also disseminates information about programs available in the college in areas like science and technology, commerce and management and humanities. It is mainly done through the community radio station for all the students in the city, joint programs on career opportunities targeting 11th and 12th students studying in the same premises along with UG and PG students together. The pre-degree students are also invited to visit different exhibitions and poster competitions organized for UG students in the campus. It is also ensured that the students attend the felicitation programs of successful graduate students qualifying competitive exams, getting campus placement, receiving awards in state and national sports and cultural events, etc. The community radio station runs special programs of interviews with teachers from different departments talking about HE career opportunities in their subjects.

There are very few programs like BBA and BCA for which extensive outreach activities were undertaken by FMs in GCID. Under these activities, FMs teaching the programs, go to the pre-

degree institutions mainly the junior colleges in the region and inform the students about the opportunities in the field. They demonstrate the online submission of forms, entrance exams, selection of programs and colleges. The availability of boys' and girls' hostels, concession in tuition and hostel fees and availability of 'earn and learn scheme' are effective in attracting students to pursue higher education. They usually form WhatsApp groups of the students to update them about admission processes. They also make calls to the students offering them help regarding selection of the institutions, documentation necessary for the admission, and relevant information about fees and other facilities.

GC-A also offers hostel accommodation facilities that helps attracting girl students as it ensures their safety and parents feel more comfortable about it. GC-A does have institutional level strategies to disseminate information about higher education. Individual teachers visit nearby villages and talk to parents and encourage them to enroll their wards to the UG programs in their college. They also help them to complete the admission process and, in many cases, support the students financially. The help is offered individually by teachers of the college.

Faculty members of GC-B offer counseling to the students who come to take admission in their college at undergraduate level in the beginning of the academic year, usually in the months June and July. There are few teachers who go to schools and pre-degree institutions and inform the students there about learning opportunities available in GC-B. Several FMs of GC-B adopt the students and pay their tuition fees, part of hostel fees and also help them financially to meet their food expenses. FMs carry out this work with self-motivation and there are certain FMs who do it regularly.

3.6 Summary and Conclusion

SU, GCID and GCs have administrative structures as prescribed by the state and central Government and follow reservation criteria in recruitment of FMs and admission of students. Though, the HEIs are in an urban area, more than 60% students on an average come from rural places.

There are several factors like commitment to offering quality education to people as a social responsibility, that are intrinsic to the structure of the HEIs, that influence the efforts towards creating awareness among students and parents regarding continuing the higher education. Lack of infrastructure and insufficient accommodation facilities make adverse effect especially on the continuation of education of girl students. Institutional outreach activities undertaken under NSS, indirectly create motivations among pre-degree students. The issues like hostel facilities, scholarships, schemes like ‘earn and learn’, connectivity with the road and rail and other physical facilities in the HEIs affect the decision of students to go for HE. There is a lack of institutionalization of HE outreaches in the HEIs and visibility of the HE outreach is felt in the individual efforts taken by FMs of the HEIs.

Chapter 4: Who are the Faculty Members?

4.1 Introduction

Institutional Leaders (ILs) play an important role in shaping inclusive policies for widening access to HE for rural and underprivileged students. This chapter also focuses on the details of FMs delivering higher education in colleges and universities in rural and semi-urban locations in Maharashtra.

FMs play an important role not just in delivery of higher education in colleges and universities but also in making higher education accessible to students coming from rural background and to students from deprived sections of society. Frequently, it is observed that though the students reside in urban location, they are actually migrants from rural area bearing rural culture and also, they are first generation learners. The role of FMs is important in ensuring that rural students and first-generation learners do not feel excluded during the process of getting their first degree.

It was found in the survey of FMs and ILs that among them, those who are the first-generation learners themselves, are usually keen on taking extra efforts to help students financially, emotionally and in every way possible to make them feel at home during their higher education, beginning with pre-admission advice and throughout the process of admission. Also, it was found that FMs actively provide guidance regarding career choices to first generation learners and rural students.

We have also included institutional leaders – who were basically FMs themselves. The data on various aspects of the identity of ILs is based on semi structured interviews that we conducted of 4 Institutional Leaders (ILs) – one each from SU, GCID, GC-A and GC-B. The data on the various aspects of the identity of FMs is based on semi structured interview of 20 Faculty Members (5 each from SU, GCID, GC-A and GC-B) that we carried out in addition to diary study in which 5 faculty members each from SU and GCID were requested to maintain a solicited diary to record their actions and perceptions about widening participation of students in HE with particular focus on first generation learners, rural students and students belonging to the deprived sections of society. Each faculty member chosen for diary study from the SU and GCID

responded to two semi structured interviews- one was pre-diary and another was post-diary interview.

For these semi structured interviews (pre-diary and post-diary in the case of SU and GCID), faculty members were chosen ensuring participation of SC, ST, OBC, General, and EWS categories. Among these, we ensured 50% representation of female faculty members.

Semi structured interview of ILs in each sampled Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) was conducted. In case of institutional leaders, we interviewed Vice-Chancellor in the case of SU and the Principal and the Vice-Principal in case of GCID, GC-A and GC-B.

The data presented in this chapter is also drawn from census survey of all FMs who were engaged in teaching UG courses in the SU (15 individuals) and GCID (100 individuals).

4.2 Demographic background of faculty members

4.2.1 State University

There were 15 FMs from SU who were engaged in teaching UG courses in the University departments. We carried out census survey of these 15 FMs.

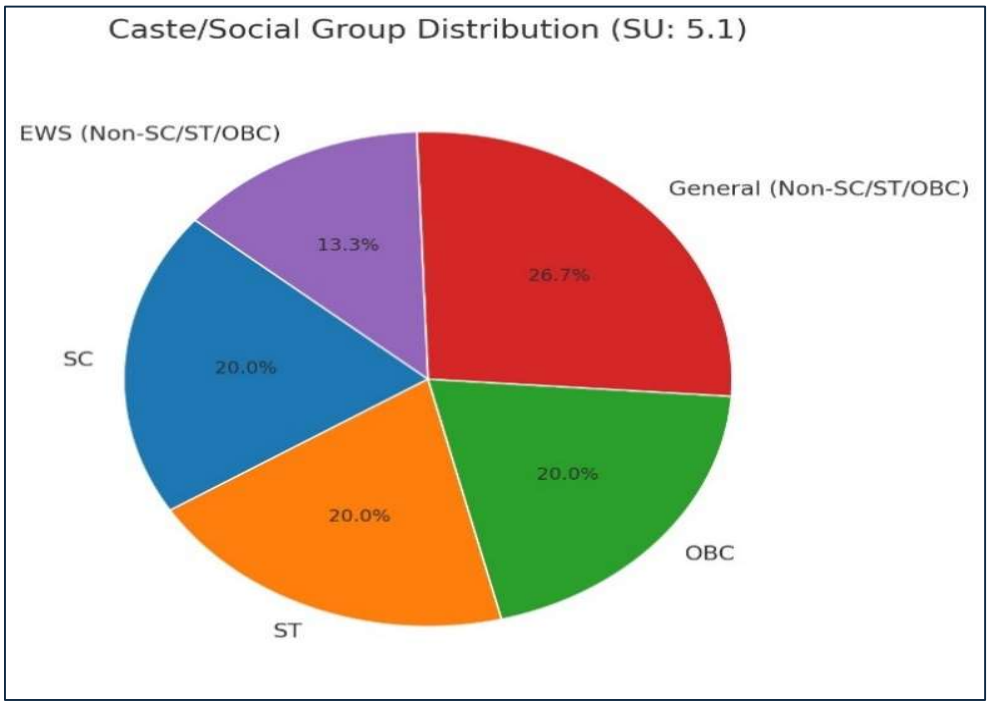
Age Group Distribution of FMs in SU:

In the SU, the majority of respondents fell within the 31-40 age group, accounting for 46.66% of respondents in SU. The 41-50 age group followed closely, comprising 33.33% in SU. The 20-30 age group had 13.34% of total faculty members in the SU. The 51-60 age group was the least represented among active faculty members, 6.67% in SU. There were no faculty members in the 60+ age category in SU as the age of superannuation in Maharashtra is 60.

Gender Distribution (SU)

In SU, 66.7% of the respondents were male, while 33.3% were female. There was no transgender respondent recorded in SU. The section for "other, please specify" did not contain any responses.

Figure 4.1: Caste/Social group wise distribution of FMs from SU



Caste/ Social group wise Distribution of FMs in SU

We received 100% valid responses for the survey sample on the question regarding cast/social group wise distribution of FMs. The table No 4.1 shows caste and social group distribution of faculty members from SU. In SU, the representation of Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), and Other Backward Classes (OBC) was evenly distributed, with each category accounting for 20% of the FMs. The general category had the highest representation at 26.7%, followed by the Economically Weaker Section (EWS) at 13.30%.

Religion of Faculty Members of SU

In SU, 86.7% faculty members identified themselves as Hindu, with 13.3% identifying as Buddhist. No respondents belonged to other religious groups such as Christianity, Islam, Jainism, Sikhism, or Zoroastrianism.

Representation of differently- abled FMs in SU

In SU, none of the respondents reported having a disability, with 100% stating that they were not differently abled. As for sexual identity, in SU, 93.33% of respondents stated that they did not identify as LGBTQIAP+, while 1 FM (6.67%) preferred not to disclose his/her identity.

Relationship Status:

In SU, the majority of respondents, 86.7% (13 FMs), reported being married, while the remaining 13.3% (2 FMs) identified as unmarried. There were no respondents in the divorced/separated category.

Caring Responsibilities:

In SU, 80% of respondents (12 FMs), reported having children or being legal guardians, while the remaining 20% (3 FMs) stated that they did not have children. The mean number of children per faculty member in SU was 1.30.

Place of Birth and Permanent Residence:

In SU, majority of faculty members, 93.33% (14 FMs), were born in Maharashtra. The remaining 6.67% (1 FM) was born in West Bengal. 100% of faculty members in SU (15 individuals) were born in India. In SU, 42.86% faculty members (6FMs) had their permanent residence in rural areas, while 57.14% (8 FMs) belonged to urban areas.

Mother tongue of FMs:

93.3% of FMs from SU reported that their mother tongue was Marathi, while only 1 FM (6.7%) said that his/her mother tongue was Bengali.

4.2.2 Government College in depth (GCID)

There were 100 FMs from GCID who were engaged in teaching UG courses. We carried out census survey of these 100 FMs.

Age Group Distribution of FMs in GCID

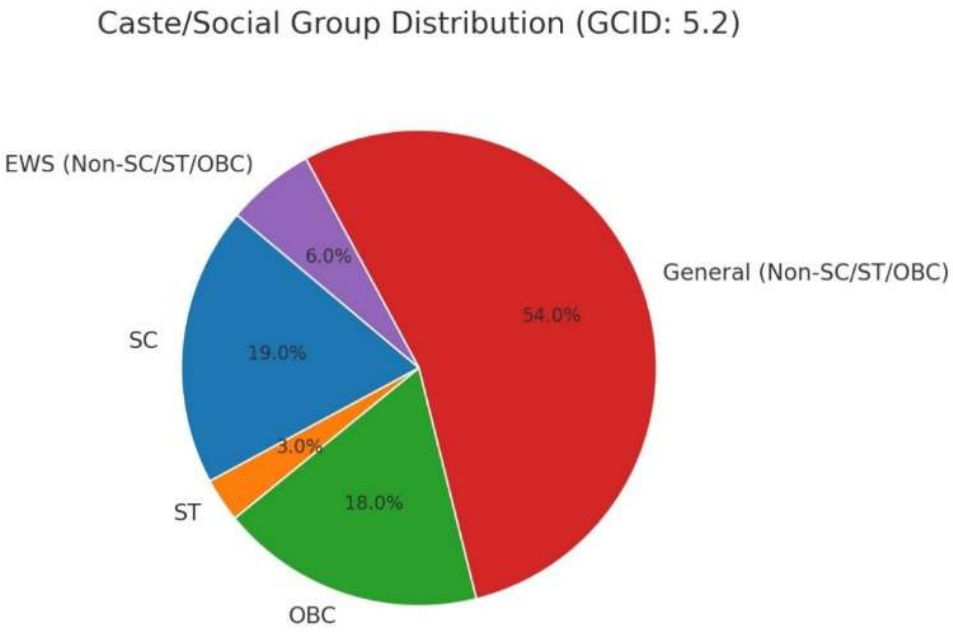
In the GCID, the majority of respondents fell within the 31-40 age group, accounting for 39% of respondents. The 41-50 age group followed closely, comprising 36% in GCID. 13% of FMs fell in

the 51 to 60 age group. The 20-30 age group was the least represented among faculty members (12%). There were no faculty members in the 60+ age category as the age of superannuation in Maharashtra is 60.

Gender Distribution (GCID)

In GCID, 42.6% of the respondents were male, while 56.4% were female. There were no transgender respondents recorded in GCID.

Figure 4.2: Caste/Social group wise distribution of FMs from GCID



Caste/ Social group wise Distribution of FMs in GCID

We received 100% valid responses for the survey sample on the question regarding cast/social group wise distribution of FMs. The table No 4.2 provides an overview of the caste and social group distribution among faculty members. In GCID, the General category dominated, making up 54% of the total FMs. SC faculty members accounted for 19%. ST faculty representation in GCID was 3%. OBC respondents constituted 18%, while the EWS category was represented by 6%.

Religion-wise Distribution of FMs in GCID

In GCID, 85% of faculty members identified themselves as Hindu, making it the dominant religious group. 9% of respondents identified as Buddhist. There was also some representation

of Muslim faculty members, accounting for 5% and Jain faculty members at 1%. No respondents identified himself/herself as Christian, Sikh, or Zoroastrian/Parsi.

Representation of differently- abled FMs in GCID

GCID had 2% (2 FMs), identifying as differently-abled, while the remaining 98% reported no disabilities. In GCID, 2 faculty members (2% of total respondents) reported having a disability, and both identified it as a physical disability (locomotor/ visual/ hearing/ speech/ language impairment). No respondents in GCID reported having intellectual disabilities, mental illnesses, or disabilities caused by chronic neurological conditions or blood disorders. Only physical disabilities were reported. In GCID, 98.85% of respondents identified as not LGBTQIAP+ and 1 FM (1.15%) chose the "Prefer not to say" option.

Relationship Status of Faculty Members from GCID

In GCID, of the total VR's 78.79% (78 FMs) were married, while 19.19% (19 FMs) were unmarried. 2.02% (2 FMs) identified as divorced or separated.

Caring Responsibilities (Children) of FMs in GCID

In GCID, 72.45% (71 FMs) reported having children, whereas 27.55% (27 FMs) did not have children. The mean number of children per faculty member in GCID was 1.69.

Place of birth of Faculty Members – By State/UT in GCID

In GCID, 98.98% of faculty members were born in Maharashtra. Only 1.02% (1 individual) was born in Andhra Pradesh. In GCID, 98 FMs who gave valid responses to the questions, were born in India.

Place of birth of Faculty Members in GCID (Place of permanent residence)

GCID exhibited a stronger urban dominance, as 82.98% (78 FMs) of faculty members had their permanent residence in urban areas. Only 17.02% (16 FMs) were from rural areas.

Linguistic Diversity of Faculty Members in GCID

In GCID, 88.78% (87 FMs) identified Marathi as their mother tongue. Other languages represented included Hindi (04.08%), Urdu (02.04%), Telugu (02.04%), Bengali (01.02%), Sindhi (01.2%), and Tamil (01.02%). Despite these additional languages, Marathi remained dominant.

4.3 Demographic Background of Institutional Leaders

Demographic background of ILs was obtained through semi structured interview of ILs in SU and GCID. We interviewed Vice-Chancellor in the case of SU and the Principal and the Vice-Principal in case of GCID, and Principal in the case of GC-A and GC-B.

All ILs were male and all stated their religion as Hindu. None of the ILs were differently abled. None were LGBTQIAP+. All were married and all ILs had children. All were born in Maharashtra. Mother tongue of all the ILs was Marathi and all the ILs stated that they had knowledge of Marathi, Hindi and English. All ILs were appointed through direct recruitment call to their current institution by the HEI. One of the three ILs from colleges belonged to the SC category, while the other two belonged to General category.

Nana, the IL from SU was Vice Chancellor and his age was 59 years and he belonged to OBC category. His place of permanent residence was Urban. Nana was appointed as IL in 2024. Nana stated his leadership role as 'Other' (Vice Chancellor) and his post as Vice Chancellor was a tenure post. His year of joining current institution was 2024.

Age group of ILs from colleges ranged between 41-60 years. One IL from GCID stated that his place of permanent residence was urban, while the other two ILs stated that their place of permanent residence was rural. The three ILs from GCID, GC-A and GC-B were Professors of English, Marathi and Physics respectively. ILs from GC-A and GC-B were appointed in 2024 while IL from GCID was appointed as Vice Principal in 2022.

Two of the ILs from colleges (GC-A and GC-B) were Principal, one of whom joined in 1991 and another joined in 1998. IL from GCID stated his leadership role as 'Other' (Vice Principal). His year of joining current institution was 2008. Nature of appointment of all the ILs from colleges was stated as 'Regular'.

4.4 Institutional Leaders and Faculty Members: Residence and Commute Information

4.4.1 State University (SU)

Location of Residence of Institutional Leader (on weekly basis):

Nana, the IL from SU said that he did not split time between residences on a weekly basis. Nana commuted using a government vehicle and stayed at a distance of 1 km from his office. It took him 5 minutes to reach his office in SU from his residence.

Location of Residence of Faculty Members (on weekly basis):

To the question on the residence pattern of faculty members, specifically whether they stay in more than one residence on a weekly basis, we received 20% VRs from the SU. In SU, the majority of faculty members, 80% (12 individuals), reported staying in a single residence throughout the week, while 20% (3 individuals) said that they stayed in multiple residences.

Location of Residence of Faculty Members during Vacation:

To the question on location of residence during vacation, we received 20 % VRs from SU. In SU, all faculty members who stayed in more than one residence (100%) reported living in the same town or location as their workplace during the workweek. None of the faculty members lived on campus, in a different town within the same district, in a different district within the same state, or in another state.

Residential Location of Faculty Members Who Do Not Stay in More Than One Residence on a Weekly Basis:

Out of the 80% valid responses that we received from the SU, we found that all of the FMs stayed in the same town where their University is located.

Mode of Transportation Used by Faculty Members in SU

The modes of transportation used by faculty members to commute to their university, revealed a strong preference for personal vehicles. The majority of respondents from SU relied on bike,

scooter, or scooty (53.3%). Personal cars were another common choice, used by 33.3% of respondents from SU.

Public transportation was not a widely preferred option, as only a small percentage of faculty members used rickshaws or autos, accounting for 6.7% in SU. Walking was also not a major choice, with only 6.7% going by walk in SU. None used carpooling in SU. The absence of metro usage is due to absence of metro facility where the SU is located. None reported use of cycles.

4.4.2 Government College in depth (GCID) & Other Government Colleges

Location of Residence of ILs from colleges (on a weekly basis):

All ILs from colleges said that they did not have residence split on a weekly basis. James – the IL from GCID - said that he stayed 1 Km away from GCID. He reported that he sometimes used two-wheeler and sometimes four-wheeler to reach his office in GCID, which took him 5 minutes. Yashwant - the IL from GC-A - used his own car to reach GC-A which was 2 km away from his residence. It took him 15 minutes to reach his office at GC-A from his residence. Vitthal - the IL from GC-B - said he used his own vehicle to reach GC-B located 4 Km away from his residence, which took him 5 minutes.

Location of Residence of FMs from GCID (on a weekly basis):

In GCID (where we received 94% VRs), 94.68% FMs resided in a single location, whereas 5.32% (5 FMs) moved between multiple residences during the week, of which 3.19% (3 FMs) reported that they stayed in the same district, but not the same town / location. 2.13% (2 FMs) said they resided in the same state but in a different district while they moved between multiple residences during the week.

Residence during Vacation:

In case of GCID, we received 15% VRs on location of residence during vacation. In GCID, 60% of FMs lived in the same town or location as their workplace during vacation, while 20% lived in the same district but not in the same town or location as their workplace. 13.33% reported staying in another district within the same state, 6.66% said that they stayed on campus and no faculty members reported living in a different state during vacation.

Residential Locations of Faculty Members from GCID Who Do Not Stay in More than One Residence on a Weekly Basis

We received 75% VRs from GCID & found that 90.67 % of FMs from GCID stayed in the same town as their college followed by only 5.33% staying in the same district but not same town/location. 2.67% reported that they stayed in the same state but in a different district and 1.33% reported staying on the campus on a weekly basis.

Modes of Transportation Used by Faculty Members from GCID

Modes of transportation used by faculty members to commute to their college or university, revealed a strong preference for personal vehicles. Carpooling appeared to be a significant trend in GCID, as it was 44.39% of total answers followed by bike, scooter, or scooty (34.53%), personal cars (7.62), auto (6.73%), walking (5.1%). Cycle, Bus, Train was reported with a 0.43% share of total responses.

4.5 Institutional Leaders' and Faculty Members' Background

4.5.1 Educational and Family Background

4.5.1.1 State University (SU)

In the case of SU, Nana the IL, described his paternal grandfather as a teacher, and reported that his maternal grandmother held the position of an education officer. Nana reported that his brother held a master's degree (M.A) and a Ph.D. in History. Educational qualification of Nana's mother was not specified. Nana's spouse was a graduate.

Occupation of Parent/Guardian of IL: (SU)

Nana reported that his father was a teacher who retired as headmaster and his mother was a housewife. Nana was the first person in his family to work as Faculty Member.

Occupation of Parent/Guardian of Faculty Members: (SU)

We conducted pre and post diary interview of five faculty members from SU. During the interview, three of the faculty members – Dr Kavya, Dr Radha and Dr Shree explicitly disclosed the occupation of their parents.

We found that among the five respondents from SU, only two faculty members' mothers were earning members (Dr Radha's mother was Accountant General, while Dr Kavya's mother was a primary teacher). From the respondents who explicitly told us about the occupation of their fathers, Abhinay mentioned that his father was in a private job and Dr Kavya said that her father was primary teacher. We found that only Dr Kavya from SU mentioned that both her parents were working and that both of them were primary teachers. Abhinay and Dr Vibha did not report about occupation of their respective parents. Abhinay did not talk about the occupation of his parents, and only mentioned that they were illiterate. Dr Vibha mentioned that both her parents had passed the ninth grade, and she did not say anything about their occupation.

Educational Qualifications of SU Respondents' Mothers

The SU sample comprised 15 valid responses to the question on educational qualifications of the respondents' mothers representing 100% of the surveyed FMs. 13.3% of respondents reported that their mothers had attained a degree-level education, and an equal proportion (13.3%) indicated that their mothers had achieved MPhil or PhD qualifications. 13.3% each reported that their mothers were educated between 1st to 5th, 9th to 10th class. 6.7% reported that their mothers had not accessed formal schooling, with another 6.7% indicating that they came from a single parent household (i.e. they did not have mother). The remaining responses are distributed across primary to higher secondary education, with the highest cluster (20%) falling in the 6th to 8th class bracket.

Educational Qualifications of SU Respondents' Fathers

Within the SU, 20% of respondents said that their fathers had received a degree. Another 20% stated that their fathers had completed education up to the 1st to 5th class level. A further reported qualifications from the 9th to 10th class and vocational streams (Diploma/ITI/ITC) 13.3% each. 6.7% reported postgraduate education, and an equal percentage recorded MPhil or PhD qualifications. 6.7% of the FMs also reported that their fathers had not received any formal education and 6.7% of FMs were unaware of their fathers' educational background.

Educational Background - Maternal Grandmothers of Faculty Members from SU

In the SU group, 46.7% of respondents indicated a lack of knowledge regarding their maternal grandmothers' educational attainment. 13.3% FMs reported that their maternal grandmothers

had not accessed any formal schooling. Respondents who said that their maternal grandmothers had attained primary education were 13.3%, middle and secondary education (6.7%) each and an equal percentage said that the question was not applicable to them. Degree-level attainment was reported by only 6.7% respondents in the SU group. Not a single response indicated M.Phil. or Ph.D. qualifications.

Educational Background- Maternal Grandfathers of Faculty Members in SU

One of the most prominent observations is the high level of uncertainty or lack of information about the educational background of maternal grandfathers. 46.4% of the respondents in SU reported that they did not know their maternal grandfather's educational qualifications. In SU, 6.7% FMs reported that their maternal grandfather did not access any formal schooling, while 20% reported that they had completed only primary schooling (1st to 5th class).

FMs reporting that their maternal grandfather was educated up to 9th to 10th class. 10th to 11th class, Degree education, M. Phil and Ph. D were 6.7% for each of these education categories mentioned here. There was no response to Diploma/ IIT/ ITC category and PG Education category.

Educational Background of Paternal Grandmothers of Faculty Members in SU

In SU, 46.7% of respondents reported that they did not know the educational background of their paternal grandmother. In SU, 20% of respondents indicated that their paternal grandmothers had not accessed any form of formal schooling. In SU, 13.3% of respondents reported that their paternal grandmother had attained education up to the 1st to 5th standard, while 6.7% said that their paternal grandmother had studied up to the 6th to 8th standard.

None of the respondents from SU reported that their paternal grandmother had reached the 9th to 10th, the 11th to 12th standard and Diploma/ ITI, postgraduate, or doctoral-level education in this population. Only one instance of a degree holder was noted in the SU population (6.7%) and 6.7% said that the question was not applicable.

Educational Background of Paternal Grandfathers of Faculty Members in SU

46.7% of the SU respondents reported lacking knowledge about their paternal grandfather's educational background. In SU, 6.7% of FM's reported that their paternal grandfather studied up to the 1st to 5th class, and an equal proportion (6.7%) reported attainment of education up to the 6th to 8th class. Secondary-level education (9th to 12th class) and Diploma level education was achieved by none.

With regard to higher education, 13.3% of respondents in SU reported that their paternal grandfathers had attained degree-level education. 6.7% in SU indicated that their paternal grandfathers had achieved postgraduate education, while no respondents reported any instance of MPhil or PhD-level attainment and 20% reported that they had not attained formal schooling.

Educational Background of Spouses of Faculty Members

Data on the educational background of the spouses of faculty members from SU is based on 13 valid responses (constituting 86.7% of total SU sample). The data revealed a remarkably high concentration of higher educational attainment among the spouses of faculty members. In particular, postgraduate education dominated the distribution (61.54%) in SU. Following postgraduate education, degree-level qualifications emerged as the next most common educational category, with 7.69% of spouses in SU holding such credentials. A substantial segment of spouses held MPhil or PhD qualifications (30.77% in SU).

Respondents' Sibling Status: SU

In SU, 93.3% of respondents (14 out of 15) indicated that they had siblings. Only 6.7% of SU (1 respondent) reported not having siblings.

Family Education: SU

In the SU, we observed notable diversity in educational backgrounds across different family members.

- Dr Shree's paternal grandmother had reached the 7th grade and paternal grandfather had a degree. Dr Shree's maternal grandmother had reached 7th grade while his maternal

grandfather had reached 10th grade. The mother and father of Dr Shree had reached the 7th and 12th grade respectively. His sibling group achieved the 12th grade. Dr Shree's spouse was a graduate.

- Dr Radha's paternal grandmother held a 10th-grade education, and her mother had a master's degree (MA). Her father attained a degree, while her siblings pursued graduation.
- Dr Kavya's mother held a Diploma in Education (D.Ed.) and her siblings pursued training at the Industrial Training Institute (ITI).
- Dr Vibha's paternal grandmother had reached the 2nd grade, while her father was graduate and her spouse was a postgraduate.
- Dr Abhinay's spouse held a postgraduate qualification. He did not share details of education of other members of his .

Occupation of FMs' Mothers

A dominant identity of FM mothers in SU was that of the housewife, accounting for 66.7% of the maternal population followed by 20% of mothers in teaching occupation. The incidence of farming as an occupation was 13.3% in SU. No respondents from SU reported that their mothers were engaged in business.

Occupation of FMs' Fathers

The most common paternal occupation reported was farming, accounting for 40.0% (6 out of 15) in SU. The second most prevalent category was retirement, recorded at 20.0% in SU. In the SU, 6.7% of FMs' fathers were in government jobs. Other formal sector occupations such as professor (6.7% in SU), teacher (13.3%) were also visible. Business was represented with 6.7% in SU respondents' fathers. Doctor and Engineer category was absent in SU. Worker occupations were limited to 6.7% in SU.

Occupation of Respondents' Legal Guardian: SU

The data for SU revealed that 2 FMs (13.33%) had legal guardian - one FM's legal guardian was involved in farming, while the other FM's legal guardian was engaged in business.

Occupation of FMs' Spouses

In the SU group, 50% of respondents' spouses were homemakers followed by teachers, who represented 25% of the responses, and professor, at 8.34%. Government jobs also featured prominently in this group, with 16.66% of respondents reporting their spouse held such a position. There were no responses indicating spouses working as accountants, advocates, businesspeople, engineers, or farmers within SU.

Average Monthly Family Income: SU

Average Monthly Family Income of FMs.

Families earning more than INR 100,000 per month was represented with 46.67% in SU. The income category of INR 25,001-50,000 per month included 13.3% of SU respondents. The income bracket-less than INR 25,000 per month-accounted for 6.7% in SU as there was only one respondent in this income category, in SU. SU had 20% of respondents in the INR 50,001-75,000 range and 13.3% in the INR 75,001-100,000 range.

First-Generation Faculty Members in SU

Among the SU respondents, 80% reported being the first in their family to take up a faculty position, while 20% of respondents from SU were not the first faculty members in their family.

Table 4.1: Involvement of Faculty Members in UG college choice. Responses of FMs from SU classified by gender/ caste/ social group/ religion/ place of permanent residence

Options	SU: 5_1			
	Yes (FM involved)		No (FM not involved)	
	N=	% of VRs	N=	% of VRs
GENDER				
Total VRs	06	100	09	100
Female	01	16.67	04	44.44
Male	05	83.33	05	55.56
Transgender	00	00	00	00
Other gender	00	00	00	00
CASTE				
SC	01	16.66	02	22.22
ST	01	16.67	02	22.22
OBC	01	16.67	02	22.22
General	03	50.00	01	11.12
EWS	00	00	02	22.22
Buddhist	01	16.67	01	11.11
Christian	00	00	00	00
Hindu	05	83.33	08	88.89
Jain	00	00	00	00
Muslim	00	00	00	00
Sikh	00	00	00	00
Zoroastrian/Parsi	00	00	00	00
Other	00	00	00	00
Rural	01	16.67	05	55.56
Urban	05	83.33	03	44.44

Table 4.1 shows involvement of faculty members in UG college choice of FMs from SU based on response of faculty members, classified by gender, caste, social group, religion and place of permanent residence. To the question on FM involvement in UG College choice, (out of 15 FMs), 6 FM's answered in the affirmative, whereas 9 FMs denied involvement of faculty members When classified the data by gender, we found that those from S U who acknowledged the role of faculty members, 83.33% were male and 16.67% were female Those FMs from S U who denied any role of faculty members, 55.56% were male and 44.44% were female.

When we classified the same data by caste/ social group, we found that 50% of those who confirmed involvement of faculty members in UG college choice belonged to the general category and 16.61% belonged to SC, ST and OBC categories each, with none belonging to the

EWS social group. While in the SU, FMs who denied involvement of faculty members, 22.22%, each belonged to SC, ST, OBC and EWS categories while 11.12% (that is only one respondent) belonged to the EWS category. Based on religious affiliation, we found that those from SU who said yes to faculty member involvement, 83.33% were Hindu and 16.67% were Buddhist. Of those who said no to faculty member involvement, 88.89% were Hindu and 11.11% were Buddhist. When we classified the same data by place of permanent residence, in SU, of those who affirmed involvement of faculty members, 83.33% came from rural background and 16.67% were from urban areas. Of those from SU who denied involvement of faculty members, 55.56% were from rural background and 44.44% were from urban areas.

Family Members of FMs from SU Who Were Faculty Members before the Respondent

In SU, 80% of the respondents did not specify a particular family member who was a Faculty Member. Among those who did, 13.3% reported their father as a faculty member while 6.7% mentioned their mother as FM.

4.5.1.2 Government College in Depth & other Government Colleges

Institutional Leaders' Family Background:

James, the IL from GCID, reported that his paternal grandfather received education up to the fourth standard. His father's educational background included a diploma in agriculture after 12th . James' siblings attained higher education, with one sister holding a Bachelor of Arts (BA) and Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.), and another holding a Master's degree (MA). His spouse held an MA and PhD, while his daughter was still at the fifth grade.

In GC-A, Yashwant, the IL, reported a relatively modest educational background. His paternal and maternal grandparents did not have any formal educational achievements. Yashwant's father completed primary schooling while his siblings completed undergraduate studies. Yashwant's spouse held a Master's degree (MA).

IL form GC-B, Vitthal's, paternal grandfather had reached up to the fourth standard in his schooling, while his maternal grandfather's educational status is unspecified. Vitthal's father had completed PUC while his siblings completed postgraduate education (PG). Vitthal's spouse completed her schooling up to the 12th grade.

Faculty Members' Family Background:

From the Pre-diary interview of 5 FMs from GCID and the standalone interview of 5 FMs each from GC-A and GC-B, we gathered information on educational background of families of FMs, which is presented below.

Educational Background of Families of FMs from GCID

- Mr Andy reported that his paternal and maternal grandfather held a 10th-grade education. His mother was educated up to 4th grade and his siblings held PG degree. Mr Andy's spouse held a Bachelor of Science (BSc) degree.
- Dr John reported that his spouse held a doctoral qualification. His siblings were graduates.
- Dr Smith's father was a graduate. His mother was educated up to 10th grade and sibling held PG degree. His spouse was also a postgraduate.
- Shaw reported that his father held a Pre-University Course (PUC) certificate, equivalent to the 12th grade and his mother was educated up to 4th standard, while his spouse was a graduate (BA) while his siblings held PG degree.
- Mary's father held a Diploma in Homeopathic Medicine and her sibling held a Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) degree.

Educational Background of Families of FMs from GC-A

- Dr VCK's sibling completed a BHMS Bachelor of Homeopathic Medicine degree. Dr VCK's spouse held a BSc.
- Dr Lata's paternal grandfather attended school for only 5 years, and her mother and father both were graduate. Her spouse held a diploma.
- Dr Amu reported his siblings had a Bachelor's degree in Pharmacy (B Pharmacy) and his souse had cleared NET (National Eligibility Test for Assistant Professor) in Marathi.
- Dr Gaju's father had a PhD and his spouse had a Master's degree (MA).
- Deva's spouse was graduate and his siblings were post graduate.

Educational Background of Families of FMs from GC-B

- Tomson's father was a Bachelor of Commerce and his siblings held postgraduate degree.

- Sumit's father held an ITI qualification and his spouse possessed a Master's degree (MSc).
- Falguni's father was educated up to the 4th grade, while her sibling was educated up to 11th standard.
- Prof. Sharmishtha reported an educationally well-established family, with both the paternal grandfather and father holding substantial educational qualifications, including a professorship and a PhD. Her spouse was also a professor.
- Edison's mother had attained graduation and his father and spouse both had completed their master's degree.

Educational Qualifications of GCID Respondents' Mothers

From the survey of 100 FMs from GCID, we gathered the following data on educational qualifications of family members of FMs from GCID. In the GCID data set, we received 94 valid responses (accounting for 94% of the total survey). The largest segment (22.34%) of mothers in this category had completed education up to the 9th or 10th class, followed closely by those who had completed 1st to 5th class (19.15%) and 11th to 12th class (17.02%). 1.06% reported MPhil or PhD-level qualifications, 6.39% of the mothers had attained postgraduate degrees. 10.64% had degree-level qualifications (BA, BSc, etc.), and another 10.63% fell within the 6th to 8th class category. 7.45% had no formal schooling, and 5.32% of respondents were unaware of their mothers' educational background. There were no responses indicating the attainment of a Diploma, ITI, or ITC.

Educational Qualifications of GCID Respondents' Fathers

We received 96% VRs to the question on father's educational qualifications. In the GCID, the most reported (27.09%) was degree-level attainment, making it the largest category, followed by 17.71% of respondents whose fathers had postgraduate qualifications and 14.59% who had completed education up to the higher secondary level (11th to 12th class). 12.6% had fathers with education up to the 9th or 10th class, while 7.29% reported vocational or diploma-level education. 1st to 5th class and 6th to 8th class were recorded at 5.20% and 3.12% respectively. 4.16% of fathers were reported to have no formal schooling, and an identical percentage was recorded for those with MPhil or PhD qualifications as well as for those about whom the respondents did not have educational information.

Legal guardian of Faculty Members in GCID

Among the 12 valid responses, 25% indicated that their legal guardians had obtained postgraduate qualifications. Another 16.66% had guardians with degree-level qualifications, and an equal percentage reported completion of higher secondary education (11th to 12th class). 25% of the respondents reported that the question was not applicable. A further 16.66% reported not knowing the educational background of their guardians.

Educational Background - Maternal Grandmother of Faculty Members from GCID

51.8% of respondents from GCID indicated a lack of knowledge regarding their maternal grandmother's educational attainment followed by 16.86 % stating that their maternal grandmother did not access schooling. 8.43% of the respondents reported that their maternal grandmother was educated up to 6th to 8th class followed by 4.81 % each reporting that their maternal grandmother was educated up to 1st to 5th class and 11th to 12th class. 2.4 % FMs said that their maternal grandmother was graduate and 1.2 % said that they were diploma holder. 3.61% said they had reached 9th to 10th class. 6.02% said that the question was not applicable.

Educational Background- Maternal Grandfather of Faculty Members from GCID

43.91% of the respondents in GCID reported that they did not know their maternal grandfather's educational qualifications. The GCID Population also included 8.53% respondents who stated the question was "not applicable,". In GCID, 9.76% of the respondents reported that their maternal grandfather did not access any formal schooling, identical to the proportion who completed only primary education (1st to 5th class). 6.09% had studied up to middle school (6th to 8th class) while 7.32% had reached the 9th to 10th class level. Another 4.88% were reported to have completed higher secondary schooling (11th to 12th class).

In the GCID sample, 7.32% maternal grandfathers were degree-holders, 1.21% had completed postgraduate studies and another 1.21% had obtained vocational a qualification (Diploma/ITI/ITC). No respondent reported MPhil or PhD qualifications for their maternal grandfather in the GCID group.

Educational Background of Paternal Grandmother of Faculty Members from GCID

In GCID, 45.12% of respondents reported that they did not know the educational background of their paternal grandmother. In GCID, 18.29% of respondents said that their paternal grandmothers had not accessed any form of formal schooling. In GCID, 7.31% FM's paternal grandmothers had completed primary or middle-level education while 7.31% of GCID respondents stated that their paternal grandmother had studied up to 9th or 10th class. 10.97% said that their paternal grandmother had reached 6th to 8th class. 3.65% of GCID respondents reported that their paternal grandmother had reached the 11th or 12th standard. 7.31% said that the question was not applicable.

Educational Background of Paternal Grandfather of Faculty Members from GCID

40.24% of the respondents reported lacking knowledge about their paternal grandfather's educational background in GCID. 12.19% in GCID indicated that their paternal grandfather had not accessed formal schooling.

In GCID, 9.75% of respondents indicated that their paternal grandfather studied up to the 1st to 5th class, and an equal proportion (9.75%) reported attainment of education up to the 6th to 8th class. 4.87% of respondents in GCID reported completion of the 9th or 10th standard. There were no reports of paternal grandfathers completing secondary school. 2.43% GCID FMs reported vocational or diploma-level education (Diploma/ITI/ITC) of their paternal grandfathers. With regard to higher education, in GCID reported that the question was not applicable, and paternal grandfather had reached 11th to 12th class and that their paternal grandfathers had attained degree-level education (6.09%). 2.43% in GCID indicated that their paternal grandfathers had achieved postgraduate education, while no respondents reported any instance of MPhil or PhD-level attainment.

Educational Background of Spouse of Faculty Members from GCID

In the GCID, 53.52% FMs reported that their spouses were Postgraduates. Following postgraduate education, degree-level qualifications (15.49%) emerged as the next most common educational category. 14.08% of spouses of FMs in GCID held MPhil or PhD qualification.

1.4% of GCID respondents reported that their spouses did not access formal schooling and only 1.4% had a spouse with a diploma or technical qualification. No respondents reported spouses with education limited to the 1st-8th standard and there were no cases of only primary or middle-level schooling (1st-8th class). Secondary-level education (9th-12th class) accounted for 5.63% in GCID. 2.81% in GCID stated that they did not know their spouse's educational qualification, while 7.04% marked the question as "Not Applicable".

GCID Respondents' Sibling Status

We received 95 valid responses (comprising 95.0% of the total FM population from GCID) to the question on sibling status. Majority of respondents (92.63%) in GCID (88 out of 95) confirmed they had siblings. The percentage of respondents without siblings was 7.37% as 7 FMs from GCID reported not having siblings.

Occupation of Parent/Guardian of Faculty Members in GCID

During the pre-diary interview which we conducted for faculty members from GCID, some details of occupation of family were shared. Mr Andy said that his mother was educated up to 4th grade while father was educated up to 12th grade and he did not mention about their occupation. Similarly, Dr John also did not mention about occupation of his parents and only mentioned that both were illiterate. While Dr Smith said that his mother was educated up to 10th standard and his father worked with Indian Railways as Station Master. He said that his mother was a home manager and father was educated up to PUC and he did not mention occupation of his father. Mary did not speak about her mother and she said that her father was a doctor.

We conducted standalone interviews of five faculty members from GC-A. None of the faculty members explicitly told us about the occupation of their parents. While Dr Lata mentioned that both her parents were graduates. Dr VCK said that his mother was educated up to 7th standard, while father was educated up to 10th standard. Deva said that both his parents were illiterate. Gaju said that while his mother was illiterate, his father had studied up to 2nd standard Dr A M U said that both her parents were uneducated.

During the standalone interviews conducted in GC-B, only one faculty member that is, Sharmishtha mentioned that her father had a PhD degree and was Professor of Marathi. Edison said that his father held am MBA but did not mention about his occupation while Falguni said that her father was a military man. Thomson said that his father was a commerce graduate but did not mention his occupation. Sumit said that his father had passed seventh standard, but he also did not disclose his father's occupation.

Occupation of Mothers of FMs from GCID

Regarding occupation of FM's mother, we received 74 VRs from GCID, representing 74% of the population. 89.18% of the mothers of FMs in GCID were housewives. The incidence of farming as an occupation was 4.05% in GCID. Business was reported as maternal occupation by one FM from GCID (1.35%). GCID recorded 5.40% of mothers in the teaching profession.

Occupation of FMs' Father

The total number of valid responses (VRs) was 80 in GCID (80% of its FM population). The most common paternal occupation reported was farming (35.0%). The second most prevalent category was retirement, recorded at 21.25% in GCID. Government employment emerged as a key occupational category in GCID where 23.75% of fathers were reported to hold government jobs. Other formal sector occupations such as professor (3.75%), teacher (3.75%), and engineer (3.75%) were visible in small numbers. Business was represented 5% in GCID among respondents' fathers. Doctor was recorded only once in GCID (1.25%). Worker occupations were limited to 2.05% in GCID.

Occupation of Legal Guardians of FMs from GCID

The GCID group showed no responses for the occupation of the legal guardian.

Occupation of GCID FMs' Spouses

We received 55% VRs to the question on occupation of spouses of FMs from the GCID group. 27.27% of respondents reported their spouses were in government jobs, followed by business roles at 12.72%. Teachers and homemakers accounted for 18.18% and 21.81%, respectively. Respondents mentioning spouses working as accountants were 5.45%, advocates (1.81%), engineers (1.81%) and farmers (1.81%).

Average Monthly Family Income:

Average Monthly Family Income of FMs from GCID

Families earning more than INR 100,000 per month was 43.0% in GCID. The income category of INR 25,001-50,000 per month included 29.0% of GCID respondents. Less than INR 25,000 per month accounted for 14.0% in GCID. FMs with family income ranging between INR 50,001-75,000 and INR 75,001-100,000, were 7% each. 43% of faculty members reported average monthly family income above Rs. 100000.

First-Generation Faculty Members

We received 99% VRs to the question whether the FMs themselves were 'First-Generation Faculty Members', from the GCID group. In GCID 69.69 % FMs were first generation FMs and 30.31% were not the first generation FMs.

Figure 4.3: Place of Permanent Residence

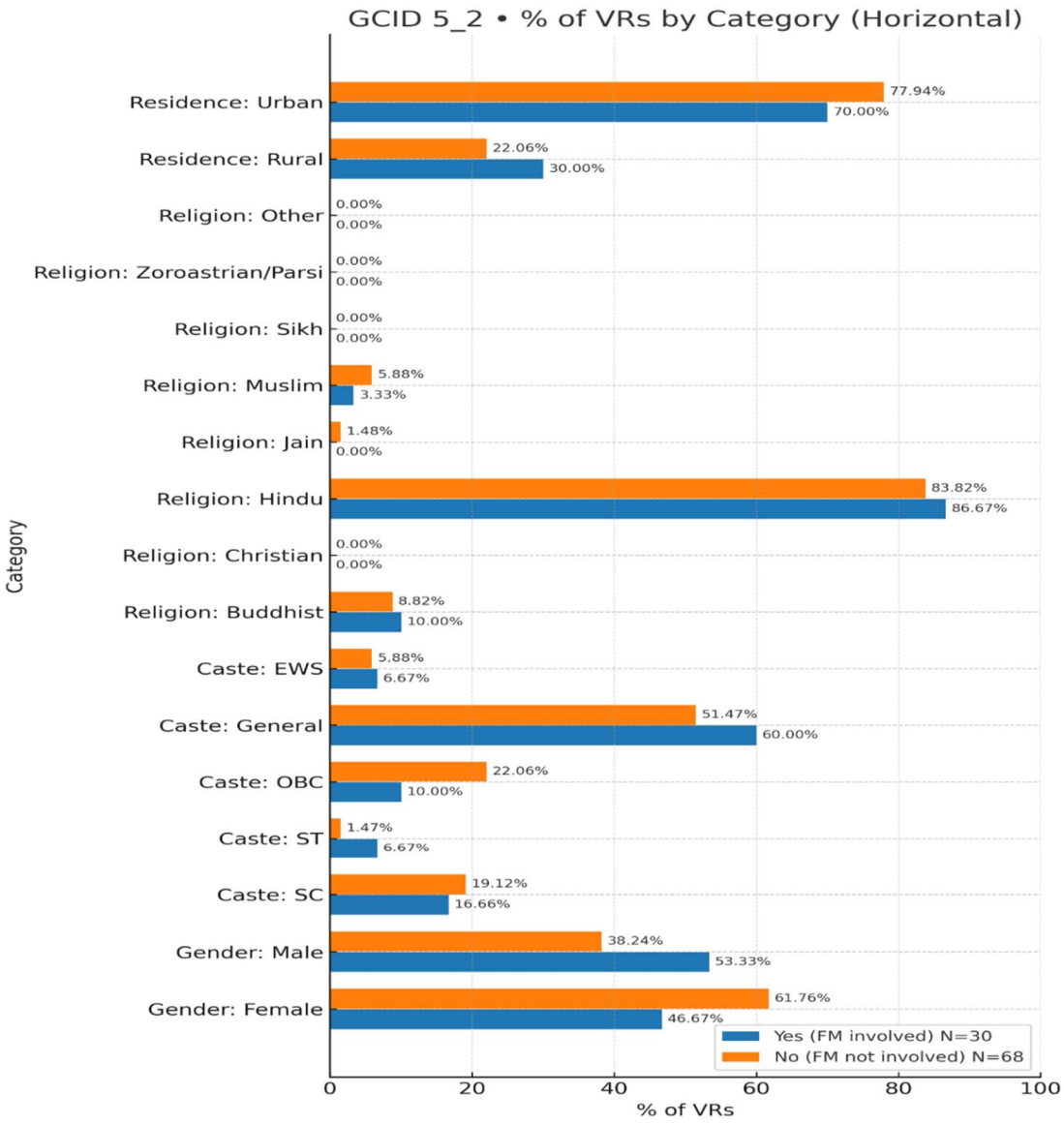


Figure 4.3 shows involvement of faculty members in UG college choice, based on response of FMs from GCID, classified by gender, caste, social group, religion and place of permanent residence.

To the question on faculty members' involvement in UG College choice, in the GCID group, 30 FMs answered in the affirmative while is 68 FMs denied any role of faculty members. In GCID, those who said that faculty members were involved in their choice of UG college, 46.67% were female and 53.33% were male respondents 61.76% of the respondents who denied involvement of faculty members were female and 38.24% were male respondents. When

we classified the same data by caste/social group, of the total respondents who affirmed involvement of faculty members, 60% belonged to the general category followed by SC (16.66%), OBC (10%) and ST and EWS 6.67% each. Those who denied involvement of faculty members in choice of college, 51% belonged to the general category followed by OBC (22.06%), SC (19.12%), EWS (5.88%) and ST (1.47%).

Based on religious affiliation, we found that those in the GCID group who said yes to faculty members' involvement, 86.67% were Hindu 10% were Buddhist and 3.33% were Muslim. Of those in GCID who said no to faculty members' involvement, 83.82% were Hindu, followed by 8.82% Buddhist and 5.88% Muslims and 1.48% Jain. When we classified the same data by place of permanent residence, in GCID, of those who affirmed involvement of faculty members, 30 % came from rural Background and 70 % were from urban areas. Of those from GCID, who denied involvement of faculty members, 22.06 % were from rural background and 77.94% were from urban areas.

Family Members Who Were Faculty Members before the Respondent

In GCID group 70.77% of the respondents did not specify a family member who was faculty member, while 7.69 % had mothers in faculty positions, 6.45 % had fathers and 4.62% had brothers and 3.08 % had cousin brothers as faculty members. 3.08 % stated that their mother-in-law was faculty member and 1.45 % each reported that uncle, paternal uncle and paternal aunts were faculty members.

4.5.2 Occupation of Parent/Guardian of ILs:

Of the 4 ILs we interviewed, Nana's father was a teacher, who retired as headmaster and his mother was a housewife. Nana was the first person in his family to work as faculty member. James' father was in Govt. Service as Agriculture Officer while his mother was housewife. Vitthal's mother was a housewife and his father was engaged in farming business. Yashwant's parents were not formally employed.

4.5.3 Schooling history

Location of Schools Attended by ILs:

All ILs attended schools up to secondary level in rural areas and all of them studied in Zilla Parishad schools, and these were co-education schools which followed State Board syllabus and the medium of instruction was Marathi.

For 11th & 12th, all ILs attended higher secondary schools at Taluka Places (i.e. semi-urban area) Nana & Vitthal reported medium of instruction as English as they chose science stream during higher secondary school. James and Yashwant reported that their medium of instruction during 11th & 12th was Marathi and that they chose the Arts stream. All ILs studied State Board syllabus during 11th & 12th Class and schools of all ILs were co-education schools. While Nana stayed at his Uncle's house during 11th & 12th standard, Yashwant stayed in Hostel. James cycled up & down from his village every day. Vitthal stayed in a rented accommodation during his higher secondary education.

4.5.3.1 State University (SU)

Location of Pre-Primary Schooling

In SU, 57.14% of respondents reported attending pre-primary school in rural areas while 42.85% attended schools in urban areas.

Geographical Distribution of Primary Schooling

In SU, 60% of respondents reported attending primary school in rural areas, while 33.3% of respondents had urban schooling and 6.7% of respondents attended semi-urban schools.

Geographical Distribution of Middle School attended by FMs

In SU, 53.3% of FM respondents reported attending middle school in rural areas. Urban schooling was attended by 40% of FMs. Only 6.7% of respondents in SU attended middle school in semi-urban areas.

Location of Secondary Schools Attended by FM Respondents:

In SU, 53.3% of respondents attended secondary school in rural areas, 40% attended urban schools while the remaining 6.7% attended semi urban schools.

Location of Senior Secondary Schools Where FMs from SU were enrolled:

In SU, 46.7% of respondents attended senior secondary school in urban areas. Rural areas accounted for 40.0% of the responses. Only 13.3% of respondents in SU attended senior secondary school in semi-urban areas.

Type of School Attended by FMs from SU up to 10th Class

In SU, 73.3% FMs attended co-educational schools (up to 10th standard) while 26.7% of respondents attended single-sex schools.

Type of school attended by FMs from SU during 11th to 12th classes

All FMs (100%) from SU reported that they attended coeducation schools during 11th and 12th classes.

Management of school attended by FMs for Classes 9th 10th

In SU, 60.0% attended government-aided / private-aided schools. 33.3%, attended government run schools, which are fully funded and managed by the government. The remaining 6.7% of respondents in SU attended private (unaided) schools, which are fully independent and do not receive government support.

Management of Schools Attended by FMs for Classes 11th To 12th

In SU, 66.7% of FM respondents attended government-aided / private-aided schools. The second-largest group, 20.0%, attended government-run schools. 13.3% of respondents in SU attended private (unaided) schools.

Syllabus Followed by Schools for Classes 9th to 10th attended by FMs from SU

In SU, all 15 respondents (100%) reported following the state syllabus during their 9th and 10th classes.

Syllabus Followed by Schools (for Classes 11th to 12th) attended by FMs

In SU, majority of respondents (93.3%) followed the state syllabus for their 11th and 12th classes. 6.7% of respondents attended schools that followed the CBSE syllabus. There were no respondents following the ICSE syllabus at this level.

Medium of Instruction in schools attended by FMs from SU for Classes 9th to 10th

In SU, there were 15 VRs, and the majority of respondents (86.7%) reported that the medium of instruction in their 9th and 10th classes was a regional language. 13.3% attended schools where English was the medium of instruction. No respondents in SU mentioned Hindi as their medium of instruction.

Medium of Instruction in schools attended by FMs for Classes 11th to 12th

In SU, with 15 VRs, 60.0% of respondents indicated that their medium of instruction for classes 11th to 12th was English. 40.0% of respondents attended schools where the medium of instruction was a regional language. No respondents in SU mentioned Hindi as the medium of instruction.

Stream Choice of FMs from SU for Classes 11th and 12th

In SU, with 15 (100%) VRs, 66.7% of respondents selected the Science stream. The Commerce stream was chosen by 20.0% of respondents, while 13.3% opted for Arts/Humanities.

Residence of FMs during 11th and 12th Class

In SU, with 15 VRs, 80% of respondents were day scholars living at home. 6.7% of respondents in SU lived in a school hostel, and another 6.7% stayed in rented accommodation or paying guest arrangements.

4.5.3.2 Schooling History: Government College in-depth & Other Government Colleges

Location of Pre-Primary Schooling:

In GCID, 47.91% of respondents attended pre-primary school in rural areas. Urban areas accounted for 43.75% of respondents. Semi-urban pre-primary education was attended by 8.33% of respondents.

Geographical Distribution of Primary Schooling of FMs from GCID

In the GCID, 45.91% of respondents attended rural primary schools. Urban schooling accounted for 46.93%. The percentage of respondents who attended semi-urban primary schools was 7.14%.

Geographical Distribution of Middle School:

In GCID, 41.83% of respondents attended middle school in rural areas. Urban schooling accounted for 50.0% of respondents. Semi – urban schooling was attended by 8.16% of respondents in GCID.

Location of Secondary Schools Attended By Respondents from GCID

In GCID, 53.06% of respondents attended secondary school in urban areas. Rural schooling accounted for 38.77% of respondents. Semi-urban schools were attended by 8.16% of respondents.

Location of Senior Secondary Schools Where FMs from GCID were enrolled

In the GCID, 68% of respondents attended senior secondary school in cities. Rural schooling was attended by 20% of respondents. Semi-urban schools were attended by 12% of respondents.

Type of School Attended by FMs up to 10th Class

In the GCID, 82% of respondents reported attending co-educational schools while the remaining 18% FMs were enrolled in single-sex schools.

Type of school attended by FMs during 11th 12th classes

The data on the type of school attended by FMs in GCID during 11th to 12th Classes shows that 92.93% of respondents attended co-educational schools. The remaining 7.07% of respondents in GCID attended single-sex schools.

Management of school attended by FMs from GCID for Classes 9th 10th

In the GCID sample, 58.61% of respondents attended government-aided or private-aided schools when they were in the 9th and 10th class. The proportion of respondents attending government schools in GCID was 26.53%. Private (unaided) schools accounted for 15.30% of respondents.

Management of Schools Attended by FMs from GCID for Classes 11th to 12th

Amongst the GCID FMs, 74.22% of respondents reported that they attended government aided/ private aided schools. Government-run schools accounted for 14.43% of respondents. The presence of private (unaided) schools in GCID was at 11.34%.

Syllabus Followed by Schools for Classes 9th to 10th attended by FMs from GCID

In the GCID, 93.93% of respondents followed the state syllabus, while 3.03% of respondents in GCID attended schools that followed the CBSE syllabus, and another 3.03% followed the ICSE syllabus during their 9th to 10th classes.

Syllabus Followed by Schools (for Classes 11th To 12th) attended by FMs from GCID

95.92% of respondents from GCID attended schools that followed the state syllabus while 2.04% FMs each attended schools that followed CBSE and ICSE syllabus. The GCID showed no "other" responses, meaning that the schools attended by respondents largely adhered to the state, CBSE, or ICSE syllabi for Classes 11th To 12th, with no significant deviations reported.

Medium of Instruction in schools attended by FMs from GCID for Classes 9th To 10th

In GCID, 80.8% of respondents reported that their medium of instruction for classes 9th to 10th was a regional language. English was the medium for 18.2% of respondents in GCID while 1.0% of respondents in GCID reported Hindi as the medium of instruction for Classes 9th To 10th.

Medium of Instruction in schools attended by FMs from GCID for Classes 11th To 12th

In GCID, with 99% VRs, 62.6% of respondents reported English as their medium of instruction for classes 11th to 12th. Regional languages were the medium for 35.4% of respondents. 2% of respondents in GCID reported Hindi as their medium of instruction.

Stream Choice of FMs from GCID for Classes 11th and 12th

In GCID, with 100% VRs, 72% of respondents chose Science. 9% of FMs in GCID selected the Commerce stream. Arts/Humanities was chosen by 19% of respondents for classes 11th and 12th.

Residence of FMs from GCID during 11th And 12th Class:

In GCID, with 97% VRs, 75.25% of FMs were day scholars living at home. The percentage of respondents living in a school hostel was 7.21%, while 10.30% lived in rented accommodation. 3.09%, lived with relatives or friends and 4.12% stayed in paying guest accommodations.

4.5.4 Higher Education History

HE Choices of ILs:

- Nana, the IL from SU, said that his mother motivated him for higher education. However, going against the wish of his mother, Nana pursued BSc course when his mother wanted him to go for UG in Engineering.
- James, IL from GCID, pursued a Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree in a college located in a semiurban area located about 20 kilometers from his village. His education involved staying in rented accommodation.
- Yashwant, IL of GC-A, completed BA from a government college situated in an urban area and received a scholarship.
- Vitthal, IL of GC-B pursued a Bachelor of Science (BSc) degree in an urban college and studied in English medium.

4.5.4.1 State University (SU)

Bachelor's degree subjects chosen by FMs from SU

Among FM respondents from the SU, Vocational Studies and Chemical Technology (20% each) had the highest enrolment followed by Management Science and School of Performing Arts (13.3% each) and Mathematics, Automobile Engineering, Fine Arts, Computer Applications and Mass Communication & Journalism was opted by 1 FM each (6.7 % each).

Higher Education Institutions Attended for Bachelor's Degrees by FMs from SU

In SU, with 14 VRs, 85.71% of the respondents attended affiliated colleges for their Bachelor's degrees. 14.29% of respondents in SU attended a university directly for their bachelor's degree.

Type of Higher Education Institutions Attended for Bachelor's Degrees by FMs from SU

In SU, with 14 VRs, 50% of respondents attended government institutions for their Bachelor's degrees. 35.71% attended government-aided or private-aided institutions. 14.29% of respondents in SU attended private institutions.

The Location of Higher Education Institutions chosen by FMs from SU for Bachelor's Degree Studies

In SU, out of 14 valid responses (VRs), 64.28% of respondents attended urban-based institutions. 28.57% of respondents attended rural-based institutions. 6.15% of respondents attended semi-urban institutions. No respondents in SU pursued higher education abroad.

Funding Sources Availed by FMs for Bachelor's Degree Studies

Scholarship support featured prominently among SU respondents, with 42.85% reporting this source of financial aid for bachelor’s degree studies. Free ships (tuition waivers) were used by 7.14% of SU respondents. No SU Faculty Member reported receiving fellowships or Parent Teacher Association (PTA) funding. 21.43% of SU respondents received funding from institutional pool-resources, often mobilised internally by faculty or administrative units.

Subjects Studied for the First Master’s Degree by FMs

In the SU group, 7.14% of respondents each pursued their first masters in Mathematics, Physics, Automobile Engineering, Fine Arts, Management Science, Mass Communication, Journalism and Vocational Studies. Chemical Technology and Performing Arts were pursued for their first master’s degree by 14.28% FMs each from SU.

Higher Education Institutions Attended by FMs from SU for their First Master’s Degree

We received valid responses from 14 faculty members in the SU. Among SU respondents, 71.43% reported that they pursued their master's degree at universities, while 28.57% attended affiliated colleges.

Type of Higher Education Institutions Attended for the First Master’s Degree by the FMs

In the SU group, 64.28% attended government institutions for their master's degree while 35.71% attended Government aided/private aided institutions.

The Location of Institutions that FMs Attended for the First Master's Degree

In the SU group, 92.85% faculty members attended institutions located in urban areas. One respondent (7.15%) attended an institution in a rural area. No respondents from SU chose semi-urban or overseas locations for their first master's degree.

Funding Sources for First Master's Degree Studies

Scholarships were an important source of funding for SU faculty members to finance their first master's degree studies, with 5 out of 14 (35.71%) reporting reliance on scholarships while an equal proportion of FMs reported that their Master's Degree education was Self-funded. Free ships, or tuition waivers, were utilized by 1 out of 14 (7.14%) SU respondents. Fellowships were only used by 1 out of 14 (7.14%) SU respondents. No SU respondents reported receiving PTA funding.

Subject chosen for Second Master's Degrees by FMs in SU

We received 3 VRs from SU respondents, representing 20% of the sample. Each of the three individuals, reported having chosen different fields for their second master's degree: Computer Science, Industrial Automation and Fine Arts, each accounting for 33.33% of SU responses.

Type of Institutions Attended for a Second Master's Degree by FMs from SU

We received 3 VRs from SU to the question on institution attended for second master degree. All three FMs from SU completed their second master degree from affiliated colleges.

The Funding Distribution for FMs from SU Pursuing a Second Master's Degree

We received 3 valid responses from SU participants. In the SU group, 2 out of 3 FMs (66.66%) reported relying on scholarships to fund their second master's degree, while one respondent (33.34%) reported self-funding. No SU respondents reported receiving any other form of support such as fellowships, free ships, or contributions from PTA or internal funding pools.

The Distribution of MPhil Degree Subjects among Respondents from SU

There were no valid responses from the SU group, regarding MPhil subject.

Higher Education Institutions chosen by FMs for M.Phil. Degrees from SU

On the type of higher education institutions attended by respondents for their MPhil degrees, we received 2 valid responses from the SU group. Among SU respondents, both individuals (100%) reported having pursued their MPhil at universities.

Type of Institutions Offering M.Phil. Degrees chosen by FM

For SU respondents, both individuals (100%) who gave VR to the question on type of institution reported that they undertook their MPhil studies in government-aided or private-aided institutions.

The Location of Institutions Offering M.Phil. Degrees chosen by FMs from SU

We observed that in SU both the FMs (100% of VRs) reported attending institutions located in urban areas.

Funding Sources that FMs obtained for M.Phil. Degrees

In the SU group, both respondents (100% of VRs) reported receiving scholarships, and none reported any other form of financial support.

Subjects in which FMs obtained Ph.D.

To the question on PhD subjects, we received responses from 8 FMs from SU constituting 53.33% of the total survey sample. In the SU, 25% FMs each obtained PhD in Dramatics and in Mechanical Engineering was obtained by 25% FM's each. One FM each obtained PhD in Computer Applications, Physics, Fine Arts and Mathematics (12.5 % each).

Higher Education Institutions Attended by FMs from SU for PhD Studies

The data on higher education institutions attended by respondents for PhD studies included 11 valid responses from SU, constituting 73.3% of the sample.

In the SU group, 90.91% respondents attended universities for their PhD studies while 9.09% attended affiliated colleges.

Type of Institutions Attended for PhD Studies by FMs from SU

To the question on the type of institutions attended for PhD studies by respondents in the SU, the total number of valid responses for SU was 11 (73.3% of the sample). In the SU group, the

majority of respondents (63.64%) attended government institutions for their PhD studies, followed by 27.27% who attended government-aided or private-aided institutions. 9.09% attended private institutions for their PhD studies.

Location of Institutions Attended for PhD Degrees by FMs from SU

The total number of valid responses (VRs) to the question on location of institutions attended for PhD Degree for SU was 11, representing 73.3% of the sample. For the SU group, all 11 respondents 100% of VRs reported attending institutions located in urban areas for their Ph.D. studies.

Funding Patterns for PhD Education of FMs from SU

Among the SU respondents, the predominant funding source for PhD education was self-funding, with 63.64% reporting that they financed their studies themselves. Fellowships were the second most common source of funding for SU respondents, with 2 respondents (18.18%) indicating that they received fellowships to support their PhD studies. PTA funding and Scholarships was reported by 9.09% respondents each. PTA funding was reported by 1 respondent (9.09%) in the SU group.

National Eligibility Test (NET) Participation by Respondents from SU

Among SU respondents, 28.57% reported that they had taken the NET, while 71.43% reported that they had not participated in the exam.

State Level Eligibility Test (SLET) Participation by Respondents from SU

For the SU group, only 1 respondent out of 14 (7.14%), who provided VR, indicated that s/he had taken the SLET, while 13 respondents (92.86%) reported that they had not participated in the exam.

Reservations availed by FMs from SU across Different Levels of Higher Education

In terms of the distribution of reservations, 5 respondents (33.3%) reported that they availed benefit of reservations at the Bachelor's degree level, 6 respondents (40%) at the Master's degree level, and 2 respondents (13.3%) at the PhD degree level. 2 respondents (13.3%)

mentioned that they availed benefit of reservations in the NET/SLET examinations. There were no respondents in the SU group who availed benefit of reservations for M.Phil. degrees.

Distribution of Reservation Categories Availed by Respondents from SU during Their Admissions to Higher Education Institutions

In the SU group out of 10 valid responses, the majority of respondents availed reservations under the OBC, SC, and ST categories. (30% each). Only one respondent (10%) reported having obtained admission from the general category.

Higher Education History of ILs/FMs:

IL from SU: Nana's History

Nana, the IL from SU, shared a personal conflict in his academic choice, indicating that he did not wish to pursue engineering but his mother wanted him to. Going against the wish of his mother, Nana pursued a BSc course.

Higher Education History of faculty Members from SU

Dr Shree held a Master of Fine Arts degree and also cleared NET, while Dr Radha completed an MTech and PhD. Dr Kavya and Dr Vibha, pursued diplomas and bachelor's degrees in applied fields viz. Computer Engineering and Music, respectively. Dr Abhinay held a Bachelor of Arts followed by a Master of Performing Arts (Dramatics).

Response of FMs from SU to how they came to Enrol in Undergraduate Study

In SU, most respondents credited a blend of teacher guidance and family support. For instance, Dr Shree and Dr Vibha both mentioned that teachers and family members played a role in shaping their educational pathways. Dr Radha reported that her decision was also independently made in addition to family support. Dr Kavya solely mentioned family support, while no details were provided by Dr Abhinay.

Other qualifications gained (e.g., Masters, PhD) by ILs

From SU, Nana the IL shared that he pursued both MSc and PhD in Physics entirely out of his own decision.

Other Qualifications Gained (e.g., Masters, PhD) by FMs from SU:

FMs from SU pursued advanced academic qualifications, often driven by self-motivation. In SU, all respondents whom we interviewed, viz. Dr Shree, Dr Radha, Dr Kavya, Dr Vibha, and Dr Abhinay-clearly indicated that their decision to pursue postgraduate or doctoral education was entirely self-initiated.

Key Sources of Encouragement and Motivation for FMs from SU while Pursuing Higher Education

The data from our survey indicated that parental influence played a significant role in shaping educational aspirations, with fathers being the most influential figures for SU reported by 18.52% of respondents. 12.96% responded that they were self-motivated. Mothers and grandmothers also played a crucial role, as these options received 12.96% of yes responses each, followed by friends 7.4%, school and college teacher 5.56% each. Senior students, sister, maternal grandfather, paternal grandfather received 3.7% of yes responses each followed by maternal grandmother, maternal aunt and uncle, paternal aunt and uncle 1.79% each.

Key Individuals Involved in Selecting an Undergraduate College or University (for FMs in SU)

Fathers played a significant role, with 26.66% of yes responses recorded for father and yourself followed by friends 16.67%, mother 10%, and sister, maternal grandfather, paternal grandmother, college teacher, senior student and tutor 3.33% each.

Key Influencers in Selecting an Undergraduate Course or Subject (as reported by FMs in SU)

We received 27 responses from SU for Key Influencers in Selecting an Undergraduate Course or Subject Father and Yourself received the highest number of responses 29.63% each as Key Influencers in Selecting an Undergraduate Course or Subject followed by mother 7.41% and 11.11% each for college teacher and friend/s. Senior student/s, school teacher/s, brother/s received 3.7% response each. Higher Education History- Government College in-depth & other Government Colleges.

Bachelor's degree subjects chosen by FMs from GCID

Among FM respondents in the GCID, Computer science had the highest enrolment (21.12%), followed by Biotechnology (15.56%) and Chemistry (14.45%), English (7.78), Physics (5.57%), Psychology and Marathi 4.44% each, Botany, Economics and Geology 3.33% each,

Environmental Science, Hindi, Zoology and Public administration 2.22% each, Dramatics, Library Science, Mathematics, Microbiology, Multimedia, Music and Sanskrit 1.11% each were chosen by FMs from GCID during graduation.

Higher Education Institutions Attended for bachelor's Degree by FMs in GCID:

In GCID, with 100 VRs, we found that 83.0% of respondents attended affiliated colleges and 17.0% of respondents attended universities.

Type of Higher Education Institutions Attended for Bachelor's Degrees by FMs

In GCID, with 98 VRs, 17.34% of respondents attended government institutions while 75.51% attended government-aided or private-aided institutions. Only 7.15% of respondents attended private institutions in GCID.

The Location of Higher Education Institutions chosen by FMs from GCID for Bachelor's Degree Studies

In GCID, with 99 VRs, 75.76% of respondents attended urban-based institutions. Rural institutions and semi urban institutions were attended by 12.12% of respondents each. No respondents in GCID pursued education overseas.

Funding Sources Availed by FMs from GCID for Bachelor's Degree Studies

Data on how faculty members from GCID financed their undergraduate education, with responses from 97 FMs, shows that scholarship support featured prominently among GCID respondents, with 18.55% reporting this source of financial aid. Among GCID respondents, self-funding stood out as the dominant source of educational finance, with 63.91% bearing their own expenses. Free ships (tuition waivers) were used by 7.21% in GCID. 2.06% of GCID faculty members received fellowships or PTA funding. 5.15% of GCID respondents received funding from institutional pools-resources often mobilised internally by faculty or administrative units.

Subjects Studied for the First Master's Degree by FMs from GCID

For the GCID group, subjects studied for the First Master's Degree by FMs from GCID were Computer Science (22.62%), Biotechnology (16.66%) and Chemistry (15.48%). English (8.33%), Physics (5.95%), Marathi (4.76%), Botany, Geology Psychology and Economics 3.57% each.

Disciplines such as Dramatics, Environmental Science, Library Science and Multimedia, each had one respondent 1.19% each.

Higher Education Institutions Attended by FMs from GCID for their First Master's Degree

53.61% of GCID respondents attended affiliated colleges, compared to 46.39% who enrolled in universities.

Type of Higher Education Institutions Attended for the First Master's Degree by the FMs from GCID

43.75% of GCID respondents attended government institutions, while 46.87% attended government-aided or private-aided institutions. 9.37% of GCID respondents attended private institutions.

The Location of Institutions that FMs from GCID Attended for their First Master's Degree

The data, gathered from 96 responses from GCID on the location of higher education institutions attended by respondents for their first master's degree, reveals clear concentration in urban areas. For the GCID group, 91.66% of respondents attended urban institutions. 4.16% of GCID faculty members attended institutions in semi-urban areas and another 4.16% attended institutions that were located in rural areas.

Sources of Funding:

Funding Sources used by FMs from GCID for their First Master's Degree Studies

Scholarships were an important source of funding for GCID faculty members, with 15 out of 94 (6.38%) reporting reliance on scholarships to finance their first master's degree studies. Self-funding emerged as the predominant source for GCID faculty members, with 64 out of 94 (68.1%) covering their own educational expenses. Fellowships, or tuition waivers, were utilized by 7 out of 94 (7.44%) GCID respondents. Fellowship was used by 1 out of 94 (1.06%) GCID respondents. PTA (Parent-Teacher Association) funding was reported by 1.06% of GCID respondents.

Subjects that FMs from GCID Studied for their Second Master's Degree

We received 15 VRs to the question on subjects studied for second master's degree from FMs from GCID. The most notable concentration was in Zoology chosen by 13.33% ofrespondentsAll other subjects were chosen by 6.66% respondent each - these included Analytical Chemistry, Economics, Mathematics, Social work, Public Administration, English and History along with vocational and professional subjects viz. Library Science, Journalism, Education, Computer Science, Commerce and Psychology.

Institutions Attended for a Second Master's Degree by FMs from GCID

Based on 20 VRs that we received, we found that of the 20 VRs, 70% (14 individuals) faculty members from GCID completed their second master degree from affiliated college whereas 30 % completed it from university.

The Funding Distribution for FMs from GCID Pursuing a Second Master's Degree

Data on the funding sources reported by faculty members who pursued a second master's degree, is based on valid responses from 18 GCID participants. 72.22% of respondents from GCID used self-funding for their second master's degree. 11.11% of GCID participants accessed scholarships, and an equal percentage received fellowships. A small fraction (5.56%) benefitted from internal institutional resources like funding pools. None reported any reliance on free ships or PTA-based funding, and no respondents from either group selected the 'other' category for additional funding sources.

The Distribution of MPhil Degree Subjects among Respondents from GCID

The subject-wise breakdown on the distribution of MPhil degree subjects in the GCID group reveals that MPhil in Commerce, Computer Science, and Public Administration and English was opted by 16.66% of respondents each. Marathi accounted for 11.11% of response. MPhil in Chemistry, Environmental Science, History, and Biology each was obtained by 5.56% of the respondents.

Higher Education Institutions chosen by FMs from GCID for M.Phil. Degree

To the question on type of higher education institutions attended by FMs for their MPhil degrees, we received 19 valid responses from the GCID group (19% of their survey samples).

The GCID group demonstrated a dominant reliance on universities, for their MPhil degrees with 89.48% (17 out of 19) attending such institutions for their MPhil studies. Only 10.52% (2 respondents) reported attending affiliated colleges.

Type of Institutions Offering M.Phil. Degrees chosen by FMs in GCID:

To the question on the type of institutions where respondents pursued their MPhil degrees, we received 19 valid responses from GCID, representing 19% of the total survey sample. Majority (73.68%) of respondents completed their MPhil in government institutions. 21.05% attended government-aided or private-aided institutions, while 5.26% reported studying at fully private institutions.

The Location of Institutions Offering M.Phil. Degrees chosen by FMs from GCID

All respondents from GCID reported attending institutions located in urban areas for M.Phil.

Funding Sources that FMs from GCID obtained for M.Phil. Degrees

Data on funding sources utilised by respondents from GCID for pursuing MPhil degrees is based on 19 valid responses from GCID. A clear reliance on self-funding was evident among GCID respondents. 14 out of 19 (73.69%) financed their MPhil studies independently. Only a small fraction reported receiving fellowship support (4 respondents or 21.05%), and one respondent (5.26%) reported having a scholarship. No respondents reported receiving tuition waivers (free ship), PTA support, or alternative forms of institutional/community funding.

Subjects in which FMs from GCID obtained Ph.D.

Data on subjects in which FMs from GCID obtained PhD includes responses from 55 FMs from GCID, constituting 55% of the total survey sample. In the GCID group, PhD was obtained in Computer Science by 12.72% of FM respondents, followed closely by FMs obtaining PhD in Chemistry and Plant Pathology (9.09% each), Commerce and Microbiology (7.27% each). Biotechnology, Economics, English, Marathi, Physics and Zoology (5.45% each); Botany, Geology and Public Administration (3.63% each), followed by Environmental Science, Hindi, History, Library Science, Plant Pathology and Psychology (1.81% each).

Higher Education Institutions Attended by FMs from GCID for PhD Studies

To the question on type of Higher Education Institutions Attended by FMs for PhD Studies, we received 57% VRs from GCID constituting 57% of the sample. We found that 80.% of the FMs from GCID attended University for PhD studies while 19.3% attended affiliated colleges.

Type of Institutions Attended for PhD Studies by FMs from GCID

To the question on the type of institutions attended for PhD studies by respondents in the GCID, the total number of valid responses was 58 (58.0% of the sample). The percentage of respondents from GCID attending Government institutions was 74.14%, government-aided or private-aided institutions was 24.14%. Only 1.72% of respondents in the GCID group attended private institutions.

Location of Institutions Attended for PhD Degrees

The total number of valid responses (VRs) for GCID on the locations of the institutions where the respondents pursued their PhD studies is 58, representing 58.0% of the total sample. For the GCID group, a significant majority (91.38%) of respondents attended urban institutions for their PhD studies. 5.18% attended semi-urban institutions and 3.44% attended rural institutions. The GCID group showed no representation of respondents attending overseas institutions for their PhD studies.

Funding Patterns for PhD Education of FMs

The number of valid responses (VRs) on funding patterns for PhD education was 57 for GCID (accounting for 57.0% of the FM Population in GCID). The most common source of funding for GCID respondents was self-funding, with 41 respondents (71.94%) indicating that they funded their PhD education themselves. Fellowships were the second most common funding source for the GCID group, with 11 respondents (19.29%) reporting that they received fellowships. Free ship (tuition waiver) was reported by 3.51% respondents. Scholarships were reported by 2 respondents (3.50%) in the GCID group. PTA funding was reported by 1 respondent (1.76%).

National Eligibility Test (NET) Participation by Respondents from GCID

The number of valid responses (VRs) regarding the National Eligibility Test (NET) participation among the respondents from GCID stood at 90 (90.0% of the sample). The data is presented in terms of the percentage of respondents who answered "Yes" and "No" to whether they had taken

the NET. 72.22% of respondents in GCID, reported not having attempted the NET while 27.78% reported having attempted the NET examination.

State Level Eligibility Test (SLET) Participation by Respondents from GCID

The number of valid responses (VRs) regarding the State Eligibility Test (SET) participation among the respondents from GCID stood at 96 (96% of the sample). The data is presented in terms of the percentage of respondents who answered "Yes" and "No" to whether they had taken the SET. 64.51% of respondents in GCID, reported not having attempted the SET while 35.49% reported having attempted the SET examination.

Reservations availed by FMs from GCID across Different Levels of Higher Education

In the GCID group we received 96 valid responses, (96% of the total sample). 25 respondents (26.04%) reported that they availed reservations at the Bachelor's degree level, 29 respondents (30.20%) at the Master's degree level, 7 respondents (7.30%) at the M.Phil. degree level, and 16 respondents (16.67%) at the PhD degree level. 19 respondents (19.79%) indicated that they availed reservations at the NET/SLET examination level.

Distribution of Reservation Categories Availed by Respondents from GCID during Their Admission to Higher Education Institutions

In the GCID group, with 27 valid responses, 44.44%, availed reservations under the SC category, followed by OBC at 33.33% and ST at 11.11%. A small proportion of respondents, 3.7% availed admission from the open/ general category and an equal proportion reported that they did not avail reservation benefit and 3.7% were admitted to HEIs through open category.

Key Sources of Encouragement and Motivation for FMs from GCID while Pursuing Higher Education

The data from our survey indicated that parental influence played a significant role in shaping educational aspirations, with fathers being the most influential figures for GCID (19.41%) respondents. ‘Yourself’ received 9.71% of responses. Mothers (15.53%) played a crucial role, as this option received 12.96% of yes responses followed by college teachers (7.77%), brothers (7.28%), sisters 6.07%, school teachers and senior students 5.58% each, paternal grandfather

and maternal uncle 2.67% each, cousins 2.43%, paternal grandmother 2.18%, maternal grandmother, maternal grandfather, maternal aunt, paternal uncle and tutor 1.94% each.

Key Individuals Involved in Selecting an Undergraduate College or University (for FMs in GCID)

Fathers played a significant role, with 27.6% of yes responses recorded for father followed by mother 17.2%, yourself 16%, brother/s 9.6%, college teacher 6.8%,friend/s 6.4%,sister/s 6%,school teacher/s 2.8%, cousin and tutor 1.6% each. Paternal uncle and senior student 1.2% each. Paternal grandfather and maternal uncle 0.8% each and paternal aunt 0.4%.

Key Influencers in Selecting an Undergraduate Course or Subject (as reported by FMs in GCID)

We received 218 yes responses from SU for Key Influencers in Selecting an Undergraduate Course or Subject. Father and Yourself received the highest number of yes responses (22.48% and 22.02% respectively) as Key Influencers in Selecting an Undergraduate Course or Subject followed by mother (11.01% responses) and 10.09% for college teacher. Friend/s and sister (6.88% each),brother (7.8%), school teacher (4.59%), tutor and senior student (1.83%) each. Paternal grandfather and paternal uncle 1.38% each each, paternal grandmother, maternal uncle, paternal aunt and cousin- 0.46% each.

4.5.5 Involvement of Faculty Members in HE Access

Involvement of FMs in HE Choices of ILs:

All the four ILs confirmed faculty involvement in their higher education access journey. Nana, the IL from SU, confirmed faculty involvement in his higher education access journey. Nana specifically mentioned the guidance of two named figures, indicating a direct and named influence from faculty. James, IL form GCID, credited a named figure with encouraging him to consider higher education. At GC-A, Yashwant noted that faculty members were "very supportive," implying a more collective influence rather than individual mentorship. Vitthal from GC-B acknowledged the help of a named figure, underscoring the personal encouragement he received.

4.5.5.1 State University (SU)

When FMs from SU were students, whether Faculty Members Played a Role while selecting Undergraduate College

In the SU group, 40% of FMs acknowledged faculty involvement while 60% denied any such involvement. From SU, faculty involvement was notably evident. Dr Shree, Dr Radha, Dr Kavya, and Dr Vibha each acknowledged support from college teachers or mentors, with one even mentioning an uncle who was also a college teacher, demonstrating how academic guidance sometimes came from within the family. Only Dr Abhinay's response was missing.

How Did FMs from SU Know about Influencers?

In the SU group, faculty members were most commonly known through family-related connections, with 16.67% yes answer each for family member, family connection, in community group settings, during the admissions process, during visit to their college and in other community setting.

At what stage were Faculty Members involved in FMs Higher Education Decision-Making Processes in case of SU respondents

For the SU group, 60% of respondents indicated that faculty played a role during the process of making choices about higher education 40% of respondents noted that faculty involvement occurred during the admissions process.

Table 4.2: The Various Ways in Which Faculty Members Were Involved in Guiding FMs from SU through Their Higher Education Choices

Option	SU: 5.1	
	Answer = Yes (number)	Answer = Yes (% of answer=Yes)
1. Advice on whether to go for higher education or other options	04	13.33
2.Choice of which colleges/universities to apply to	03	10.0
3. Choice of course/subject	05	16.67
4. About the admissions process	03	10.0
5. About covering tuition expenses/funding options	02	6.67
6. About higher education entry exams preparation	02	6.67
7. About special admissions programs/processes e.g., reservations	02	6.67
8. Checking application form/other documents	02	6.67
9. Choice of which colleges/universities to enroll in if selected in more than one	06	20.0
10. Accompanying for a visit to the college/ university where they worked	01	3.33
11.Accompanying for a visit to another college/university	00	00
Total of Answer=Yes	**30**	**100**

Note: 'tick all that apply' question

The data from table no. 4.2 shows the various ways in which faculty members were involved in guiding FMs through their higher education choices.

'Choice of which colleges/universities to enroll in if selected in more than one' was the most frequent advice (20%) extended to FMs from SU by Faculty Members, followed by advice on choice of course / subject (16.67%) and 13.33% reported having received advice on 'whether to go for higher education or other options.' FMs acknowledged faculty members' involvement in choice of which colleges / universities to apply to (10%), about the admission process (10%), about covering tuitions expenses/ funding (6.67%), about HE entrance exams preparation (6.67%), about special admission programs (6.67%), checking application forms (6.67%). 3.33% reported that faculty members accompanied them for visit to another college/University.

Preparatory Activities Undertaken by FMs from SU before Enrolling for Higher Education.

Among respondents from SU, we received a total of 36 affirmative responses regarding preparatory activities undertaken by FMs before enrolling in undergraduate programs.

Of the total responses, physically visiting the college/university before enrolling were 30.55% followed by 'visited other colleges to compare options' 13.89%, 'Interaction with college administrative staff prior to admission' and 'Online exploration through platforms like College Duniya or institutional websites' was 5.56% each. 'Reference to college brochures' and 'visit to college fair' was 11.1% each in SU. Visit to common service centres and consultation with contact person/ NGO was 2.78% each. Newspaper information, use of social media platforms, use of YouTube videos reported by 8.33%. Finally, there was one yes response to the option 'none of the above' (2.78%).

First Institution Joined as FM

66.7% of FMs from SU reported that SU was the first institution that they joined as FM and 33.3% said that the SU was not their first institution that they joined as FM.

4.5.5.2 Involvement of Faculty Members in HE Access: Government College in-depth & Other Government Colleges

Whether Faculty Members Played a Role while selecting Undergraduate College

The results from FM Survey indicate that faculty members played a role in undergraduate college selection, but their influence was not dominant. In the GCID group, 30.61% of respondents acknowledged faculty involvement, while 69.39% of GCID respondents denied their role. Majority of respondents made their decisions without direct faculty input. Majority of FMs (68.0%) in GCID-reported that faculty members were not involved in their undergraduate college choice.

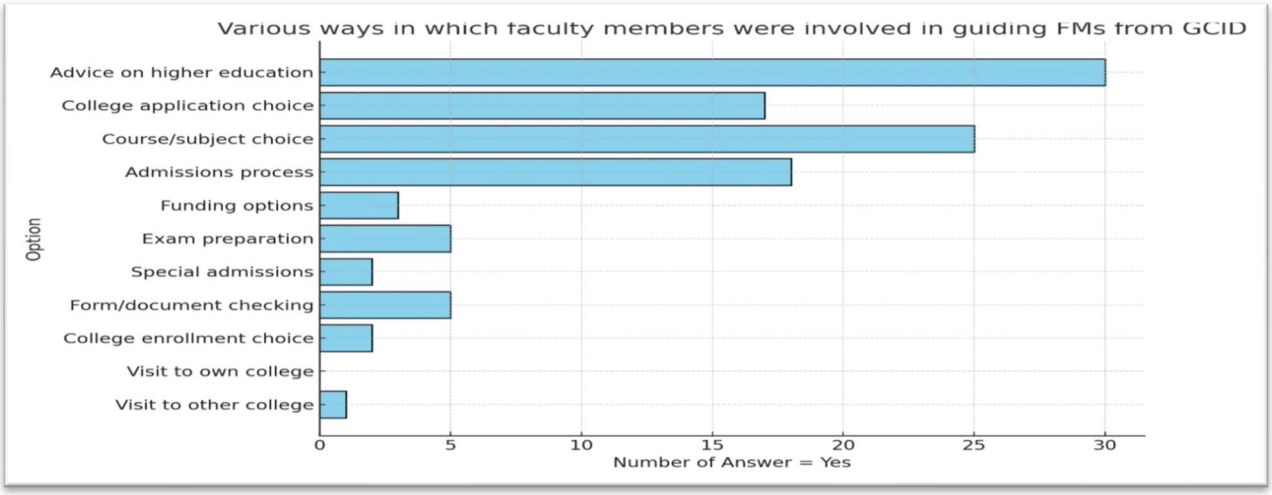
How Did FMs Know FMs that influenced them? Responses from FMs from GCID

In the GCID group, family networks played a significant role in connecting FMs with faculty members. Of the 45 yes answers that we received from GCID, 17 yes answers (37.78%) were reported for family member, family connections received 7 yes responses (15.56%) followed by 'during admission process'(13.33%), ' when visited their college' (8.89%), 'as a tuition teacher' and 'met them when they visited my school' (6.667% each) and there was one yes response to 'through NGO work' (2.22%). Neighbour and community group were reported by 4.44% respondents each.

At what stage were Faculty Members involved in FMs Higher Education Decision-Making Processes: Responses from GCID

From the GCID group, 57.14% of FMs reported involvement of faculty members during admission process. 42.86% of the FMs from GCID mentioned that faculty were involved earlier, during the process of making choices about higher education.

Figure 4.4: The Various Ways in Which Faculty Members Were Involved in Guiding FMs from GCID through their Higher Education Choices



The data from Figure no. 4.4 highlights the various ways in which faculty members were involved in guiding FMs through their higher education choices.

In the GCID group, faculty were involved mostly (30 frequency) in offering advice on whether to pursue higher education or other paths. 25 instances of faculty members offering guidance on choosing course or subject were reported by FMs. Other forms of assistance that faculty members offered to FMs in the GCID group included help with the admissions process. 18 instances of guidance on the choice of which colleges or universities to apply given by faculty members was reported by FMs. We recorded 5 instances of faculty members guiding FMs for checking application form/ documents and regarding HE entry exams participation, 3 instances of guidance on funding options, 2 instances each on special admission programs and choice of college/ University, and one instance of accompanying for visit to college/ university.

Preparatory Activities Undertaken by FMs from GCID before Enrolling for Higher Education: In GCID, all 100 respondents answered the question on whether FMs from GCID had undertaken any specific activity before enrolling in their college/university for undergraduate

study, representing 100% of survey sample. 100 FMs from GCID logged 265 affirmative responses.

Physically visiting the college/university before enrolling received the highest number of yes answers (29.43%) followed by 'visited other colleges to compare options' (16.23%), 'Reference to college brochures' (13.58%). 'Discussion with college/ university staff prior to admission' and 'finding information in newspapers' were 10.94% each. 'Online exploration through platforms like College Duniya or institutional websites 'were 3.77% and use of YouTube were 2.64%. Social media platforms were 2.26%. Listening to radio, consultation with contact person/ NGO, and visit to college faire were 1.76% each. Visiting service centre, obtaining information from local administration options received 4 responses each. 1.51% yes answers also indicated that FMs had not been engaged in any of the activities mentioned in the questionnaire.

Involvement of Faculty Members in HE Choices: Responses from colleges

In the GCID group, Mr Andy, Dr John, and Shaw cited direct involvement of faculty members, with Shaw referring to a neighbour who was a professor. Dr Smith and Mary did not attribute their decision to any faculty involvement, instead pointing to relatives or their own decision-making.

Respondents from GC-A, Dr VCK, Dr Lata, Dr Amu, and Dr Gaju all indicated that faculty members played a guiding role, while Deva noted that his own brother, a faculty member, guided him.

From GC-B, Tomson, Sumit, and Prof. Sharmishtha confirmed faculty members' influence. Falguni and Edison denied faculty involvement, Falguni credited her father while Edison credited self-motivation.

4.6 Faculty Members' professional trajectories

4.6.1 State University (SU):

Whether the Current College or University is the First Institution Where Faculty Members Have Worked:

In the SU group, 66.7% of the respondents indicated that the current institution was their first place of employment as a faculty member and 33.3% had worked at other institutions before joining their current university.

Current Position (Designation) of FMs from SU:

In the SU group, 86.7% of the respondents were Assistant Professors. 13.3% of respondents from this group held the position of Associate Professor. No respondents from the SU group reported holding a Professor position.

Leadership Responsibilities of FMs in SU

In the SU group, 69.24% of respondents had no leadership responsibilities. Among those faculty members in SU who did hold leadership positions, 7.69% d as Principals (college only). 23.07% held the position of Head of the Department. There were no faculty members in the SU group holding the position of Dean.

Length of Service of Faculty Members in SU

In the SU, the majority of faculty members (35.71%) fell within the 5-10 years of service category. This was followed by the 10-15 years category, with 28.57% of faculty members having served in their current positions for this length of time. The 15-20 years category included 21.42% of respondents. 7.14% of faculty members in SU had been with their institutions for less than 5 years. 7.14% of faculty members in SU had a tenure of 20-25 years, with no faculty members reported in the 25-30 years category. There were no faculty members in the SU group with more than 30 years of service.

IL Career History:

The IL from SU, Nana, outlined a career that began during his PhD research, which eventually led to joining a college. Over time, Nana advanced to a teaching position in university and ultimately became a professor and finally was appointed as vice chancellor.

How Faculty Members Were Appointed in SU

In the SU group, the majority of faculty members (85.71%) were appointed through direct recruitment calls. A smaller portion of faculty members (14.28%) in the SU group were appointed through examinations conducted by the state government.

Nature of Appointment of FMs in SU

In the SU, majority of faculty members (71.42%) were appointed on regular basis. 14.28% were appointed as guest lecturers. 7.14% were appointed on contractual basis and 7.14% served as visiting teachers. There were no ad-hoc appointments in the SU. 4.6.2 Faculty Members' professional trajectories: Government College in-depth & Other government Colleges:

In the GCID group, 64.64 % of faculty members who participated in FM survey reported that the current institution was their first place of employment, while 35.36 % had previous teaching experience at other institutions.

Current Position (Designation) of FMs from GCID:

The majority of respondents in the GCID group (79.78%) were Assistant Professors. Professors in this group were 12.77% of the respondents. The proportion of Associate Professors in the GCID group was 7.45%.

Leadership Responsibilities of FMs in GCID

69.23% respondents from GCID had no leadership responsibilities. 26.16% of respondents in this group held the position of Principal. In the GCID group 3.07% held leadership roles as Heads of Departments.

Length of Service of FMs in GCID

In the GCID group, 46.31% of faculty members served for less than 5 years. The 5-10 years category included 15.78% of faculty, while 18.94% served for 10-15 years. The 15-20 years category had 14.73% of respondents. Faculty members with more than 20 years of service are less common in the GCID group, with only 1.05% having served more than 30 years.

How Faculty Members Were Appointed to GCID

First Institution Joined as FM

64.4% of FMs from GCID reported that GCID was the first institution that they joined as FM and 35.36% said that the GCID was not their first institution that they joined as FM.

In the GCID group, 95.92% of faculty members were appointed through direct recruitment calls by their HEI. A small proportion of faculty members (2.4%) were appointed through examinations conducted by the state government. 2.4% of faculty members in the GCID group were transferred from other institutions.

Nature of Appointment of FMs from GCID:

36.73% of faculty members in GCID group held regular appointments. Majority FMs (52.04%) were employed on contractual basis. The GCID group included faculty members in guest lecturer roles (2.04%), visiting teacher roles (8.16%), and one ad-hoc appointment (1.02%).

Career History of ILs from Colleges:

James, the IL from GCID, had a diverse teaching career, having taught in two different colleges before joining GCID. Over time, James took on leadership roles, first as the IQAC (Internal Quality Assurance Cell) director, and later as the vice-principal. Yashwant from GC-A had joined a senior college as a full-time lecturer after completing the NET (National Eligibility Test) before joining GC-A. Both James and Yashwant were employed on a full-time basis with full payment. Vitthal from GC-B described an initial appointment on a non-grant basis, which gradually transitioned into permanent, government-subsidized position and he later on became Principal.

Career History of FMs from Colleges:

At GCID, Mr Andy cleared GATE and worked as Executive Chemist with ONGC for 18 months and later joined GCID as faculty member. Dr John began teaching undergraduate courses and became a permanent faculty member in 2017 in GCID. Dr Smith joined directly as a lecturer in GCID. Shaw worked in a rural college for a year before joining as FM in GCID. Mary had experience teaching in two different colleges before joining GCID.

In GC-A, Dr VCK began as a teacher on clock hour basis eventually becoming a Professor in GC-A. Dr Lata worked as a teacher on clock hour basis and also taught a NEET crash course in a private coaching class before joining as FM in GC-A. Dr Amu began as a junior college teacher for six years and later joined GC-A (senior college) as Professor. Dr Gaju worked as a CHB

teacher and later became a permanent faculty in the same college- GC-A. Deva worked as a guest lecturer for two years, receiving a fixed per-term salary, before securing a permanent faculty position in GC-A.

In GC-B, Tomson worked as a postgraduate teacher in two different colleges before joining GC-B as FM. Sumit worked on contract basis as teacher in the same college and later became a regular FM in the same college. Before Joining GC-B as FM, Falguni taught B.Sc. course at another college. Prof Sharmishtha worked as a lecturer on contract basis at another college before joining GC-B. Edison taught on clock hour basis in two other institutes before joining GC-B.

4.7 Summary and conclusion

This chapter examines the demographic and sociocultural background of faculty members and institutional leaders in state University and Government College in depth and the other government colleges highlighting their role in supporting rural first generation and disadvantaged students. We found that faculty members and institutional leaders served as more than just educators. They provided financial, emotional and academic support to students who often came from rural or deprived sections of society. Faculty members were not only teaching but also catering a supporting environment that prevents marginalized learners from feeling excluded.

The demographic background of faculty members from SU highlights that most Faculty are mid-career stage with a significant gender imbalance favoring men, whereas caste distribution is balanced across SCs, STs, OBCs and general categories. Hindus dominate the population, and most are married, have children and are Marathi speaking with near even rural to urban distribution. In contrast, GCID presents more gender equity with female faculty outnumbering males. The general category dominated in GCID while SC, ST, OBC groups were less represented. GCID Faculty were also predominantly Hindu with some Buddhist and Muslim minorities. Almost all were Maharashtra born with urban origins strongly outgoing rural ones. The State University reflected more diversity across caste and rural urban lines while GCID was more urban and general category, however both institutions highlighted local recruitment patterns, and strong regional concentration.

Institutional leaders profile was uniform across institutions. All four institutional leaders were male, Hindu, married, and Marathi speaking in the age between 41 and 60 years. While one institutional leader belonged to the SC, category others were from OBC or general groups, none reported disabilities or LGBTQIAP+ identities. This points to low diversity at the leadership level.

Residence and commuting patterns underline the proximity of Faculty to their workplace. In SU, more than 90% lived in the same town with a preferred preference for two wheelers and cars over public transport. GCID showed similar trends with 92% residing in the same town, 77% using two wheelers, 17% using cars and an unusual finding in GCID was the near universal reporting of carpooling. Public transportation played only a marginal role in both institutions, suggesting reliance on private means of transport due to limited infrastructure or convenience.

The family educational background revealed both continuity and upward mobility. The institutional leader from State University reported a strong lineage of educators while faculty members displayed mixed patterns. Many mothers and grandmothers of FM's lacked formal education. Fathers had modest education and spouses were highly educated, often postgraduates or holding M.Phil. PhD degrees. Fathers were often farmers (40%) while mothers were mostly homemakers. Almost 67% of state university faculty families reported income above ₹1,00,000 per month and 80% of SU faculty members were first generation faculty. Institutional leader from GCID showed more varied family education, ranging from modest to highly educated lineages while faculty data revealed persistent gender disparities with fathers, more educated than mothers. Overall education of family members of FM's improved across generations

Linguistic and regional background highlight strong local dominance, State University Faculty, were almost entirely Maharashtra born with more than 93%, Marathi speaking. GCID was even more concentrated with almost 99% born in Maharashtra and almost 89% Marathi speaking. This suggests that State University and government colleges recruit locally, potentially limiting cultural and regional variety in the academic environment.

In summary, the findings portray FMs and institutional leaders as predominantly midcareer, Hindu, Marathi speaking and Maharashtra born, with strong urban representation in government colleges and more balanced rural to urban mix in State University. Faculty members, demonstrate diversity in caste and family, educational backgrounds, whereas institutional leaders remain largely homogeneous in gender, religion and language. The dominance of local recruitment ensures cultural continuity, but reduces diversity at the same time. Upward, educational mobility across generations reflects progress, especially among spouses and siblings. Despite infrastructural gaps in public transport and housing, faculty members remain committed to supporting rural and first-generation students making them pivotal agents of inclusion in higher education.

Chapter 5: Institutional Leaders, Faculty Members and HE Outreach: Practices and Perspectives

5.1 Introduction

This section deals with the following research questions:-

- What faculty members in rural and semi urban areas currently perceive to be the role of higher education institutions and what are their roles as IL's and FM's in facilitating access to higher education?
- What are their roles in facilitating access to higher education choice in the localities of their workplaces and what the existing practices of higher education outreach are?

It also aims at outlining details relating to what institutional leaders of rural and semi urban colleges and universities perceive to be higher education institutions', and employees', role in relation to facilitating access to higher education and higher education choice.

We conducted semi structured interviews of 4 Institutional Leaders (ILs) – one each from SU, GCID, GC-A and GC-B. Semi structured interview of 20 Faculty Members (5 each from SU, GCID, GC-A and GC-B) were carried out in addition to diary study involving 5 faculty members each from SU and GCID whom we requested to maintain a solicited diary each to record their actions and perceptions about widening participation of students in HE with particular focus on first generation learners, rural students and students belonging to the deprived sections of society. Each faculty member chosen for diary study from the SU and GCID responded to two semi structured interviews, one was conducted before they started maintaining the diary, and another was a post-diary interview. These interviews were semi-structured.

For these semi structured interviews (pre-diary and post-diary in the case of SU and GCID), faculty members were chosen ensuring participation of SC, ST, OBC, General, and EWS categories. Among these, we ensured 50% representation of female faculty members.

Semi-structured interviews of ILs in each sampled Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) were conducted. In case of institutional leaders, we interviewed Vice-Chancellor in the case of SU and the Vice-Principal in case of GCID, and Principal in case of GC-A and GC-B.

In this chapter we explore the role of selected higher education institutions in Maharashtra in facilitating access to higher education, particularly for rural students. We have presented insights from institutional leaders, faculty members, and a census survey of faculty teaching undergraduate courses. The chapter is structured around several key sections, including the comfort level of rural students in these institutions, inputs on facilitating access for rural and underserved students, faculty perspectives on access, and current challenges and future opportunities in higher education outreach. The chapter ends with a summary and conclusion, highlighting the outreach practices and perspectives of institutional leaders and faculty members in promoting inclusive higher education.

Structure of the chapter

Section 5.2 of the present chapter throws light on the role of selected higher education institutions in Maharashtra in facilitating access to higher education, particularly to rural students in terms of whether students feel comfortable in the respective higher education institutions. Discussion is based on responses from interview of institutional leaders, faculty members, and the census survey of all faculty members who taught UG courses in the selected institutions in Maharashtra.

Section 5.3 focuses on inputs on facilitating access to higher education to rural students and students from underserved communities, and representation of rural students in the selected higher education institutions in Maharashtra, as perceived by the interviewed institutional leaders.

Section 5.4 is devoted to the responses regarding facilitating access to higher education received from faculty members of State University, Government College in depth and other government colleges.

Section 5.5 outlines the current challenges and future opportunities regarding higher education outreach identified, based on data collected.

5.2 Facilitating Access to Higher Education: Institutional Level

5.2.1 State University (SU):

Representation of rural students in SU:

Following are the responses that we gathered through semi structured interviews of institutional leaders and with the pre diary and post diary interviews from the faculty members regarding to activities to attract rural students conducted by them and their respective institutions..

The institutional leader of SU, Nana, informed that 60% of the students in the SU come from rural places. When asked whether students feel comfortable choosing the SU, he responded that it is relative. He also added that students feel comfortable because government provides scholarships to them. He also informed that SU takes efforts to attract rural students and provides hostel facilities besides the 'Earn and Learn' scheme and NSS.

Faculty members from SU reported that there is 50 to 70% representation of rural students in the university campus. According to them, rural students feel comfortable in the university campus. Dr Shree mentioned in his response that the university may initially seem far away from their village for the rural students, but once they arrive, they quickly adapt to the environment and feel comfortable because of the excellent facilities, atmosphere and also the guidance provided by expert faculty members from the university campus. Dr Shree also mentioned one example of a student who was from rural tribal background getting selected for a workshop in New York for which all expenses were borne by the Ministry of Art and Culture of Govt. of Maharashtra. Despite being a first generation learner, Dr Shree said that the student made remarkable progress and he is now a professional artist at national and international level.

Another faculty member from the university, Dr Radha, reported that once a student from a rural area takes admission in the SU, he/she often encourages others from his/her native place to join the SU. They suggested that once a new rural student observes that there are many other rural

students in the university department with similar rural backgrounds, he/she feels at home and comfortable.

Dr Kavya from the university department mentioned that most of the students are from economically weaker sections and that when they know about the low fee structure in university departments and hostel facilities, the students feel comfortable. Most of the faculty members from SU said that Earn and Learn scheme of the university which offers Rs 3000/- per month to students for working for two hours daily in the morning, and hostel accommodation at a nominal rate, are two main factors which make rural students feel comfortable in the university premises.

Activities conducted by the university to attract rural students:

Faculty members from SU reported that the university organizes various competitions and an open day is celebrated where students from nearby villages get an opportunity to visit and see the departments and facilities available. Various workshops are arranged by different departments in the university. Advertisement through posters in strategic locations and use of social media platforms is used to increase the admission process. Using photos of famous alumni on posters is a novel idea used by the Department of Performing Arts in the University for attracting rural students.

Another faculty member from the university talked about a novel practice for attracting rural students to his department which was in the form of reaching out to students in rural areas, particularly in schools and junior colleges, to help them understand the various openings and consequent opportunities by explaining the importance of enrolling for higher education and the subsequent career choices available to students. He said that this is their regular practice to reach out to rural students and explain to them what all facilities are available on the campus including the 'Earn and Learn' scheme of the university and hostel accommodation and about the various scholarships available for them. Events like workshops and open days (highlighted by Dr Radha and Dr Vibha) introduce prospective students to campus life.

Table 5.1: Guidance Provided by FMs from SU to Rural Students (based on FM survey)

Option	SU: 5_1	
	Answer = Yes (number)	Answer = Yes (% of answer=Yes)
1. Advice on whether to go for higher education or other options	11	8.53
2. Choice of which colleges/universities to apply to	07	5.43
3. Choice of course/subject	10	7.75
4. About the admission process	10	7.75
5.About covering tuition expenses/funding options	09	6.98
6. About HE entry exams preparation	09	6.98
7.About special admissions programs/processes e.g., reservations	07	5.43
8.Checking application form/other documents	04	3.10
9.Choice of which colleges/universities to enrol in if selected in more than one	06	4.65
10.Organising a visit to the college/university	05	3.88
11.Advice on accommodation	08	6.20
12.About college facilities/activities/provisions	09	6.98
13.About campus safety and security	11	8.53
14.About employability prospects	09	6.98
15.About whether the college/university has good academic functioning	09	6.98
16.About transport facilities	05	3.88
Total of Answer=Yes	**129**	**100**

There were 15 FMs in the SU who taught UG courses. We received 100% valid responses to the question regarding guidance provided by FMs to rural students regarding HE.

In the SU group, of all the advice given by FM's 8.53% each was on 'whether to go for higher education or other options' and 'about campus safety and security' followed by 7.75% each on 'choice of course/subject' and 'about the admission process'. 6.98% each of all advice given was on 'covering tuition expenses/funding options', 'HE entry exams preparation', **'**about college facilities/activities/provisions', 'about employability prospects**',** and 'about whether the college/university has good academic functioning'. 6.20% of advice was 'on accommodation' while 'which college/university to apply to', 'about special admissions programs/processes e.g., reservations,' was 5.43%. **'**Organising a visit to the college/university' and 'transport facilities'

was 3.88% each, 'checking documents' was 3.1%. 4.65% of all advice the FMs gave pertained to choice of college / universities to enroll if selected in more than one.

Comfortability of Rural Students Choosing SU (based on FM survey):

We received 100% valid responses from SU out of which 93.3 % faculty members reported that rural students felt comfortable choosing their university and 6.7 % felt that rural students were not comfortable choosing their university.

Activities Conducted to Attract Rural Students by the Institutions (based on FM survey):

We received 100% valid responses from SU. 93.3% faculty members from SU reported that their university is conducting various activities to attract rural students and only one respondent (6.7%) reported that there is a need to increase the activities to attract rural students towards higher education.

5.2.2 Government College in-depth (GCID) and Other Government Colleges (GC-A and GC-B)

Representation of rural students in GCs:

Following are the responses gathered through semi structured interviews of institutional leaders and with the pre-diary and post diary interviews from the faculty member's about activities to attract rural students conducted by the GCID, and standalone interviews of faculty members from GC-A and GC-B.

James, the institutional leader from GCID, informed that 70 to 80% of the students in his college were from rural areas. On the question regarding whether rural students feel comfortable choosing his institution, James said that hostel accommodation and availability of food at reasonable rates make rural students feel comfortable choosing his college. James stated that his college conducts activities under the NSS in the nearby villages wherein the residents of the village are informed about availability of graduate programmes and other academic facilities available with his college to attract the students from the villages. James also informed that his college runs a community radio and it is helpful in disseminating information about different courses and programmes being run in the college. Various programmes conducted by the college are published in local newspapers and on the community radio. He mentioned two

distinct activities namely the “Fun in Chemistry” programme for school students in rural areas who are also invited to visit the Chemistry lab of his college and motivating rural students to enrol for higher education. This activity becomes effective in attracting rural students after rural students visiti the campus. James also added that his college conducts competitive exam classes. According to James these are the activities that attract rural students to his college that is GCID.

Dr Yashwant from GC-A informed that the proportion of rural students has decreased over the past five to seven years due to government policy of inception of new colleges in rural areas. Hence students no longer feel the need to come to urban colleges. However, he believed that education in these rural colleges is less rigorous and many students pass without attending regular classes. Currently, rural students make up about 25% of college student population in GC-A. Dr Yashwant thinks that rural students feel comfortable choosing his college because teachers in his college are very supportive to rural students, also, his college offers free competitive exam preparation classes (even though it is not part of the syllabus). Rural students benefit from these classes Dr Yashwant said.

Dr Yashwant said that in order to attract rural students, the college conducts classes regularly and the college provides financial assistance to rural students in addition to government scholarships. Dr Yashwant also added that his college organizes NSS camps at villages where rural students are informed about the facilities available in his college which encourages parents to send their children to his college for further education. This initiative encouraged many parents to send their children tohis college, Dr Yashwant said..

Vitthal, the institutional leader from GC-B informed that 70% of the students in his college are from rural background. He reported that students from rural areas feel comfortable choosing his college because his college was incepted for providing higher education to students from backward rural areas and he added that his college is moving ahead in the direction of this goal. When we asked about special activities for attracting rural students, he reported that his college has formed an admission committee which starts its work right in the month of February i.e. significantly before the final examination is over. This committee visits junior colleges to convince students regarding the importance of getting enrolled for UG degree. He also reported

that school children are invited for a science fair organized by GC-B every year. To avoid dropout of girl students, GC-B provides accommodation facility for girls on priority basis. He also added that his college ensures that girls are not deprived of higher education

Faculty perception regarding the representation of rural students in the respective institutions to which FMs belonged variedconsiderably, ranging from 40% to as high as 90%. For example, Dr VCK, Dr Amu, Deva and Falguni from GC-A reported high rural student representation of 90%, considering students currently residing in urban areas to belong originally to rural families who migrated for work or education. In contrast Dr Lata and Dr Gaju from GC-A reported lower figures that is 30 to 40% as they classify such as students based on current urban residence and not rural background. Despite these variations, faculty across all surveyed institutions agreed that rural students were well represented and supported by their institutions.

According to all faculty members, their respective institutions offer a comfortable and supportive environment for rural students. Faculty members from GCID, Dr Smith, Dr John, and Dr Shaw, highlighted hostel facilities particularly for both girls and boys as critical in creating a safe and welcoming space for rural students. Sumit pointed to a simplified admission process that eases access, while Deva noted the importance of direct financial aid for economically disadvantaged students. Faculty members from GC-A: Dr VCK, Dr Amu, Tomson, and Prof. Sharmishtha from GC-B, mentioned direct engagement with rural communities through NSS scheme and outreach initiatives which significantly helped rural students in feeling connected and informed. To attract more students from rural areas, institutions have adopted a range of strategies. Outreach programmes and NSS camps – including those led by Dr VCK, Professor Sharmishtha and Edison, were conducted in rural settings to promote awareness of educational opportunities. Competitive exam support is another key initiative. In Dr Lata's college (GC-A) there is a dedicated committee to guide rural students. Motivational talks enhance visibility of GCID among rural population as reported by Mr. Andy. The availability of hostel accommodation and financial assistance play a major role in reducing economic barriers (as emphasised by Dr Gaju (GC-A), Shaw (GCID) and Deva (GC-A)). Collectively, these efforts demonstrate a strong institutional commitment to making higher education accessible and comfortable for rural students.

Table 5.2: Guidance Provided by FM from GCID to Rural Students (based on FM survey)

Option	GCID: 5_2	
	Answer = Yes (number)	Answer = Yes (% of answer=Yes)
1. Advice on whether to go for higher education or other options	85	8.23
2. Choice of which colleges/universities to apply to	78	7.55
3. Choice of course/subject	91	8.81
4. About the admission process	81	7.84
5.About covering tuition expenses/funding options	52	5.03
6. About HE entry exams preparation	71	6.87
7.About special admissions programs/processes e.g., reservations	50	4.84
8.Checking application form/other documents	55	5.32
9.Choice of which colleges/universities to enrol in if selected in more than one	46	4.45
10.Organising a visit to the college/university	49	4.74
11.Advice on accommodation	54	5.23
12.About college facilities/activities/provisions	69	6.68
13.About campus safety and security	74	7.16
14.About employability prospects	66	6.39
15.About whether the college/university has good academic functioning	61	5.90
16.About transport facilities	51	4.94
Total of Answer=Yes	**1033**	**100**

There were 100 FMs from GCID who taught UG courses. We received 100% valid responses to the question regarding guidance provided by FMs to rural students regarding HE.

In the GCID, 8.81% of all advice that FMs offered was regarding 'Choice of course/subject' followed by 8.23% of advice on 'whether to go for higher education or other options', on admissions process (7.84%), 'Choice of which colleges/universities to apply to' (7.55%), 'about campus safety and security'(7.16%), 'About HE entry exams preparation' (6.87%), 'about college facilities/activities/provisions' (6.68%), 'about employability prospects' (6.39%), 'about whether the college/university has good academic functioning' (5.9%), 'about covering tuition expenses/funding options' (5.03%), 'about transport facilities' (4.94%), 'about special admissions programs/processes e.g., reservations' (4.84%),'organising a visit to the college/university' (4.74%), 'choice of which colleges/universities to enrol in if selected in more

than one' (4.45%) and 'Checking applications form' was %.32% and advice on accommodation was 5.25% of all guidance provided by FMs from GCID.

Comfortability of Rural Students Choosing GCID (based on FM survey)

98% faculty members from GCID responded to this question. 92.85 % FMs from GCID reported that students were comfortable to choose their college and 7.15% reported that students were not comfortable to choose GCID.

Activities Conducted to Attract Rural Students by the Institutions (based on FM survey)

We received 98% valid responses from GCID. From GCID, 89.80% respondents reported that their college was conducting various activities to attract rural students and 10.20% faculty members indicated that the college was not actively conducting activities to attract rural students.

5.3 Facilitating access to HE: Institutional Leaders

5.3.1 State University (SU)

Institutional leaders play an important role in terms of encouraging faculty members to take initiatives for widening access to higher education as the role of ILs determines institutional approach.

Institutional leader of SU (Nana) played role in advising students about undergraduate higher education options prior to admission. Nana's approach centred on exposing to successful professionals such as industrialists, doctors and engineers who visited the university's Physics department. While this did not imply direct one to one counselling, it served to inspire and inform students about potential career paths and higher education opportunities. Nana did not explicitly highlight rural outreach.

Information about Pre-Admission Guidance Activities:

At the university level, Nana acknowledged that his institution (SU) did not provide structured pre-admission guidance, operating under the assumption that students already have access to necessary information. At SU, faculty engagement was minimal, with less than 10% involved in pre-admission guidance, Nana said

Government College in-depth (GCID) and Other Government Colleges

All institutional leaders (James, Yashwant and Vitthal) played roles in advising students about undergraduate higher education options prior to admission, though the extent and nature of their involvement varied. All ILs from colleges expressed that providing critical support to students as they navigate the complex admission process. This was particularly important for students whose families lack prior experience with higher education.

James (the IL from GCID) acknowledged his limited personal involvement in advising students, noting that his college had an established counselling committee responsible for offering such guidance. James did not explicitly highlight rural outreach.

Yashwant (the IL from GC-A) stood out for his active engagement with first generation learners. He said that he spent out of his pocket to support his school to be able to afford latest technology in teaching- learning and advised villagers on best HS opportunities for their words.

Vitthal (IL from GC-B) offered perhaps the most structured and sustained from the guidance, working closely with students in the 11th and 12th grades mostly from rural areas. His ongoing counselling reflects a deep commitment to supporting ruralstudents though their educational transition. Specifically, regarding rural students, Vitthal directly mentioned that the majority of those he advised on access to higher education were from rural background, and his work involves continuous support to help them understand and pursue higher education options.

Information about Pre-Admission Guidance Activities

Institutional leaders' efforts regarding pre-admission guidance range from minimal engagement to comprehensive, proactive outreach programmes. James, the ILfrom GCID explained that while he was not personally involved, a special counselling committee was designed and it was responsible for providing pre-admission guidance. The method of pre-admission guidance used in GCID represents an organized method of support ensuring that students have access to advice through institutional mechanism. James also reported that his college is attached with a junior college , thus they get an opportunity to guide students there about higher education.

At GC-A Yashwant reported that faculty across departments actively participate in pre-admission guidance, offering subject-specific advice and mentoring to prospective students. He also mentioned that all faculty members from different departments were engaged in such activities to guide these students for higher education options. The most comprehensive effort was reported by Vitthal from GC-B who described a highly proactive and multifaceted outreach model. This includes school visits, participation as chief guest at educational events, organizing science fairs for school children and providing continuous mentorship and follow-up. Such initiatives aimed at early exposure to higher education pathways and foster ongoing engagement with students, particularly those from rural and underserved backgrounds. GC-B's approach exemplifies best practices in bridging the information and access gap for first generation and rural students, creating a strong support system well before the admission stage.

Institutional leaders reported differing levels of involvement in undergraduate higher education access. GCID and GC-B exhibited strong commitment through structured outreach efforts, including visits to nearby colleges and off campus counselling. GC-A went a step further by involving both teaching and non-teaching staff in supporting students and offering financial assistance to those from economically disadvantaged, background, reflecting a more holistic approach to widening access as reported by respective ILs of HEIs.

5.4 Facilitating Access to HE: Faculty Members

5.4.1 State University (SU)

Table 5.3: Advice given by FMs from SU to students about undergraduate higher education options Classified by Gender/ Caste/ Social Group/ Religion/ Place of Permanent Residence

Options	SU: 5_1			
	Yes (given advice)		**No (not given advice)**	
	N=	**% of VRs**	**N=**	**% of VRs**
Total VRs	10	100	04	100
Gender				
Female	02	20%	02	50%
Male	08	80%	02	50%
Transgender	00	-	00	-
Other gender	00	-	00	-
Caste/Social Group				
SC	02	20%	00	-
ST	02	20%	01	25%
OBC	03	30%	00	-
General	03	30%	01	25%
EWS	00	-	02	50%
Religion				
Buddhist	01	10%	00	-
Christian	00	-	00	-
Hindu	09	90%	04	-
Jain	00	-	00	-
Muslim	00	-	00	-
Sikh	00	-	00	-
Zoroastrian/Parsi	00	-	00	-
Other	00	-	00	-
Valid Responses	09		04	
Place of Permanent Residence				
Rural	02	22.22%	04	100%
Urban	07	77.78%	00	-

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The above Table 5.3 shows involvement of faculty members in providing advice to students, on higher education choices, classified by gender, caste, social group, religion, place of permanent residence. To the question on whether the faculty member gave advice to students on higher education choice, 10 faculty members from SU answered in the affirmative, whereas 4 faculty members reported that they did not give such advice to students.

When we classified the same data by gender, we found that of those from SU who advised, 20% were male and 80% were female faculty members. Those faculty members from SU who denied having given advice, 50% were male and 50% were female faculty members.

When we classified the same data by caste / social group, we found that in the SU 30% of the faculty members who gave advice on higher education to students belonged to the general category and OBC category each while 20% belonged to the SC category and 20% belonged to the ST category.

In case of SU, when we classified the data based on religious affiliation, we found that 90% of those who extended advice to students belonged to the Hindu religion and 10% belonged to the Buddhist religion. In the SU group faculty members who said that they did not give advice is 85.71% were Hindus, 8.33% were Buddhist, 4.76% were Muslim and 1.19% were Jain.

We classified the same data by place of permanent residence and found that in the case of SU, of those faculty members who gave advice 77.78% where from Urban area and 22.22% were from rural area. In the SU, of those faculty members who did not give advice, 78.57% belonged to urban areas while 21.43% were from rural areas.

Table 5.4: Type of Advice Given by FMs from SU (data from FM survey)

Option	SU: 5_1	
	Answer = Yes (number)	**Answer = Yes (% of answer=Yes)**
1.Advice on whether to go for higher education or other options	10	12.2
2.Choice of which college/universities to apply to	11	13.41
3.Choice of course/subject	10	12.2
4.About the admissions process	09	10.2
5.About covering tuition expenses/funding options	05	6.1
6.Checking application form/ other documents	05	6.1
7. Choice of which college/university to enroll in if selected in more than one	08	9.76
8. Advice on preparing for HE entrance exam	05	6.1
9. Contacting college/university on behalf of applicants	04	4.88
10.Accompanying for a visit to the college/university where you work	05	6.1
11.Accompanying for a visit to another college/university	02	2.44
12.Advising via social networking e.g., WhatsApp	05	6.1
13. About special admissions programmes/ processes (e.g. Reservations)	03	3.66
Total of Answer=Yes	**82**	**100**

We conducted a survey of 15 faculty members from SU. Out of these 15 faculty members, 10 faculty members (66.67%) answered in the affirmative to the question on whether they offered advice to students regarding higher education choices.

The above Table 5.4 shows the types of guidance/ advice FMs gave to students. Respondents could choose multiple types of advice they offered.

In the type of advice given by FMs from SU, the most frequent (13.41%) was regarding choice of which college/universities to apply to followed by advice on whether to pursue higher education or other options and regarding selecting colleges (12.2% each). 10.2% of the advice was about the admissions process, choice of which college/university to enroll in if selected in more than one was 9.76%. About covering tuition expenses/funding options, checking application form/ other documents, advice on preparing for HE entrances exam, accompanying for a visit to the college/university where FM worked, advising via social networking e.g., WhatsApp was 6.1% each. Contacting college/university on behalf of applicants was 4.88%. 3.66% was about special admissions programmes/processes (e.g. Reservations) and 2.44% was in the form of accompanying for a visit to another college/university.

Table 5.5: Faculty Engagement in Advice on HE Access across Various Community Settings

Option	SU: 5_1	
	Answer = Yes (number)	**Answer = Yes (% of answer=Yes)**
1.Extended family (beyond nuclear)	10	27.02
2.Neighbours	10	27.02
3.Domestic staff	04	10.81
4.In a faith-based setting e.g. temple	02	5.41
5.In a community group	07	18.92
6.Through NGO work	01	2.7
7.Through local politics	00	00
8.Through your own tutoring/coaching work	03	8.1
Total of Answer=Yes	**37**	**100**

The above Table 5.5 shows the community settings in which FMs from SU advised students regarding higher education choices.

From the 15 FMs from SU, we received a total of 37 yes responses across all listed options (as they could choose multiple options simultaneously). In SU, the most common setting for such interactions were ‘extended family’ and ‘neighbours’, with 27.02% positive responses each to these options, followed by ‘community group’ (18.92%), ‘Domestic Staff’ (10.81%), ‘through own tutoring/coaching work’ (8.1%), ‘in a faith-based setting’ (5.41%) and ‘through NGO work’ (2.7%).

Table 5.6: Advice Given by FMs in Professional Network (data from FM survey)

Option	SU: 5_1	
	Answer = Yes (number)	Answer = Yes (% of answer=Yes)
1.When you went on a visit to a school	10	29.41
2.When you visited another community setting	03	8.82
3.When you met with students who were visiting your college/university	10	29.41
4. When you organized or assisted with an open day/official visit/taster day for students to visit your college/university	06	17.65
5.When you asked some current students to advise other young people in their communities	05	14.71
Total of Answer=Yes	**34**	**100**

Table 5.6 shows responses of FMs from SU regarding advice given to students in their professional network. At SU, out of 15 FMs surveyed, 10 FMs reported providing such advice.

We received 34 yes answers from these FMs. 29.41% each of the yes answers pertained to FMs from SU giving advice when visiting schools and also when they met with students who were visiting their university. This was followed by 17.65% yes answers for 'when FM organized or assisted with an open day/official visit/taster day for students to visit their university', 14.71% yes answers for 'when FM asked some current students to advise other young people in their communities' and 8.82% yes answers for 'when FM visited another community setting'.

Summary of advice about UG HE options given by FMs from SU

The responses from faculty members highlighted widespread involvement in advising students about undergraduate higher education options, though the depth and focus of their guidance vary significantly across institutions and individuals. Many faculty members offered general guidance. For example Dr Shree, Dr Radha and Dr Abhinay from SU, motivated students to aim for higher studies or competitive exams like the UPSC. Dr Kavya played more direct role in pre-admission counselling. She provided hands on support during the admission process.

Experiences about Career Guidance Given by FMs from SU (based on FM Diary):

Based on diary entries and experiences reported by the faculty members from SU, we received 120 diary experiences from 10 faculty members. Faculty members' responses regarding pre-

admission guidance revealed two broad categories of advice: personal and professional. This distinction depends on whether the guidance was part of formal, institutional efforts or informal, individual interactions.

Dr Shree, Dr Radha and Dr Vibha, FMs from SU, provided what can be considered professional advice, as their interactions were linked to structured efforts or occurred within academic context. For instance, Dr Kavya's proactive school visits to inform students about course options, reflected a strong personal outreach initiative, which is especially valuable for rural students who may not have easy access to such information. Dr Radha and Dr Vibha noted that 12th pass outs often approached university academic departments for guidance.

Advice Given by FMs from SU (based on FM Diary study)

Dr Shree and Dr Radha extended guidance within the university settings. Dr Shree, by advising diploma holders seeking lateral entry into undergraduate programs and Dr Radha, by responding to students who approached her independently. Dr Kavya reported proactive engagement with first generation learners from unlettered families. Dr Vibha advised students in her department setting and from her neighbourhood.

Whether students whom FMs advised were from rural background (based on FM Diary)

We received 30 valid diary entries from SU on whether students whom FMs advised were from rural backgrounds. Dr Radha from SU observed that even if one student from a rural area successfully enrolled for higher education in the SU, other students from his or her village then joined some UG course in the SU, she said she had observed.

Dr Radha mentioned about a girl from a village who knew her personally. This girl who came from a rural background was initially very shy, but when she saw other students with similar background as her own, she was totally transformed and became confident. Likewise, Dr Vibha from SU gave an example of a tribal girl (who came from remote tribal belt of Maharashtra) who was passionate about higher education in the field of dramatics. This tribal girl completed one-year bridge course in dramatics and participated in drama competitions and later enrolled for Masters' program.

Dr Shree from SU reported that he conducted outreach activities to inform rural students about higher education choices which led to building a network of students which continued to exist as a result of his initiatives in the past. Dr Shree said that he received regular enquiries about courses largely due to word of mouth and the posters that he and his colleagues distributed. As a result of these outreach activities, the students who enrolled to the UG courses in his department were mostly (70%) from rural areas. Dr Shree particularly mentioned an example of a tribal student who enrolled for bridge course, and completed his Master's degree in fine arts. Despite coming from an unlettered family, he made remarkable progress and became a renowned professional artist at the international level.

Dr Kavya from SU has also reported that during her first diary entry week period she visited her rural school and informed students there about different undergraduate courses available in the SU. Dr Kavya mentioned about an orphan girl who was very poor who took up a vocational course on Dr Kavya's advice to become financially independent.

Information about Advice given by FMs (based on FM Post-Diary)

Dr Kavya was directly engaged with students facing significant socio-economic challenges, including limited family support, unfamiliarity with higher education pathways, and financial security.

Students from rural areas to struggle with adjusting to urban college life, as Dr Vibha reported. Rural students concerns revolved not just around academics, but also around managing living expenses and emotional stress. One of the recurring narratives was financial barriers. Smith reported a case, involving a visually impaired student seeking scholarship information, which pointed to a larger issue: a lack of awareness about available financial aid and support systems among students with disabilities. Dr Radha highlighted that students often rely heavily on peer recommendations when choosing their academic path. Dr Shree, too, noted that many of the students approaching him were unfamiliar faces. Dr Shree also pointed at a lack of formal advising structure and over-reliance on word-of-mouth or personal networks.

Abhinay, who mentored students pursuing creative fields, illustrated the value of career-specific counselling which could be expanded to include non-traditional career paths that rural or first-generation learners may not even consider viable without exposure.

Table 5.7: Type of Advice given by FMs from SU (based on FM diary)

Type of Advice	SU: 5_1	
	Yes answers	% of Yes answers
1. Advice on whether to go for higher education or other options	25	5.99
2. Choice of which college/universities to apply to	29	6.95
3. Choice of course/subject	32	7.67
4. About the admissions process	30	7.19
5. About covering tuition expenses/funding options	26	6.24
6. About higher education entry exams preparation	20	4.79
7. About special admissions programs/processes e.g., reservations	24	5.76
8. Checking application form/other documents	20	4.79
9. Choice of which colleges/universities to enrol in if selected in more than one	26	6.24
10. Organising a visit to the college/ university	24	5.76
11. Advice on accommodation	27	6.48
12. About college facilities/activities/ provisions	28	6.71
13. About campus safety/security	29	6.95
14. About employability prospects	26	6.24
15. About whether the college/university has good academic functioning	30	7.19
16. About transport facilities	21	5.04
17. Other advice	-	--
Total Yes Answers	417	100

Table 5.7 shows types of advice by FMs from SU. We received 33 diary entries from SU maintained by five faculty members.

In the SU group, we received 417 yes answers from the 33 diary entries. The advice given on choice of course/subject was most frequent (7.67%), followed by 7.19% each on admissions process and on whether the university has good academic functioning, 6.95% of the advice given was on campus safety and choice of University to apply to followed by advice about college facilities/activities/ provisions (6.71%), on accommodation (6.48%), advice about covering tuition expenses and funding options and on choice of University to enrol in if selected in more than one and about employability prospects (6.24% each). 5.99% of the advice pertained to whether to go for higher education or other options. This was followed by 5.76% each of advice being offered regarding special admissions programmes and organising a visit to

the university. 5.04% of the advice was about transport facilities while 4.79% each of advice pertained to higher education entry exam preparation and checking application form or other documents.

Information about Advice given by FMs from SU (based on FM post diary)

Dr Shree and Dr Kavya offered advice to individuals within their personal circles, including friends, family members, or acquaintances. Dr Shree guided a friend's son. Dr Kavya reported that students frequently visited her at work or even at home to seek educational guidance. Dr Vibha highlighted that many rural students she interacted with faced significant financial stress, which limits their ability to pursue or continue higher education. Smith's experience with a student who had recently lost his mother also illustrates how emotional and financial hardships can disrupt educational trajectories.

Location where Advice was given by FMs from SU (based on FM diary)

In the SU group, advice given in College (in various roles such as chief guest or for giving special lecture) was in 12 instances, University Department (7 instances), on phone (6), at home (5) University campus and unidentified locations (2 each).

Context in which Advise was given by FMs (based on FM post-diary interview)

In the post- diary interview, FMs from SU responded to question on the context in which advice was given. Dr Shree, Dr Vibha and Dr Kavya frequently offered advice outside formal institutional setting –phone calls, home visits, or personal connections. Dr Shree received calls from students and parents between 7 am and 10 pm during peak admission months. Dr Vibha provided subject-related counselling at her home. Dr Kavya guided a rural student aiming to study abroad. Abhinay observed that students often lingered in department all day hoping for guidance, and he commented that the faculty are unable to dedicate sufficient time. Dr Radha noted that some students were unable to gain admission due to low merit rankings. Smith advised a student to complete graduation first before seeking a job.

Motivational Reasons for Advice (based on FM diary)

In the SU groups, social responsibility was the most frequent (17) motivation followed by professional responsibility (6), interest in advising and being concerned about the individual was

reported once each. Knowledge regarding HEIs processes, family connection and personal connection was reported as the motivational reason by none in SU.

FM Motivation for the HE Advice Provided (based on FM post-diary)

Faculty members offered HE advice driven by a variety of motivations, often shaped by their personal experiences and the student populations they engaged with. For instance, Dr Shree, with years of experience in responding to student queries about undergraduate, postgraduate, and PhD courses reported the recurring nature of these inquiries. Another major theme was the influence of peers and a general lack of awareness among students. Dr Radha noted that peer pressure played a significant role in students' decision-making processes, often leading to uninformed choices. Dr Kavya suggested a student to focus on improving his basic concepts in English and Mathematics.

Experiences about Advice given by FMs (based on FM post-diary)

To the question on experiences about advice given by FMs, we received 21 valid diary entries from SU.

Dr Shree from SU recorded two experiences each in the first four weeks, while he recorded one experience each in Week 5 and Week 6**.** In total, Dr Shree recorded ten experiences**,** all of which were in his professional role**,** except for one, which he described as a personal interaction: "I advised a neighbor because I felt it was my duty and also an opportunity to promote art education." Except for this one personal instance, all other advice was directed towards school students**.** Of the ten experiences, five were given over the phone**.** In several instances, Dr Shree provided advice in the university department where he served as a faculty member, noting, "I often meet students in my department who come to seek guidance on art education and career options."

In one experience, he shared that a student approached him during a college visit where he was an alumnus, saying, "The student had been carefully observing my conversation with another faculty member and then asked me about higher education and art-related courses." Another significant experience occurred during a Board of Studies meeting at another university in Maharashtra, where Dr Shree recalled, "A student who already knew about our department's

reputation approached me with questions about further studies in fine arts." Throughout his diary entries, Dr Shree consistently emphasized, "It is my duty to guide students whenever possible," and also expressed personal motivation, saying, "I'm genuinely interested in giving such advice to promote art education," and "I want to increase admissions to our department and encourage more students to pursue a career in fine art." Dr Shree said, "As the head of the department and a subject expert, I guided tribal students to choose the right course to help preserve and promote tribal art and artists."

Dr Kavya**,** a faculty member from SU, recorded a total of nine experiences across six weeks, out of which three were personal and six were professional. In the personal entries, Dr Kavya shared, "I helped a poor but bright student in my department," and described how "a neighbor from a wealthy family sought my advice about studying abroad, knowing I had earlier guided village girls into university education." Another personal case involved a family relative whom Dr Kavya guided by saying, "Based on his interest and CET marks, I advised him to choose BTech in Computer Science."

In professional settings, most advice was given to school students—especially those at junior colleges—who approached Dr Kavya for help with academic direction, course selection, and personal challenges**.** She mentioned, "BCA students didn't know the syllabus, so I started guiding others who came with pre-admission queries," and added, "Many students approach me because they recognize me from YouTube videos where I share educational content." Dr Kavya also supported students dealing with low academic performance and lack of confidence, noting, "One rural student was anxious about adjusting to the new college environment, and I helped him feel more confident," and "Another was weak in studies, so I encouraged him to acquire extra knowledge." When a financially challenged student asked how to balance work and study, she advised, "I told him to consider part-time work while still continuing his education." Dr Kavya said, "Being a faculty member and a relative, I encouraged village girls to join the university after they saw my Youtube videos and came to me for guidance." Throughout her entries, Dr Kavya's role as a respected faculty member and mentor stands out—offering academic, emotional, and career guidance to both urban and rural students, in both formal and informal setting.

5.4.2 Government College in –depth(GCID) and Other Government Colleges

Table 5.8: Type of Advice Given by Faculty Members (data from FM survey)

Option	GCID: 5_2	
	Answer = Yes (number)	**Answer = Yes (% of answer=Yes)**
1.Advice on whether to go for higher education or other options	77	13.77
2.Choice of which college/universities to apply to	68	12.17
3.Choice of course/subject	82	14.67
4.About the admissions process	72	12.88
5.About covering tuition expenses/funding options	36	6.44
6.Checking application form/ other documents	58	10.38
7. Choice of which college/university to enroll in if selected in more than one	37	6.62
8. Advice on preparing for HE entrance exam	38	6.81
9. Contacting college/university on behalf of applicants	16	2.86
10.Accompanying for a visit to the college/university where you work	15	2.68
11.Accompanying for a visit to another college/university	16	2.86
12.Advising via social networking e.g., WhatsApp	27	4.83
13. About special admissions programmes/ processes (e.g. Reservations)	17	3.04
Total of Answer=Yes	**559**	**100**

We conducted survey of 100 faculty members from GCID, out of which 84 faculty members gave VRs which comes to 84% of the total respondents from GCID. We received 559 'Yes' answers on various types of advice given by FMs.

In GCID 14.67% of 'Yes" responses pertained to choosing courses followed by advising students on whether to pursue higher education or other options (13.77%), advice on admissions process (12.88%), selecting colleges (12.17%), Checking application form (10.38%), on preparing for HE entrance exam (6.81%), choice of which college/university to enrol in if selected in more than one (6.62%), about covering tuition expenses/funding options (6.44%), advising via social networking e.g., WhatsApp (4.83%), about special admissions programmes/ processes (for e.g. Reservations) (3.04%), contacting college/university on behalf of applicants and accompanying for a visit to another college/university (2.86% each) and accompanying for a visit to the college/university where you (FM) work (2.68%).

Table 5.9: Advice Given by Faculty Members from GCID in Professional Network (data from FM survey)

Option	GCID : 5_2	
	Answer = Yes (number)	**Answer = Yes (% of answer=Yes)**
1.When you went on a visit to a school	37	18.05
2.When you visited another community setting	35	17.07
3.When you met with students who were visiting your college/university	69	33.66
4. When you organized or assisted with an open day/official visit/taster day for students to visit your college/university	24	11.71
5.When you asked some current students to advise other young people in their communities	40	19.51
Total of Answer=Yes	**205**	**100**

Table 5.9 shows when FMs advised students. In the GCID survey of the100 faculty members, 84 confirmed that they had given advice in their professional network. Of the 205 yes answers from the 84 FMs from GCID, 33.66% of advice was given when FMs met with students who were visiting their college followed by 19.51% of advice given when FMs asked some current students to advise other young people in their communities. 18.05% of advice occurred when FMs went on a visit to a school, 17.07% when FMs visited another community setting and 11.71% when FMs organized or assisted with an open day/official visit/taster day for students to visit their college/university.

Table 5.10: Faculty Engagement in Advice on HE Access across Various Community Settings (GCID)

Option	GCID: 5_2	
	Answer = Yes (number)	**Answer = Yes (% of answer=Yes)**
1.Extended family (beyond nuclear)	72	27.27
2.Neighbours	69	26.14
3.Domestic staff	37	14.02
4.In a faith-based setting e.g. temple	16	6.06
5.In a community group	36	13.64
6.Through NGO work	09	3.41
7.Through local politics	05	1.89
8.Through your own tutoring/coaching work	20	7.58
Total of Answer=Yes	**264**	**100**

Table 5.10 shows the distribution of advice given in various settings. FMs from GCID interacted with students regarding higher education choices across various community settings. From the hundred FMs at GCID, we received a total of 264 yes responses (as they could choose multiple options simultaneously). In GCID, the most common setting for such interactions was the extended family, with 27.27% of total yes responses. This was closely followed by neighbours (26.14%), domestic staff (14.02%), in a community group (13.64%), through their own tutoring/ coaching work (7.58%), in a faith-based setting (6.06%), through NGO work (3.41%) and 1.89% through local politics.

Information about Career Guidance Given by FMs (based on FM interview)

Faculty members from colleges offered general guidance. Dr Amu and Dr Gaju from GC-A, motivated students to aim for higher studies or competitive exams like the UPSC. Dr VCK from GC-A played a direct role in pre-admission counselling. He provided hands on support during the admission process, while Edison from GC-B, as a member of admission committee, was actively involved in guiding students. Mr. Andy and Dr John from GCID contributed by helping students choose appropriate undergraduate courses. Dr Smith, Shaw and Mary from GCID, Deva from GC-A and Thomson from GC-B made efforts in offering advice within their social circles addressing educational barriers at the grassroots level. Falguni from GC-B helped a girl student with financial aid while Sumit provided career guidance linking education to job opportunities. Prof. Sharmishtha from GC-B organized student- parent meetings in junior

colleges, while Dr Lata from GC-A mentored a girl student through her academic journey from undergraduate to doctoral studies.

Experiences about Career Guidance Given by FMs from GCID (based on FM Diary):

Based on diary entries and experiences reported by the faculty members from GCID, we received 56 entries from GCID. There were 6 instances of GCID FMs advising neighbours, 7 and 5 instances of advising relatives and neighbours respectively. 39 instances of advice fell in the 'other' category.

Advice Given by FMs from GCID (based on FM Diary):

Andy, John, Smith, Shaw and Mary, provided guidance within personal and community-based settings. Andy and John helped neighbours understand career and degree options, while Smith and Shaw supported marginalized students within their social circles. Shaw's engagement with the son of a security guard, a socio- economically disadvantaged student, reflects his reach at the grass roots level. Mary, by advising her daughter's friend, represented support extended in personal network.

Whether students whom FMs advised were from rural background (based on FM Diary):

We received 30 valid diary entries from GCID on whether students whom FMs advised were from rural background. Mr. Andy, FM from GCID, reported that he came across a tribal student during a family function and advised him to go for medical education. John from GCID shared his experience of guiding a student who belonged to a very poor family and who was unaware of availability of degree courses. The student was from a rural area and belonged to scheduled caste (SC) category. John from GCID helped the student get appropriate advice on higher education access, as a result of which the poor boy got admitted for a UG course in GCID. Andy mentioned that he advised the son of a security guard who belonged to marginalised community. As the security guard was unlettered and was unaware of the importance of higher education and was reluctant about the idea of his son continuing higher education, Andy convinced him about the importance of higher education, also informed the security guard that the fees would be waived and in addition to that, his son would get a scholarship. As a result of which the son of this security guard enrolled for BA degree course in GCID.

Smith from GCID reported that a partially blind student enquired about admission for UG program and about concessions for visually challenged students. Smith discussed the problem with the college administration and got him enrolled for UG course. Smith also reported about offering guidance to another poor student, whose mother worked on daily wages and was from village.

Information about Advice given by FMs (based on FM Post-Diary interview)

Andy, Shaw, and Mary directly engaged with students facing significant socio-economic challenges, including limited family support, unfamiliarity with higher education pathways, and financial security. Their concerns revolved not just around academics, but also around managing living expenses and emotional stress. One of the recurring narratives was financial barriers. Smith reported advising a visually impaired student who was seeking scholarship information. A student from low-income background had approached John to seek advice. Mary's experience revealed that many parents remain uninformed about the educational opportunities and their children's potential, affecting their ability to support informed decisions. Dr Shree noted that many of the students approaching him were unfamiliar to him.

Table 5.11: Type of Advice given by FMs (based on FM diary)

Type of Advice	GCID: 5_2	
1. Advice on whether to go for higher education or other options	50	9.49
2. Choice of which college/universities to apply to	46	8.73
3. Choice of course/subject	51	9.68
4. About the admissions process	46	8.73
5. About covering tuition expenses/funding options	31	5.88
6. About higher education entry exams preparation	29	5.50
7. About special admissions programs/processes e.g., reservations	33	6.26
8. Checking application form/other documents	21	3.99
9. Choice of which colleges/universities to enrol in if selected in more than one	23	4.36
10. Organising a visit to the college/ university	14	2.66
11. Advice on accommodation	32	6.07
12. About college facilities/activities/ provisions	33	6.26
13. About campus safety/security	33	6.26
14. About employability prospects	43	8.16
15. About whether the college/university has good academic functioning	25	4.74
16. About transport facilities	17	3.23
17. Other advice	-	--
Total Yes answers	527	100

From the diary entries filled by faculty members from GCID, we found that 9.68% of the advice was regarding choice of course or subject followed by 9.49% of advice on whether to go for higher education or other options, followed by choice of College and the admissions process (8.73% each). 8.16% of the advice was regarding employability prospects, 6.26% each was regarding college facilities and campus safety and about special admissions program, followed by 6.07% on accommodation, 5.88% about covering tuition expenses 5.5% about higher education entry exams preparation, 4.74% about whether the college has good academic functioning, 4.36% regarding choice of College to enrol in if selected in more than one, 3.99% regarding checking application form, 3.23% about transport facilities and 2.66% on organising a visit to college.

Information about Advice given by FM (based on FM post diary)

Advice given by faculty members on higher education options occurred in informal or personal contexts rather than through formal institutional channels. Smith and Mary offered advice to

students within their personal circle including friends, family members, or acquaintances. Mary advised a relative. Andy was approached by a student from the Scheduled Tribe (ST) community during a family event. Smith's experience with a student who had recently lost his mother also illustrates how emotional and financial hardships can disrupt educational trajectories.

Location where Advice was given by FM (based on FM diary):

College was the most frequent location reported by FMs from GCID group 'in various roles such as when invited as chief guest or for giving special lectures/ motivational talks' (29), followed by 'home' (15), 'phone' (4) and 'unidentified location' (3), 'society garden' (2), 'bus stop' and 'family function' , one each.

Motivational Reasons for Advice (based on FM diary)

In the GCID group, social responsibility was the most frequent (25) motivation followed by professional responsibility (10), knowledge regarding HEIs processes (7), Personal connection (not family) and other (6 each), interest in advising was reported twice, and being concerned about the individual was not reported as the motivational reason.

FM Motivation for the HE advice Provided (based on FM post-diary)

Andy pointed out that many students lacked basic knowledge about the range of academic disciplines available. This fact motivated Andy to advise students regarding HE options available. John reported that many junior college students in his area came from underprivileged backgrounds, this fact motivated John.

Mary's motivation was rooted in the fact that students are from disadvantaged background.
Shaw was motivated as he observed that rural students need FMs' guidance.

Experiences about Advice given by FMs (based on FM post-diary interview)

To the question on experiences about advice given by FMs, we received 64 valid diary entries from GCID. Mr. Andy from GCID documented twelve instances of advising students over six weeks. His interactions were a mix of professional (seven entries) and personal (five entries), reflecting that he guided students from various backgrounds, especially those from rural, minority, and economically weaker communities. In his professional capacity, Mr. Andy often

engaged with students at his college and in staff room. In one instance, he noted, “A student from junior college was confused between choosing Chemistry and Physics. Based on her marks and performance, I advised her to pursue a career in Chemistry because I feel it’s my responsibility to help students choose better and appropriate career options.”

While in the staff room, Mr. Andy recalled, “A girl from a backward caste came to me seeking guidance about higher education, scholarships, and other facilities. She was confused, and I knew she needed clear direction.”

At times, his work overlapped with formal institutional roles. For example, while attending to his duties in the admission committee, he shared, “A rural student who was an orphancame to me. I advised her to take admission to B.Voc. (Multimedia Animation) course, considering job employability.” He added, “As an admission committee member, I keep advising many students.” In another case, while handling counselling responsibilities, he said, “When I visited a junior college, students came with queries about admission and subject selection—I regularly help students in these areas.”

Even in informal settings, Andy remained a trusted guide. At a society garden near his residence, he recounted, “Some students were very confused or even depressed thinking about their career choices. I always try to help because I come from the teaching field and I know what’s helpful for them.” Andy also described personal connections that led to advising. During a phone call from a relative, he shared, “They’re from a rural, farming background and called me to ask about higher education advice for their daughter. I was happy to guide them.” At a family function, a parent approached him. “They wanted help deciding on their child’s education after 12th science. I explained the career opportunities and higher education options available.”

In another personal case, he noted, “A neighbour recently passed 12th. Someone told him to talk to me, so I explained career options and opportunities in detail.” He also advised a minority community student about scholarships, explaining, “I was in the college staff room giving advice to students when this one student asked about scholarship facilities—so I guided him with the available scholarship.” Mr. Andy said, “As a teacher and committee member, I advised a rural

science student to choose chemistry over physics based on performance, and I also explained scholarships, hostel facilities, and career opportunities.''

Throughout his diary, Mr. Andy consistently positioned himself as an accessible, empathetic, and proactive advisor. As he stated, "I am always advising many students, and because of that, more students come to me."

John, from GCID with strong roots in rural area, recorded twelve experiences over six weeks where he offered career and academic advice. Of these, eight were personal interactions and four were professional. His reflections highlighted concern for economically weaker sections, tribal and rural students, and those lacking access to information about higher education. John acted as a mentor to his extended network. For example, in week I, he shared, "he (the student) is my neighbor and after his 12th, he came to me asking about degree programs. I gave him detailed information about other courses available." He explained that "he knew about my profession because I live nearby." In another case involving a relative from a backward caste, he recalled, "His mother worked as a daily wage laborer. I felt I should guide him early so he could make a better career decision."

John demonstrated empathy for students from rural and tribal background. In Week 2, he said, "I come from a rural background myself, so I know their situation. I felt I should help them." Another student came with questions about educational support, prompting John to say, "He's from a rural background and wanted to know about facilities for rural students." During a family visit, John spoke to a friend's relative and mentioned, "My teacher helped many poor students, so I also want to support students just like my teacher''. He added, "As this student's father is a farmer, I wanted to convince his father and motivate the student and his family to pursue higher education."

John continued offering guidance to socially and economically disadvantaged students, including one case where he shared, "the student was from a disadvantaged background and didn't know about degree course admissions or scholarships. He needed clear guidance." Among his professional interactions, John recalled in Week 4, "The student was physically challenged, so I advised him on the reservation quota, the admission process, and the

assistance provided by the college to students." At a bus stop, John spontaneously helped a student: "He asked me about scholarship schemes and financial help. I saw he had a poor family background, so I guided him."

John also noted students' determination. "One student (whom I advised) was very sincere, but came from a poor family and had moved to the city to study and look for a job." In another encounter, he said, "A student from a tribal area was totally unaware about higher education choices. I told him about scholarship schemes and encouraged him to pursue further studies." In his final diary entry, John reflected on meeting a student from a farmer's family: "They owned very little land and sometimes worked on other farms. I guided this student who came from a very poor background**."** John said, "as a neighbour and relative, I guided a poor student with physical challenges who had no idea about scholarships or educational opportunities." John's diary portrayed him as a community-oriented educator, driven by both personal values and professional responsibility. His words**—**"I want to do what my teachers did for me" and "students come to me because they know I can guide them"**—**capture his commitment to bridging the information gap for students on the margins of the education system.

Shaw from GCID said, "As a teacher, I helped a confused student decide on the appropriate choice of undergraduate course and supported a struggling girl student in choosing Pharmacy after understanding her situation." Smith from GCID said, "Being from the teaching field and knowing the student personally, I advised him to consider a career in Environmental Science and explained government job opportunities." Mary from GCID said, "Working in higher education, I helped rural students who lacked awareness by informing them about scholarships, required documents, fees, and career options in language studies."

5.5 HE Outreach: Current Challenges and Future Opportunities

5.5.1 HE Outreach: Current Challenges:

5.5.1.1 State University (SU):

Challenges Faced by the ILs in Providing Guidance about Higher Education

From the standalone semi structured interview with ILs we could identify some key challenges and possible solutions for improving access to higher education for rural students. Nana shared that many students were not interested in higher education because of their mindset, and this he said was unlikely to change without efforts to shift that attitude.

Table 5.12: Challenges For College/University Identified By FMs in Providing More Pre-Admission Guidance and Advice About Higher Education (Data is from FM Survey)

Option	SU: 5_1	
	Answer = Yes (number)	Answer = Yes (% of answer=Yes)
1.There is not enough funding availability for extra activities	09	36
2.Staff workload means that people do not have time	11	44
3.Faculty members are not aware of the issues that young people are facing in accessing higher education	02	8
4. Faculty members do not live near the college so do not know the local community	01	4
5.This is not a priority for this college/university	02	8
Total of Answer=Yes	**25**	**100**

We received 25 Yes answers from SU regarding challenges for College/University identified by FMs in providing more pre-admission guidance and advice about Higher Education. We received 44% of yes answers for Staff workload followed by 36% of yes answers for lack of funding for extra activities. 'Faculty members are not aware of the issues that young people are facing in accessing higher education' and 'this is not a priority for this university' received8% of yes responses each, while 'Faculty members do not live near the college so do not know the local community' received 4% of total yes responses.

5.5.1.2 Government College in- depth (GCID) and Other Government Colleges

Challenges Faced by the ILs in Providing Guidance about Higher Education

From the standalone semi structured interview with ILs, we could identify some key challenges and possible solutions for improving access to higher education for rural students. James pointed out that institutional leaders are not fully aware of the need to guide students in classes 11th and 12th to help them get access to higher education. Vitthal added that rural students are often overlooked, and their specific questions and concerns are not properly addressed to help solve these issues. Yashwant suggested holding NSS camps in villages to interact with families about college opportunities and encourage them to access higher education. Vitthal recommended staying in regular contact with students from primary school to Junior college and offering personalized counseling based on their needs and abilities. This, he believed, could make a lasting difference in their interest and readiness for higher studies.

Challenges Faced by the FMs in Providing Guidance about Higher Education

Table 5.13: Challenges For College/University Identified By FMs in Providing More Pre-Admission Guidance and Advice About Higher Education (Data is from FM Survey)

Option	GCID: 5_2	
	Answer = Yes (number)	**Answer = Yes (% of answer=Yes)**
1.There is not enough funding availability for extra activities	49	36.84
2.Staff workload means that people do not have time	41	30.83
3.Faculty members are not aware of the issues that young people are facing in accessing higher education	24	18.05
4. Faculty members do not live near the college so do not know the local community	09	6.77
5.This is not a priority for this college/university	10	7.52
Total of Answer=Yes	**133**	**100**

We received 133 Yes answers from GCID regarding challenges for College/University identified by FMs in providing more pre-admission guidance and advice about Higher Education. We received 36.84% of yes answers for lack of funding for extra activities followed by Staff workload (30.83%), 'faculty members are not aware of the issues that young people are facing in accessing higher education' (18.05%), 'this is not a priority for this university' (7.52%) and 6.77% of yes answers for 'faculty members do not live near the college so do not know the local community.'

5.5.2 HE Outreach: Future Potential

5.5.2.1 State University (SU)

In this section, information on the activities carried out by the college / university concerning higher education outreach obtained from IL and FM interview is presented.

Other Activities That the College/University Could Do to Attract Rural Students/Guide Them on Higher Education Choices Response of ILs:

Among the ILs, Nana from SU highlighted the role of Rayat Shikshan Sanstha, noting that its colleges were actively involved in promoting quality higher education through various institutional initiatives which could be replicated in the SU.

Other Activities That the College/University Could Do to Attract Rural Students/Guide Them on Higher Education Choices: Response of FMs

Faculty members from different institutions offered a range of suggestions to attract and guide rural students toward higher education. At SU, the focus was on increasing visibility and engagement through displaying posters, organizing exhibitions, holding lectures or events and conducting open day activities to showcase the university environment.

Recommended, but not yet Widely Implemented Strategies to Attract Rural Students/Guide Them on Higher Education Choices

In the post diary interview, FMs outlined several practical recommendations to improve access to undergraduate higher education, especially for rural students. Alumni engagement was seen as a powerful tool. By involving alumni in workshops and small interactive sessions, current students can gain real-life insights and inspiration from those who successfully pursued higher education. FMs acknowledged that lack of financial support is a common barrier to enrolment. To reduce the burden of cost of HE, it was suggested that financial support for rural students should be provided.

Suggestions after Participation in the Diary Study

FMs recommended strategies to improve access to HE for rural students which are not yet widely implemented during the Post – Diary interview. The most frequently mentioned recommendation was the need for strong leadership and administrative support, especially backing from Vice Chancellors and University leadership to drive access related initiatives. Another key area was creation of dedicated student engagement programs and outreach activities for targeting rural schools. FMs emphasized the importance of going beyond campus to engage directly with underserved communities. Several suggestions focused on establishing continuous support structures, such as dedicated guidance departments that would offer year-round academic and career advice to students. Policy related recommendations included making sure that new education policy is sensitive to the needs of rural students and prioritizing support activities that helped them transition smoothly into higher education. Improving information dissemination was another recommendation.

Activities That the other College/University Do to Attract Rural Students Response of ILs:

The Vice Chancellor of SU, Nana, recommended replicating unique practice of another college, where students were given fruit saplings to grow over several years. Teachers visited regularly to monitor progress. This activity helped build responsibility and long-term thinking, connecting students to their HEI education in a practical way.

Activities That the other College/University Do to Attract Rural Students Response from FMs:

Dr Radha and Dr Vibha mentioned that coaching activities, workshops, and orientation programs to support students academically and emotionally, that are conducted by other HEIs. These sessions helped students better understand HE options and helped them feel more prepared for college life. Dr Radya and Dr Vibha said they were not aware of specific activities done by other HEIs.

5.5.2.2 Government College In-Depth (GCID) and Other Government Colleges

Other Activities That the College/University Could Do to Attract Rural Students/Guide Them on Higher Education Choices: Response of ILs:

James, the IL from GCID pointed out the importance of NSS camps, which help students by encouraging community service. These camps, he said, build key life skills like leadership, teamwork, and social responsibility, which support students' personal growth and readiness for higher education. Vitthal recommended expanding skill-based education and 'earn and learn' programs to improve the access to higher education. These initiatives, he said, blend academic learning with practical work experience, helping students become financially independent while gaining relevant job skills.

Other Activities That the College/University Could Do to Attract Rural Students/Guide Them on Higher Education Choices: Response of FMs

In GCID**,** the approach leaned more toward direct interaction and support, including faculty members visiting students' homes, organizing orientation programs specifically for 12th-grade students, providing financial concessions, and spreading information about scholarships and opportunities to rural and unreached communities. From GC-A**,** suggestions pointed towards structural and policy-level changes such as increased government and college funding for rural

students, updating educational syllabi in line with new education policies, and informing students early (post-10th grade) about various career opportunities. At GC-B, recommendations emphasized social and economic support measures such as lowering fees for rural girls, arranging accommodation for rural and tribal students, encouraging teachers to visit rural schools and junior colleges and improving planning and organization for social awareness. There was also a call for increased government expenditure on education.

Recommended, but Not Yet Widely Implemented Strategies to Attract Rural Students/Guide Them on Higher Education Choices

In the post diary interview, FMs outlined several practical recommendations to improve access to undergraduate higher education, especially for rural students: Digital outreach was recommended, such as creating and sharing subject specific videos on social media to inform and engage students who may not have access to traditional sources of guidance, especially in remote areas, was recommended.

Community based workshops were recommended to bring information directly to students in rural areas.

Suggestions After Participation in the Diary Study (Data is From FM Post- Diary Interview)

During the Post-Diary interview, FMs recommended strategies to improve access to HE for rural students, which are not yet widely implemented. Several suggestions focused on establishing continuous support structures, such as dedicated guidance departments that would offer year-round academic and career advice to students. Policy related recommendations included making sure that new education policy is sensitive to the needs of rural students and prioritizing support activities that helped them transition smoothly into higher education. Improving information dissemination was another recommendation.

Financial support also featured prominently, with suggestions to tap into CSR and NGO funding to seek assistance for students who face economic challenges. Encouraging colleges to work closely with communities to address local barriers to higher education in a more targeted and context specific manner was also recommended by FMs.

Activities That the Other College/ University Do to Attract Rural Students Response of ILs:
James, the IL of GCID, reported that faculty from one private University from the same town took a proactive approach by visiting other colleges in the month of May, before the admission season starts. They inform students about available courses and encourage them to consider higher education options. Vitthal from GC-B said that he knew that many colleges, NGOs and Private institutions are working to support access to higher education for rural and underprivileged students.

Activities That the Other College/University Do to Attract Rural Students Response from FMs:
In terms of preparing for the future, Sumit mentioned that guidance was also given in other HEIs for competitive exams like the MPSC and UPSC, which motivates students to complete undergraduate education as a stepping stone. Edison shared that other colleges also use websites to publish useful information, helping students and their families to stay informed. Thomson noted that the quality of these efforts matters a lot.

Mary shared that many colleges are running coaching and orientation programs to support students. These sessions help students better understand HE options and feel more prepared for college life. Orientation programs, as mentioned by Dr Smith and Shaw, play a role in guiding students who are new to the higher education system. Mr. Andy explained that faculty members from other HEIs sometimes go door-to-door in rural areas to talk to students and their families about higher education opportunities. Dr Gaju pointed out that colleges often charge lower fees for students from disadvantaged background.

In terms of preparing for the future, Sumit mentioned that other HEIs offer guidance for competitive exams like the MPSC and UPSC. Edison shared that colleges also use websites to publish useful information, helping students and families to stay informed. Thomson noted that the quality of these efforts by HEIs mattered a lot. Prof. Sharmishtha said that she was not aware of specific activities done by other HEIs.

5.6 Summary and Conclusion

This chapter offers an analysis of the current landscape of access to higher education for rural students. Rural students constitute a significant proportion of the student body across the

selected institutions with representation varying widely from roughly 40% to as high as 90% depending on institutional definition of rural students. These differences reflect different methods of classification where some count rural origin while others consider present residence. Nevertheless, a consensus emerged among institutional leaders and faculty that rural students are well represented and generally feel comfortable and supported in their academic environments in all the selected higher education institutions.

Several critical factors emerged as enablers for rural students' access and sustained participation in higher education. Foremost comes financial support which plays a crucial role in overcoming economic barriers. Government scholarships and university specific initiatives such as earn and learn programs provide necessary financial assistance. These schemes not only alleviate the immediate cost burden but also offer opportunities for skill development and work experience.

Another vital component is the availability of hostel facilities which is particularly important for female rural students. Safe, affordable accommodation options provide rural students the confidence and security needed to attend institutions located far from their homes. This infrastructure directly addresses cultural and social constraints that might otherwise prevent girls from pursuing higher education. We also found that community outreach and awareness programs actively engage institutions with rural communities through national service scheme camps, community radio broadcast, school visits and promotional events such as open days and Science Fairs. These activities raise awareness among rural students and their families about higher education opportunities, admission procedures and institutional infrastructure.

Faculty members play a central role as mentors and guides. They provide comprehensive - though often informal - advice on admissions, course selection, and financial support options, campus safety and related issues. Faculty members' involvement is informal beyond the campus. However, this support is frequently ad-hock and dependent on individual faculty initiative rather than structural institutional programs. There are multiple barriers that continue to hinder rural students' access to higher education. Economic hardship is the most pressing challenge forcing students to prioritize earning income over continuing education. Lack of hostel facilities is a hindrance, particularly for girl students besides social and cultural

factors,. Faculty workload is an institutional challenge, limiting their ability to engage fully in outreach and counselling activities for widening access to higher education. Financial constraints restrict institutions' ability to organize extra-curricular activities and community outreach events which are likely to play a key role in attracting rural students to avail higher education options.

To address these issues that hinder access to higher education for rural students, institutional leaders and faculty members have recommended establishment of formal counselling centers that provide year-round structured guidance to students which should include academic advising and emotional support. Dedicated outreach programs that target rural schools and communities from an early stage starting at Primary or Junior College levels are seen as essential to building students' motivation, and preparedness for accessing opportunities of higher education. Using digital platforms is highlighted as a promising avenue for widening access to guidance and information pertaining to higher education for rural and disadvantaged students. Community engagement emerges as an important strategy. Institutional leaders and faculty members have suggested continuous and personalized engagement with students and their families through NSS camps and other outreach activities.

Strong leadership and administrative support from institutional leaders is needed for widening access to higher education, without which, outreach and support programs often lack the necessary resources and coordination.

In conclusion, widening access to higher education for rural students in Maharashtra requires community outreach, financial and infrastructure support and personalized academic guidance which should be integrated into institutional strategies. Such guidance and support services will ensure equity in access to higher education for rural students and disadvantaged students. Beyond individual faculty efforts, alumni network can expand outreach and inspire students. Strong institutional leadership with commitment to widen access to higher education for rural students is very important.

Commitment to widening access to higher education for students and deep faith in the principle of equity can transform higher education into an inclusive system, leading to empowerment of youth and bridge educational divides.

Chapter 6: Who are the Students and What is Their Experience of, and Perspectives on, HE Outreach?

6.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to build a comprehensive profile of undergraduate students across the higher education institutions (HEIs) enrolled at SU and GCID, focusing on their demographic backgrounds, schooling history, stream and subject choices, current academic enrollment, sources of financial support, and most importantly, their awareness of and subject choices, current academic environment sources of financial support and most perspectives on higher education outreach efforts. Through a detailed statistical presentation and analysis of student responses to a structured survey, this chapter addresses both the diversity of student experiences and the institutional mechanisms that aim to attract, support, and retain students - especially those from rural and / or disadvantaged backgrounds.

This chapter also illustrates that students' experience and perspectives on HE Outreach are shaped not only by institutional practices but also by family background, school experiences, linguistic medium, course preferences, financial arrangements, and the communication channels through which higher education is accessed.

6.2 Demographic Background of Undergraduate Students

6.2.1 Demographic Background of Undergraduate Students SU

We carried out survey of UG Students from SU. Following tables show data based on census survey, FGDs and interviews of the students.

Age Group of the Students:

The age distribution of respondents in the, SU reveals distinct patterns. We received 98.8 % valid responses from SU. The highest proportion of participants are 19 years old (26.99%), followed by those aged 20 (23.93, while 21 years old accounted for 14.11%. Smaller proportion are seen at ages 18, 22 and 24 (6.75% each), with even fewer at 23 (4.91%) and more than 24 years (3.68%).

Gender of Students:

The data collected of gender composition of student respondents totals 163 valid responses. In the case of SU, the distribution is distinctly male-dominated. Out of 163 valid responses, male represents 78.5% of the total. In contrast, only 21.5% respondents identified as a female. Notably, no respondents in SU identified as transgender.

Caste/Social Group Distribution of Students:

The data pertains to the caste and social group with 100% of valid respondents in SU. The largest proportion of respondents belong to the General category, with 60 students, accounting for 36.8% of all valid responses. This is followed closely by the SC and OBC categories, which have 43 (26.4%) and 42 (25.8%) respondents respectively. The presence of Scheduled Tribe respondents is marginal, with only 4 individuals (2.5%) identifying as ST. The Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) comprise of 8.6% respondents.

Religion of Students:

The data of the undergraduate survey collected information on the religious affiliation of student with 100% valid respondents from SU. Hindu students form the majority with 99 respondents, accounting for 60.73% of the valid responses. This is followed by Buddhist students, who comprise 17.17% of the samples. Muslim students are close behind, representing 16.56%. Christian respondents 4.29%, while both Sikh and Jain categories register one respondent each.

Differently Abled Students:

In the SU context, none of the surveyed students identified as differently abled.

Sexual Orientation/Identity:

(LGBTQIAP+ Identification among Students)

Only two students from SU group gave affirmative response to the question of sexual orientation, but they did not give detailed information about their community. A small number choose not to disclose their identity, with 1.8% student from SU preferring not to say.

Relationship Status of Students:

Majority of students(95.7%), identified as unmarried, only 7 students reported being married.

Caring Responsibilities (Children):

Student responses regarding caring responsibilities of children, gathered from SU found that there were 163 valid responses. The data showed that only 1.84% students had children.

Place of Birth of Students by State/UT:

The data gives us information about the state of birth for students enrolled in the institution, 100% valid responses were collected. We found a significant majority of students (67.48%) were born in Maharashtra, 27 students (16.56%) were born in Madhya Pradesh and 26 students (15.95%) in Rajasthan. Notably, no student in SU reported birth in any other state or union territory, indicating a distinctly regional character with limited geographical inflow from more distant parts of the country. The survey data also revealed that country of birth of all respondents was India only.

Place of Birth of Students: (Place of Permanent Residence):

The data of permanent place of residence of student respondents (with 100% valid responses) 56.44% students reported their permanent residence as urban, while 43.66% students identified as rural residents.

Mother Tongue of Students:

The linguistic profile is heavily dominated by Marathi, reported as the mother tongue by 128 students, which constitutes 78.5% of all valid responses. This strong presence of Marathi speakers reflects the institution's location in Maharashtra and indicates a largely regional student body. The next most spoken language is Hindi, reported by 11% students, and followed by Urdu with 6.1% students. The remaining mother tongues - Arabic, *Banjara*, Gujarati, English, and Tamil - were each reported by only one or a few students, collectively making up a small linguistic minority within SU. Notably, *Banjara* was listed by 1.8 % students, suggesting the presence of a small but significant group from this nomadic community.

6.2.2 Demographic Background of Undergraduate Students GCID

Age Group of the Students:

We received 99.5% valid responses from GCID. It shows a heavier concentration at age 19, which accounts for over half the respondents (51.24%), followed by 20 years (29.28%), while 18

year old represented 9.34% of the respondents. The representation of older age categories was minimal, with only 6.54% at age 21, 1.71% at age 22, and very negligible percentage for 23 (0.31%), 24 (1.09%) and those above represented 24 (0.46%) of the respondents.

Gender of Students:

The survey was administrated, with a total of 642 valid responses. Here, 386 respondents identified as female amounting for 60.13% of the total, while 39.72% respondents, identified as male. Additionally, one respondent (0.15%) identified as transgender.

Caste/Social Group wise Distribution of Students:

The data collected pertains to the caste and social group with 100% of valid responses from GCID. The General category constituted the largest share of respondents, (40.12%) followed by OBCs (29.61%). The Scheduled Caste group included (17.35%), and we received only 2.38% ST respondents. The EWS category accounted only 10.5%.

Religion of Students:

We found Hindu as a predominant religion with 83.09% respondents. Buddhist 11.11%, followed by Muslims (3.12%), Jains (2.03%). and Christians (0.46%). The Sikh (0.31%) and Zoroastrian/Parsi (0.46%) categories registered marginal representation.

Differently Abled Students*:*

We received 93.8% valid responses for the question in GCID. Only 2% students identified as differently abled. The remaining 98% students reported no disability.

Sexual Orientation/Identity (LGBTQIAP+ Identification among Students):

In the data of student identification with LGBTQIAP community, 564 valid responses were recorded, representing 87.9% of its total sample. 84.7% students from GCID group gave negative response to this question. A small number chose not to disclose their identity, while 3.1% students in GCID opted for the Prefer not to say option.

Relationship Status of Students:

The data explores the relationship status of students enrolled in GCID. 100% valid responses were recorded in GCID, 98.75% identified as unmarried. The married category accounted for 1.09% students, and just 1 respondent (0.16%) identified as divorced or separated.

Caring Responsibilities (Children):

There were 614 valid responses regarding caring responsibilities of children, gathered from GCID. The data shows that only 0.82% students had children in GCID and that the mean number of children in GCID was 0.8.

Place of Birth of Students-– By State / UT:

The data gives us information about the state or union territory of birth for students enrolled with 97.17% valid responses in GCID. A dominant 95.23% of its students were born in Maharashtra. However, GCID has recorded student births from multiple other states and union territories, albeit in small numbers. These include Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, each with 1.4%, and Uttar Pradesh with 0.47%. In addition, one respondent each was born in Assam, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Punjab, Telangana, and Delhi accounting for 0.15% of the valid responses. Two students were born in Bihar. All students reported India as their country of birth. There were no respondents who reported being born outside India.

Place of Birth of Students (Place of permanent residence) :

We collected the information about the permanent place of residence of student respondents from GCID. The total number of valid responses to this question is 92.83% of the survey samples. 49.83% respondents reported an urban permanent residence, while 50.17% students came from rural backgrounds.

Mother Tongue of Students:

GCID showed high concentration of Marathi speakers, with 87.04% respondents identifying it as their mother tongue. Hindi was the second most prevalent language, reported by 9.47% students, Banjara (4 respondents), Gujarati (2), Urdu (4), and Telugu (4). Additional entries include individual respondents identifying Bengali, Kannada, Marawadi, Punjabi, Rajasthani, and Sindhi as their mother tongues each contributing 0.15% of the sample.

6.3 Undergraduate Students: Residence and Commute Information

6.3.1 Residence and Commute Information (SU)

Students Staying in More than One Residence on a Weekly basis (Based on UG Survey):

This analysis explores the data whether students reside in more than one location during a typical week. 100% valid responses were received from the institution. Only 18.40% students reported staying in more than one residence on a weekly basis, while 81.60% students indicated that they resided in a single place throughout the week.

Location of Residence of Students(Who stayed at more than one residence on a weekly basis):

The data captured whether students live on campus, within the same town or district, or in a different district or state. A total of 30 valid responses were recorded from SU, accounting for 18.40% of the surveyed student samples. Majority of students resided in the same town or location as their institution. 56.66% Students reported living in the same town. On-campus residence remained relatively limited, with only 4.29% students reported staying on campus. A small segment of the student body resided outside the town where the institution is located. 2.45% students reported living in the same district but not the same town, while 6.6% students resided in a different district within the same state.

Residential Locations of Students Who Do Not Stay in More Than One Residence on a Weekly Basis (based on UG Survey):

We received 17.79% valid responses of the total survey samples to the question. The majority of students who resided in a single place during the week lived in the same town or location as their institution. 34.48% fall into this category. 27.58% students lived on campus. Smaller proportions of students lived outside the town. 6.08% students resided in the same district but outside the town, 27.58% students live in different districts within the same state, and 1 student (3.4%) resided in a different state. The mean distance from usual weekly residence to university was 11.33 kms.

Average Travel Time from Residence to College/ University:

It was found from the data of SU student's average time from usual residence to higher education institution was 27.53 minutes per student. 98.15% of SU respondents responded to the question.

Modes of Transportation Used by Students:

The most frequently reported (50.9%) mode of transport was two wheeler such as bikes, scooties or scooters to commute to their respective higher education institute. This was followed by walking which accounts for 36.8%. Bus and mini-van travel was reported by 11.65% students while Auto Rickshaw were used by 8.58%.Cycle 1.22%, train 1.22%, personal car 0.61% and carpool 0.61% were mentioned as modes of transportation.

Location of Residence, Travel Time, and Modes of Transportation Used by Students (Based on Students' Interview)

We conducted interviews of six students who were selected from the two FGDs arranged at SU. None of them split the place of their residence. Rohit resided in his own place and was dropped to SU by his father on two-wheeler, taking 20 to 30 minutes from his residence. Adhishree resided in SU hostel and took ten minutes' walk to reach her department. However, she said she goes to her village only during her vacation. Ram, Adinath and Vihan also stayed at University hostel and preferred walking to their department. Shruti comes to SU by auto rikshaw. Her place of residence was 10 km away from SU and it took 10 minutes to reach the campus.

6.3.2 Residence and commute information (GCID)

Students Staying in more than One Residence on a Weekly Basis (Based on UG Survey):

Valid responses were received from 623 students at GCID, representing 97.04% of the survey samples. from among 623 valid responses, 12.35% reported staying in more than one residence per week, while 87.65 % students reported that they lived in a single residence.

Location of Residence of Students (Who stay at more than one residence on a weekly basis):

The data captures whether students live on campus, within the same town or district, or in a different district or state. A total of 67 valid responses were recorded, accounting for 10.43% of the surveyed student samples. 16.41% reported living in the same town. 52.23% students reported staying on campus. 14.92% stayed in the same district but not outside the sametown, 13.43% were from different districts of the same state, and 2.98% students resided in different states altogether.

Residential Locations of Students Who Do Not Stay in more than One Residence on a Weekly Basis (Based on UG Survey):

This subset of data from the undergraduate survey, captures the place of residence for students who reported living in only one residence during the week. The data includes 63 valid responses from GCID, which represent 9.81% of the total survey samples. Of the 63 respondents, 22.22% lived in the same town as the institution. On-campus residence accounted for 11.11% students.. A total of 31.74% students resided in the same district but outside the institution's town, and 31.74% students came from different districts within the same state. 3.17% students reported living in a different state.

The mean distance from usual residence to higher education institution was 13.83 kms for GCID. And the average time from usual residence to higher education institution was 27.84 minutes.

Modes of Transportation Used by Students:

In GCID, walking was commonly reported by 254 students 39.56% closely followed by bike or scooter usage at 195 responses (30.37%). Autorickshaws appear to be a more significant mode in GCID with 19.78% students using this option, buses and mini vans were also utilized by 14.33%., personal cars 2.02% and cycles 5.14%. 2.8% travelled by train and 0.62% by tractor and 0.15% reported using carpool.

Location of Residence, Travel Time, Modes of Transportation Used by Students (Based on Students Interview)

Two FGDs were organized at GCID and 6 students from the FGDs were selected for interview. None of them split the place of their residence. All stayed at their own house except Tom. He stayed in a shared rented room and it was one and half km away from GCID. Tom and Nikki walked to college. Harshal’s place was 2-3 km away from the college and she used a scooter to reach the college. Uki came to college by bus and her house was 18 km away from the college and it usually took an hour to reach. In case of Rahul who resided in his village which was 20 km away from the college, he commuted by bus, taking 20 minutes to reach the college.

6.4 Undergraduate Students' Background

6.4.1 Educational and family Background (SU)

Educational Qualifications of Respondents' Mothers:

In SU, we received 161 valid responses and majority of students reported that their mother had completed some level of formal schooling with the highest concentrations being in the 9th and 10th class category, comprising 26.08% respondents. This was followed by 11th to 12th class education, reported by 16.14% students, and early primary schooling (1st to 5th class and 6th to 8th class), each reported by 13.04% students. Notably, 10.55% students indicated that their mothers had completed a bachelor's degree, while (5.59%) reported maternal postgraduate qualifications. Only 1 respondent (0.62%) reported a mother with an MPhil / PhD. On the other hand, 1.84% students stated that their mothers had never accessed formal education, and 4.96% students reported either not knowing their mother's education or marked the question as not applicable.

Educational Qualifications of Respondents' Father:

In SU, the distribution of responses reveals that the highest proportions of students' fathers had completed either higher secondary education (11th to 12th class) or secondary education (9th to 10th class), reported by 24.52% and 22.64% respondents respectively from 97.5% valid responses. A further 11.94% fathers had completed degree-level education, and 10.06% had pursued postgraduate education. An additional 8.17% fathers had technical qualifications such as Diplomas or ITI certifications. Only a small minority of respondents reported that their fathers had no formal education (1.89%), while 5.66% students did not know their father's education and 2.51% marked the question as not applicable.

Legal Guardians Educational Qualification:

Of the VRs 71.66% said they did not know. 33% said the question was not applicable. 5 % said that they were graduates and 1.6% said they did not access schooling and an equal proportion reported they were post graduates and M.Phil and or PH.D. 6.66% said they were educated up to 11^{th} to 12^{th} class and 3.33 % said they were educated from 1^{st} to 5^{th} class.

Educational Background - Maternal Grandmother of Students:

A total of 147 valid responses were recorded from SU who reported the educational background of maternal grandmothers. The most striking observation is the overwhelming number of

students (77.55%) who reported that they did not know the educational attainment of their maternal grandmothers.

Among the respondents who did have some knowledge of their maternal grandmother's education, a majority indicated very low levels of formal education. 3.40% students noted that their grandmothers had not accessed any formal schooling. Early primary education (1st to 5th class) was reported by 4.76% students,. Middle-level schooling (6th to 8th class) was relatively rare, indicated by just 1 respondent (0.68%). Only 2.72% students reported their grandmother had completed either 9^{th} -10^{th} or 11^{th} -12^{th} standard. Just 0.68% students reported a technical diploma and none reported degree, postgraduate, or research-level qualifications.

Educational Background - Maternal Grandfather of Students:

A significant number of respondents reported not knowing the educational background of maternal grandfather, 72.78% students selected this response. Only 2.72% students reported that their maternal grandfather had no formal education, early primary schooling was cited by five students (3.40%) andsimilarly, 6^{th} to 8^{th} class education was noted by 2.04% students.

Secondary level education was recorded by 3.40% students, while senior secondary education was reported by 4.08% students. Degree level education that is BA, BSc was reported for two maternal grandfather (1.35%). Post graduate education, MSc was mentioned by two respondents (1.36%). Finally, M Phil and PhD qualifications were noted for one respondent (0.68%) representing the highest academic achievement levels in this data set.

Educational Background – Paternal Grandmother of Students:

In SU 77.62%, students did not know about the educational level of paternal grandmother. 4.19% students reported that their paternal grandmother had no access to formal schooling. Early formal schooling that is from 1st to 5th was completed by 4.19%. Middle school education was cited by one student (0.69%). Only 2.09% students reported that their paternal grandmother had completed up to 10th class while 2.79% reported up to 12th class and 1.39% students reported a technical diploma of their paternal, grandmother and 1 each (0.69%) noted, degree level and post graduate education.

Educational Background – Paternal Grandfather of Students:

With regard to formal education, 3.47% of paternal grandfathers had no form of schooling. Participation in basic education up to 5th class was reported for 05 grandfather (3.47%). The middle school level, with 1.38%, similarly, completion of secondary education was reported by 3.47%. While completion of higher secondary education was observed among 4.16%. It was found from the data that for secondary technical or vocational education, such as diploma or ITI level courses featured modestly with 2.08%. 77.08 % of respondents did not know educational background of their paternal grandfather and 4.86% said that the question was not applicable. None reported degree or post graduate and above level of education.

Respondents' Sibling Education Status:

Of the 163 VRs from SU, 91.41% had siblings . 149 SU respondents reported educational status of their siblings. Of these, 8.72 % said that the question was not applicable. 0.67% said that their siblings attended to 6th to 8th class, 0.67% attended 11th to 12th , 5.36% had diploma/ITI/ITC, 33.55% attained graduation and 28.18% and 5.36% attained PG education and M.Phil and/or Ph.D respectively.

Educational Background of Students Family Members across three Generations (Based on Students Interview):

From SU Rohit, Adishri and Adinath reported that their paternal and maternal grandparents we are not formally educated. Vihan and Drishti from SU reported that they did not know the education background of their grandparents. Ram from SU said that his paternal grandmother was not educated, but his paternal grandfather had reached sixth class while his maternal grandmother had reached 12th class and he did not know about education background of his maternal grandfather. Adishri from SU reported that both her grandfathers and parents and uncle and aunt were graduates while both her grandmothers(maternal and paternal), were not educated Ram's parents were unlettered .Drishti and Adinath from SU and Vihaan from SU reported that their parents had reached 12th class. Drishti's Father had also reached 12th class while her mother was not educated. From SU Rohit, Adinath and vihaan reported that their siblings were graduates and Post graduates.In case of other relatives (typically uncle /aunt) graduate level education was reported by Adishri and Ram.

Educational Background of Spouse:

Only 2 students (28.57 %) from SU responded. One student (50 %) reported that his /her spouse was educated up to degree level while another reported that his / her spouse had attained Post Graduate level education.

Occupation of Students' Mothers:

The occupational profile of mothers of undergraduate students highlighted a significant concentration in domestic and informal sectors. Among the 154 valid responses, a dominant 79.87% of students reported their mothers as housewives. Followed by 5.84% reporting that they were teachers, and farmers each. 2.59% were workers, 1.94% were in unspecified jobs. 0.64% each were Asha workers, Accountants, Advocate and Police.

Occupation of Students' Fathers:

Dominant presence of farmers is observed, as 28.84% of the students' fathers were engaged in farming. The second most prevalent category was job holders 26.92% followed by those engaged in business related activities (21.79%). The working-class occupations are also well represented, with 8.97% of fathers in SU being employed as workers. 6.41% of fathers worked as drivers,, 5.12 % as teachers, 1.28% as advocate and 0.64% as doctor.

Table 6.1: Average Monthly Family Income of Students

Monthly income in INR	SU: 5.1	
	N=	**% of VRs**
Less than 25,000	72	45.57
25,001-50,000	55	34.82
50,001-75,000	16	10.13
75,001-100,000	09	5.69
More than 100,000	06	3.79
Total	**158**	**100**

The data indicates a predominant number of students from economically modest households. 45.57% of the respondents belonged to families earning less than ₹ 25,000 per month. A substantial portion of the students falls within the next income bracket of ₹ 25,001 rupees to ₹ 50,000 per month (34.82%). In SU, 10.30% of the respondents reported family income in the ₹ 50,001 - ₹ 75000 range, the ₹ 75,001- ₹ 1,00,000 range comprised 5.69%. 3.79% of students of

SU reported monthly household earnings above ₹ 1,00,000. The mean number of people supported by the household was 3.57 in SU.

6.4.2 Educational and Family Background (GCID)

Educational Qualifications of Respondents' Mothers:

GCID, the highest percentage of respondents (26.27%) reported that their mother had attained education up to 9th to 10th class, followed by 11th to 12th class at 21.65%. 1st to 5th class and 6th to 8th class, with 11.46% and 10.98% being reported respectively. Incidence of mothers without any formal education4.45%. Degree and postgraduate education were reported 9.87% and 2.54% respondents respectively.

Only 2 students (0.31%) reported their mother had attained an M.Phil or Ph.D. It is also notable that 60 respondents (9.55%) reported not knowing their mother's educational background.

Educational Qualifications of Respondents' Father:

In GCID we received 97.1% valid responses of 97.1% for father's education. The largest group of responses was for the 11th to 12th class category, with 28.84% respondents, followed by 9th to 10th class at 20.51%. Degree education was recorded for 16.66% fathers, and postgraduate education for 8.97%. 1.12% students reported that their fathers had no formal schooling, while 5.60% did not know their father's educational status. And0.48% students marked the question as not applicable.

Education of Guardians:

Of the VRs 66.66 % respondents did not know and 3.88 % said the question was not applicable. 4.44 % said that their guardians did not access formal schooling. 0.55 % were educated up to 5th class and 6th to 8th class each. 5.55 % were educated from 9th to 10th class. 3.88 % up to 11th and 12th , 7.22 % were diploma holder while 1.66 each were graduates and post graduates.

Educational Background - Maternal Grandmother of Students:

The data of educational background of maternal grandmothers of the respondents with a total of 583 valid responses were recorded from GCID. In GCID, 67.92% students did not know the education level of maternal grandmother.

Among the respondents who did have some knowledge of their maternal grandmother's education, a majority indicated very low levels of formal education. With 10.80% students,

maternal grandmother had not accessed formal education. Early primary education (1st to 5th class) was reported by 7.71% students. Middle-level schooling (6th to 8th class) was indicated by 3.60% respondents. 0.34% students reported technical diplomas, 1.37% reported degree education, and 0.17% reported postgraduate and MPhil/PhD-level education.

Educational Background - Maternal Grandfather of Students:

The data of educational background of maternal grandfathers of the respondents with total of 581 valid responses were recorded from GCID. The highest number of students (64.02%) were unaware about educational background of maternal grandfather. Only 5.67% students reported that their maternal grandfather had no formal education, 1st to 5th standard schooling was reported by 5.85%, 6th to 8th class education was noted by 3.78% students. 9th to 10th class education was recorded by 6.71%, while 11th to 12th class education was reported 4.81% students. ITI/Diploma was reported by 1.20% students.

Degree level education that is BA, BSc was reported by 5.16%, and post graduate education, MSc was mentioned by 4 respondents. Finally, M.Phil and Ph.D qualifications were reported by 0.34%.

Educational Background – Paternal Grandmother of Students:

A total number of 566 students provided the responses about educational background paternal grandmother. 71.02% students did not know about the educational level of paternal grandmother. 11.30% students reported that their paternal grandmother had no access to formal schooling, and 1st to 5th was completed by 7.77% grandmother's. 6th to 8th class education was cited by 3% students. Only 3.35% students reported that their paternal grandmother had completed up to 10th class and 1.41% students reported completion of class 12th. GCID showed 0.53% for diploma and 1.06% for degree level qualifications and just 0.17% for post graduate education.

Educational Background – Paternal Grandfather of Students:

A total of 563 students from GCID responded to this question. Participation in basic education up to 5th class was reported for 5.68% of grandfathers.The middle school level 6th to 8th class was 2.66%, 9th to 10th class education was reported by 5.50% while completion of 11th to 12th

class 4.16%. Diploma or ITI level courses was 1.24%. 3.37%, respondents reported a degree level education, 1.59% noted, postgraduate qualifications and 0.88% reported M.Phil and doctoral level education for their paternal grandfather.

Spouse Education Status:

We received 2 VRs for spouse's education status with 1 (50%) reporting degree level and (50%) reporting post-graduation level education.

Respondents' Sibling Education Status:

A total of 625 students responded accounting for 97.3% of the samples. At GCID 92% reported having siblings. Siblings from the institution have attended degree level education: 226 siblings. 28.18% had completed MA, MSc or equivalent degrees. Additionally, a smaller subset had attended M.Phil or PhD level qualifications as 5.04 % had completed their post PG level qualifications. Low level of schooling was reported in smaller proportions. Diploma category, indicative of vocational or technical education accounted for 4.69%.

Educational Background of students Family Members across Three Generations (Based on Students Data)

Shivansh, Nikki, Rahul Uki, and Tom (All from GCID) reported that their paternal and maternal grandparents we are not formally educated. Harshali from GCID said that her parents and all her grandparents were graduates except her paternal grandmother and her siblings were still at school and her uncle was a graduate. Rahul from GCID said that their mothers were not educated. Tom from GCID reported that his mother and father had reached first and third standard respectively while Uki said that her mother had reached fifth class and Father had an ITI qualification. Rahul from GCID said that his mother was not literate and father had reached seventh class. Nikki from GCID said that her mother had reached 10th and Father had reached 12th class Shivansh from GCID. Uki said that one of her siblings was MCA qualified and her other sibling had dropped out after 12^{th}. In case of other relatives (typically uncle /aunt) graduate level education was reported by Harshali and Uki from GCID.

Occupation of Students' Mothers:

Among the 589 respondents valid responses, 83.53% of students reported their mothers as housewives. Teaching jobs and farmer for 3.56%, jobs 3.39%. 2.37% mothers were were

workers, 2.22% were in business,0.33% each were Asha workers, Accountant, Advocate and Police were 0.64%.

Occupation of Students' Fathers:

The data reveals that 42.13% of the fathers were farmers. Job holders were 18.70%. 21.85% of students reported their father as businessman. 10.66% of fathers were employed as workers. 2.44% work as drivers. Teachers were2.44% while advocates and doctors each accounted for less than 1%.

Table 6.2: Average Monthly Family Income of Student

Monthly income in INR	GCID: 5.2	
	N=	**% of VRs**
Less than 25,000	285	47.81
25,001-50,000	21	35.23
50,001-75,000	32	5.36
75,001-100,000	42	7.04
More than 100,000	23	3.85
Total	596	**100**

47.81% of the students belonged to families earning less than ₹25,000 per month. Proportion of students in the income bracket of ₹25,001 rupees to ₹50,000 per month was35.23%.

5.36% of the respondents reported family income in the ₹50,001 - ₹75000 range. The ₹75,001 - ₹1,00,000 range comprised 7.20%. 3.85 % of students reported monthly household earnings above ₹1,00,000. Mean number of persons supported by the household was 3.79.

6.4.3 Schooling History

6.4.3.1 State University (SU):

Location of Pre-Primary Schooling:

The data provides insights into the geographical location of early childhood education among undergraduate students. The total number of valid responses for this question was 152 at SU, representing 93.3% of its total survey population. At SU, the majority of students, 53.28%, reported having attended urban pre-primary schools. This was followed by 40.78% having attended rural schools and 5.92% attended semi-urban schools.

Location of Primary Schooling:

57.14% of students reported attending urban schools during their primary education. Rural schooling was reported by 35.71% of respondents, while 7.14% attended primary schools in semi urban locations.

Location of Middle school (6th – 8th class):

At SU, 61.58% of students reported that they attended middle school in urban areas. Rural schooling was reported by 29.80% and semi urban schooling by 8.60% of the respondent.

Location of Secondary School (9th – 10th class):

62.58% of students had attended secondary schools located in urban areas. 29.03% of students reported completing secondary education in rural areas. 8.38%, studied in semi urban schools.

Location of Senior Secondary School (11th – 12th class):

The data shows that the majority of students (66.87%) attended urban senior secondary school. 23.56% of students studied in rural senior secondary institutions. Semi urban senior secondary schooling was reported by 9.55% of respondents.

Type of School Attended for Secondary Education (9th–10th Class):

90.38% of students studied in co-educational schools and only 9.62 % of students studied in single sex educational school.

Type of School Attended for Secondary Education (11th–12th Class):

For 11 th to 12 th class 92.95 % of students studied in co educational schools and 7.94 % students went to single sex schools.

Management of school attended by Students for Classes 9th 10th:

Government managed schools were attended by 45.06% respondents . Private unaided schoolswere attended by 37.65% of students. Government aided schools were attended by 17.28%.

Management of school attended by Students for Classes 11th to12th:

Nearly half of the students at SU attended government managed schools i.e. 49.66%. Government aided schools attended by 23.84% students. Private (unaided) schools made up about quarter of the students, with 25.82%.

Syllabus Followed by Schools for Classes 9th to 10th Attended by Students:

The predominant syllabus followed is the State syllabus, chosen by 86.41% of students followed by the CBSE syllabus is the second most common choice, with 11.11%.

Syllabus Followed by Schools for Classes 11th to 12th attended by Students

At SU, 90.19% of the respondent reported studying under the state board. The CBSE syllabus, representing more centralized and nationally recognized framework, was followed by only 5.8% of respondent and the ICSE syllabus was the least represented, chosen by 3.92% of students.

Medium of Instruction in schools attended for classes 9th to 10th:

57.14% of students reported studying in their regional language. English was the second most frequently reported medium, with 31.67% of respondents. The use of Hindi as a medium of instruction was relatively limited, with only 10.55%.

Medium of Instruction in schools attended for classes 11th to 12th:

Majority of students (51.33%) reported English as the medium of instruction, followed by 40.66% who studied in a regional language, and 8% who studied in Hindi for 11th and 12th classes.

Stream Choice of students for Classes 11th And 12th:

Majority of students (68.32%) and humanities was chosen by 12.42 % of students, while 7.45% selected commerce. 11.80% students from SU chose other faculties like- 3.33% MCVC, and one student each from B. Voc, ITI and Foodtech.

Residence of Students during 11th And 12th Class:

The data collected from UG students regarding residential arrangements during their higher secondary education classes, 11th and 12th, based on valid responses (97.5%) of respondents from SU indicated that majority (84.89%) of students were day scholars 6.28% stayed in school

hostels. 2.51% stayed with relatives or friends, 3.14% lived in rented accommodation, and an equal proportion 3.14% resided in paying guest setups.

Schooling background of Students (Based on student interview):

The data reveals diverse educational experiences shaped by rural-urban differences, school types and mediums of instruction: Rohit and Vihaan both studied entirely in rural, government schools with Marathi medium instruction, indicating limited exposure to English education early on. In contrast, Adishree, Ram and Drushti, were educated in urban, private schools, showing access to better infrastructure and mixed language mediums. Adishree's switch from CBSE to the state board highlighted a strategic choice to prepare for engineering entrance exams. Adinath's unique education through Varkari Sampraday and vocational focus reflected alternative learning paths available in rural areas. Science was the most common stream in higher secondary education among urban students, while Arts and vocational courses appeared more in rural ones. None of the students stayed in hostels, showing strong family-based educational support.

Bachelor's Degree course Chosen by Students: (SU)

We received 100% VRs to the question on bachelors degree course chosen by students in SU. 43.55 % reported having chosen B.Voc followed by 19.01 % choosing BCA, 9.81% BFA, BA and B. Tech 8.58% each, 7.36 % BPA, 1.22% Foreign Language, Diploma and MCVC was chosen by 0.61% each.

6.4.3.2 Government College in-depth (GCID)

Location of Pre-Primary Schooling:

GCID recorded 613 valid responses, accounting for 95.5% of the sample, 48.12% of respondents indicated an urban location for their pre-primary education, while 44.86% reported a rural background. Semi urban schooling was reported by 7.01% of the respondents.

Location of Primary Schooling:

In GCID, 52.76% of students had completed their primary education in urban settings. Rural schooling was attended by 38.76% of students, while 8.46% received their education in semi urban schools.

Location of Middle school (6th – 8th class):

In GCID data, on location of middle schooling, 55.04% of students indicated urban schooling, while rural schools accounted for 34.36% and semi urban areas 10.58%.

Location of Secondary School (9th – 10th class):

Students who attended urban secondary schools was 57.75%. The rural school proportion was 37.32%, and semi urban schooling was attended by is 10.93% of students.

Location of Senior Secondary School (11th – 12th class):

71.52% of students reported urban senior secondary education. Rural schooling at this level was experienced by only 18.28% of GCID students, while 10.03% attended semi urban schools.

Type of School Attended for Secondary Education (9th–10th Class):

At GCID, 92.12% students attended their secondary education in co-educational schools for classes, 9th and 10th classes and 7.88% students attended single sex schooling for secondary education.

Type of School Attended for 11^{th} to 12^{th}:

97.42 % students attended coeducational schools during 11^{th} and 12^{th} class and 2.57% of GCID students reported being educated in single sex schools.

Management of school attended by Students for Classes 9^{th} 10^{th}:

The data indicates that government managed schools were attended by 40.89% of GCID respondents. Private unaided school were attended by 36.74% and government aided schools were attended by 22.36% of students.

Management of school attended by Students for Classes 11^{th} to12th:

36.89% students reported government school attendance. 38.51% of students attended government aided schools.. Private (unaided) schools were attended by 24.59% students..

Syllabus Followed by Schools for Classes 9th to 10th attended by Students:

The data of the syllabus types followed by students during their 9th and 10th class education, explains that the predominant syllabus followed is the state syllabus, chosen by 87.82% respondents, followed by CBSE (11.37%) and a smaller segment of students follows ICSE Board (0.80%).

Syllabus Followed by Schools for Classes 11th to 12th attended by Students:

95.63 % of the respondent reported studying under the state board, followed by CBSE with (3.88%) and the ICSE syllabus was the least represented, chosen by 0.48 % of students from GCID.

Medium of Instruction in schools attended for classes 9th to 10th:

At GCID, 61.08 % of students reported studying in their regional language, English was the second most frequently reported medium, with 36.04% of respondents, the use of Hindi as a medium of instruction was relatively limited, with only 2.87%.

Medium of Instruction in Schools Attended for Classes 11th to12th:

96.4% students responded to the question.The proportion of students studying in regional languages was 49.11%. 47.98% reported English as their medium of instruction. 2.9% of students reported Hindi as the language of instruction.

Stream Choice of students for Classes 11th And 12th:

The data of stream choice was collected from GCID students, 629 students responded to this question. Commerce emerged as the most popular stream, selected by 51.82% of the students. Science was chosen by 34.02% of students, while arts / humanities was elected by 13.51%. 0.63%students selected other courses which includedMCVC and B. Voc studies.

Residence of Students during 11th And 12th Class:

The residential arrangements of students during their higher secondary education classes, 11th and 12th, based on responses from the institution is as follows: 76.67% of students were days scholars living at home, 12.61% stayed in school hostels. 5.91% stayed with relatives or friends, 3.19% lived in rented accommodation, and 0.63% were in PG arrangements.

Schooling background of Students (Based on student interview) :

The data of interviewed students reflects a varied educational background among students, shaped by location, school type and stream selection. Most students completed their schooling under the state board syllabus, with Marathi or semi-English medium, showing a strong regional influence in education. Shivansh, Rahul and Tom studied primarily in rural, Government schools.

Nikki and Harshali had access to private schools in a semi urban area.. Harshali stood out with her CBSE background and consistent English medium education. Commerce and Arts were the most common streams after class 10th. Only Harshali pursued science. Most students stayed at home during schooling, though Shivansh and Tom lived in rented rooms for higher studies. Uki shifted from semi urban schooling to a college hostel in an urban area.

6.4.4 Higher education history

6.4.4.1 State University

Bachelor's degree course chosen by Students:

The course wise distribution of undergraduate students was as follows. 43.55% of students were enrolled in courses. This is followed by BCA (19.01%), Bachelor of fine arts (9.81%) and bachelor of performing arts (7.36%). BJ and B.Tech each accounted for 8.58% of students. BPA was chose by 7.36% followed by Foreign Language 1.22% and MCVCand Diploma was chosen by 0.61% students each.

Bachelor's degree stream chosen by Students:

The most represented area was engineering and technical sciences, making up 39.87% of valid responses. Followed by science 18.40%, social sciences (14.72%), Management (12.88%), and humanities/Arts (12.26%) and commerce 1.84%.

The Location of Higher Education Institutions chosen by Students for Bachelor's Degree Studies:

The distribution of students by the geographical location of the survey institutions is as follows; For SU, (89.44%) out of 161 respondents reported studying in an urban location. Rural institutions account for a small minority in both samples – 8.69% for SU. Semi urban attendance is marginal, with only 1.08% of students studying in such areas.

Table 6.3: Funding Sources Availed by Students for Bachelor's Degree Studies

Option	SU: 5.1	
	Answer = Yes (number)	**Answer = Yes (% of answer=Yes)**
1.Fees paid entirely by family	90	57.57
2. Fees paid partly by family	13	7.74
3. Fees paid with the help of a scholarship	47	27.98
4. Fees paid by taking a loan	02	1.19
5. Fees paid by taking up a job	12	7.14
6. Fees paid by a free ship (tuition waiver)	02	1.19
7. Fees paid through funding from the PTA (Parent-Teacher Association)	01	1.19
8. Fees paid through the allocation of funds from the Faculty Pool (e.g., faculty/administrative staff)	01	1.19
Total of Answer=Yes	**168**	**100**

The responses to the multiple option question presents detailed information on how students financed their undergraduate education The most frequently cited source of fee funding was full payment by the families. 53.57% of respondents reported that their entire fee was paid by their family. 7.74% of students reported partial financial contribution from their families. 27.98% of respondents reported receiving scholarships. 1.19% mentioned using loans. In terms of self-support, 7.14% of students funded their fees by taking up jobs, . Other forms of support such as tuition fee, waivers, parent – teacher, association funds, pool allocations were reported by 1.19% of students in each category in SU.

Reservations availed by Students during degree Level:

This question aimed to understand the extent to which undergraduate students utilized reservation provisions during their admission process. 100% of the survey students responded to the question. 39.26% of respondents affirmed that they availed of reservation benefits during admission. The majority (60.73%) , stated that they did not utilize any reservation quota.

Specification of Reservations availed by Students during degree Level:

The data provides insight into the specific reservation categories availed by undergraduate students during their admission process based on 100% valid responses. 0.61% of respondents

reported general as their admission category. The SC category had a significant presence, accounting for 23.31%, followed by OBC (6.74%), EWS (4.29%), and VJNT (2.45%). Categories such as ST and SBC, where each availed by 1.22% of respondent. It is noteworthy that 60.12% of respondents said that the question on reservation categories was not applicable for them.

Table 6.4: Primary Occupation Status of Students

Options	**SU: 5.1**	
	N=162	**% of VRs**
1. Full time student not working	116	71.60
2. Employed part-time	30	18.51
3.Helping in family business	08	4.93
4.Helping on farm work	04	2.46
5. Helping in domestic household work	02	1.29
6.Conducting tuition classes	02	1.29

This table presents the current primary occupational engagement of undergraduate students from SU based on their responses to the survey question regarding their main activity at the time of data collection. At SU, 71.60% responents identified themselves as full time students without any job responsibilities. About 18.51% of students werere working part time, students helping in family businesses (4.93%) and on farms (2.46 %). We observed 1.29% reporting involvement in domestic household work and an equal proportion conducting tuition classes.

Enrolment for Undergraduate Study (Based on Students Interview):

Based on the Students interviews from SU, we found that family encouragement plays a key role for most of the students. Rohit, Ram and Drishti, stated that they were guided by family members, especially fathers, uncles and siblings, reflecting strong family involvement in educational decisions. Rohit and Adinath chose industrial automation for its skill-oriented nature and job potential while Adishree selected food technology due to her interest and awareness of food safety issues. Ram and Rohit preferred this university for its affordability. Drishti was inspired by her sister's project, and Vihaan discovered industrial automation through self-research and online advertisement. Teachers and local mentors also shaped decisions as seen in the case of Rohit and Adinath.

Table 6.5: Sources of Encouragement for Pursuing Higher Education

Option	SU: 5.1	
	Answer = Yes (number)	Answer = Yes (% of answer=Yes)
1. Mother	104	63.80
2. Father	109	66.87
3. Sister/s (sibling)	45	27.60
4. Brother/s (sibling)	53	32.51
5.Maternalgrandmother	05	3.06
6.Maternal grandfather	08	4.90
7.Paternalgrandmother	04	2.45
8.Paternal grandfather	05	3.06
9. Maternal aunt/s	01	0.61
10. Maternal uncle/s	02	1.22
11. Paternal aunt/s	01	0.61
12. Paternal uncle/s	01	061
13. Cousin/s	17	10.42
14. School teacher/s	19	11.65
15.College/university teacher/s	09	5.52
16.Friend/s	49	30.06
17.Senior student/s	11	6.74
18.Neighbour/s	05	3.06
19.Coaching/tutor	05	3.06
20.Yourself	78	47.85
Total of Answer=Yes	**531**	**100**

The responses of this multiple response item revealed the significant individuals who motivated undergraduate students to pursue higher education. We received 100% response rates to this question. Father (66.87%) and mother (63.80%) were again the leading sources of encouragement. Self-motivation was significantly higher at 47.85%. Siblings – brother. (32.51%) and sisters (27.60%) also played a strong role in encouraging students. School teachers were reported as motivators by 11.65% and college teachers by only 5.52% of SU respondents. Cousins (10.42%) and friends (30.06%) played a moderately visible role. The extended family and community actors had comparatively lesser roles, often below 5%. One student is motivated by his wife and one is by brother-in-law for their graduation studies.

Table 6.6: Involvement in Choosing Undergraduate College/University of Students

Option		
	Answer = Yes (number)	**Answer = Yes (% of answer=Yes)**
1. Mother	67	41.10
2. Father	82	50.30
3. Sister/s (sibling)	31	19.01
4. Brother/s (sibling)	37	22.69
5.Maternalgrandmother	00	00
6.Maternal grandfather	01	0.61
7.Paternal grandmother	01	061
8.Paternal grandfather	00	00
9. Maternal aunt/s	00	00
10. Maternal uncle/s	03	1.84
11. Paternal aunt/s	00	00
12. Paternal uncle/s	03	1.84
13. Cousin/s	12	7.36
14. School teacher/s	13	7.97
15.College/university teacher/s	12	7.36
16.Friend/s	38	23.31
17.Senior student/s	11	6.74
18.Neighbour/s	04	2.45
19.Coaching/tutor	03	1.84
20.Yourself	79	48.46
Total of Answer=Yes	**397**	**100**

HEI:	***21.Number of 'other please specify' responses***	***Please list the specified 'other' responses***
SU: 5.1	01- (0.61)	Brother in law-1(0.61)

The table captures the individuals who were involved in the process of selecting the university for the surveyed students. Since this was a 'Tick all that apply' item, the total number of mentions exceeds the number of respondents. Father (50.30%) held a prominent role, followed by self-motivation (48.46%) and mother (41.10%). This reinforces the finding that while students rely on family guidance, they also actively participate in making higher education choices. Friends were mentioned by 23.31% of respondents. Siblings, particularly brother (22.69%), played a larger role compared to sisters (19.01%). Extended family members had a much lower representation at SU, of an under 2% indicating limited environment. Teachers and cousins had modest but consistent mention rates, usually between 7 to 13%.

Table 6.7: Involvement in Choosing Undergraduate course/subject of Students

Option	SU: 5.1	
	Answer = Yes (number)	**Answer = Yes (% of answer=Yes)**
1. Mother	35	11.25
2. Father	62	19.93
3. Sister/s (sibling)	21	6.75
4. Brother/s (sibling)	29	9.32
5.Maternal grandmother	00	00
6. Maternal grandfather	01	0.32
7.Paternal grandmother	00	00
8.Paternal grandfather	00	00
9. Maternal aunt/s	00	00
10. Maternal uncle/s	02	0.64
11. Paternal aunt/s	00	00
12. Paternal uncle/s	02	0.64
13. Cousin/s	07	2.25
14. School teacher/s	10	3.21
15.College/university teacher/s	15	4.82
16.Friend/s	34	10.83
17.Senior student/s	07	2.25
18.Neighbour/s	02	0.64
19.Coaching/tutor	01	0.32
20.Yourself	84	27.00
Total of Answer=Yes	**311**	**100**

The table presents analysis of the individuals who influenced students, choices of undergraduate course or subject. SU reported full response rates with 163 valid responses. 27%stated that they themselves were responsible for choosing their course, while the father's involvement was reported by 19.93% and the mother's by 11.25%. Brothers (9.32%) were more influential than sisters (6.75%), and friends 10.93%. The influence of college or university teachers was4.82%. The rest of the extended family and other influences such as senior students, neighbors and coaching tutors were present but remainedin the range between 0.32% to 2.25%.

6.4.4.2 Government College in-depth (GCID)

Bachelor's degree course chosen by Students:

The course wise distribution of undergraduate students recorded a response rate of 92.5%. The majority of students (52.02%) were enrolled in the Bachelor of Commerce programme. This is followed by Bachelor of Arts 22.05% and Bachelor of Science at 15.98%. A smaller proportion

of students were enrolled in technical or professional courses such as BCA (4.87%), BCS (3.36%), and BBA (0.67%). Vocational and applied programs like B.Voc, B.Tech and Biotechnology are minimally represented, each accounting for less than 1%.

Bachelor's degree stream chosen by Students:

For the distribution of undergraduate students by the broad subject area of their current course of study at GCID we received 98.59% valid responses. The dominant area was commerce, which accounted for over half of all valid responses (52.76%). This was followed by humanities / Arts (20.53%) and science (18.16%). Management and engineering/technical sciences were represented by relatively smaller shares, at 1.9% and 4.5%, respectively. Social science and medical fields were marginal, accounting for only 0.15 and 0.31% of responses respectively.

The Location of Higher Education Institutions chosen by Students for Bachelor's Degree Studies :

97.4% of valid responses about the distribution of students by the geographical location of the GCID explains that majority of students attended urban located higher education institutions. 557 (89.40%) out of 623 respondents also indicated urban attendance. Rural institutions account for a small minority in the samples (8.34%). Semi urban attendance is marginal, with only 2.24% of GCID students studying in such areas.

Table 6.8: Funding Sources Availed by Students for Bachelor's Degree Studies

Option	GCID: 5.2	
	Answer = Yes (number)	Answer = Yes (% of answer=Yes)
1.Fees paid entirely by family	474	70.00
2. Fees paid partly by family	47	6.94
3. Fees paid with the help of a scholarship	122	18.02
4. Fees paid by taking a loan	07	1.03
5. Fees paid by taking up a job	17	2.51
6. Fees paid by a free ship (tuition waiver)	02	0.29
7. Fees paid through funding from the PTA (Parent-Teacher Association)	04	0.59
8. Fees paid through the allocation of funds from the Faculty Pool (e.g., faculty/administrative staff)	04	0.59
Total of Answer=Yes	**677**	**100**

The responses to the multiple option question presents a detailed view of how students from GCID financed their undergraduate education. The most frequently cited source of fee funding was full payment by the family. 70% of respondents reported that their entire fee was paid by their family. A relatively smaller segment of students (6.94%) reported partial financial contribution from their families. Scholarship support played an important role for a notable section of students, 18.02% of respondents reported receiving scholarships. 1.03%) reported taking loans to pay their studies. In terms of self-support, a small proportion of students paid their fees by taking up jobs (2.51%) in GCID, other marginal forms of support such as tuition fee, waivers was reported by 0.29%. Parent – teacher, association funds, pool allocations each were reported 0.59% of students.

Reservations availed by Students during degree Level:

From GCID we received 95.6% valid responses about availing the reservation, 36.49% of students reported admission through a reservation quota, while 63.51% said they did not access any reservation provision.

Specification of Reservations availed by Students during degree Level:

We received 596 valid responses to the specific question on reservation categories availed. 64.76%, reported that the question was not applicable to them, indicating that they either did not avail any reservation or were not eligible. 13.92% of respondents identified with the OBC category followed by SC (12.41%), VJNT (3.85%). Smaller proportions were reported under ST (2.01%), General (1.84%), EWS (0.67%), ESBC (0.33%), and SBC (0.16%).

Table 6.9: Primary Occupation Status of Students

Options	GCID: 5.2	
	N=630	% of VRs
1. Full time student not working	504	80.00
2. Employed part-time	74	11.76
3.Helping in family business	21	3.33
4.Helping on farm work	12	1.90
5. Helping in domestic household work	8	1.26
6.Conducting tuition classes	11	1.75

This Table 6.9 presents primary occupational engagement of undergraduate students based on their responses to the survey question regarding their main activity at the time of data collection. All surveyed students responded to this question.

Majority of students (80%) identified themselves as full-time students who were not engaged in any form of employment. 11.74%students reported part-time employment, while 3.33% were helping in family businesses, and another 1.90% were involved in farm work. 1.26% reported helping in domestic household work, and 1.74% mentioned conducting tuition classes.

Enrollment for Undergraduate Study (Based on Students Interview):

The data of enrolment for undergraduate study based on student interviews explains the factors affecting the overall student choices. Shivansh chose commerce influenced by family tradition, Nikki selected Arts after guidance from teachers and online research about opportunities. Harshali's decision was primarily made by her father and Rahul's choice was shaped by his brother's success, and practical considerations like GCID facilities and location. Uki received full family support and guidance from teachers, and Tom made his own decision to pursue higher education.

Table 6.10: Sources of Encouragement for Pursuing Higher Education

Option	GCID: 5.2	
	Answer = Yes (number)	**Answer = Yes (% of answer=Yes)**
1. Mother	480	15.92
2. Father	494	16.38
3. Sister/s (sibling)	211	6.99
4. Brother/s (sibling)	259	8.59
5.Maternalgrandmother	82	2.71
6.Maternal grandfather	82	2.71
7.Paternalgrandmother	70	2.32
8.Paternal grandfather	72	2.38
9. Maternal aunt/s	55	1.82
10. Maternal uncle/s	67	2.22
11. Paternal aunt/s	55	1.82
12. Paternal uncle/s	61	2.02
13. Cousin/s	82	2.71
14. School teacher/s	108	3.58
15.College/university teacher/s	95	3.15
16.Friend/s	166	5.50
17.Senior student/s	73	2.42
18.Neighbour/s	42	1.39
19.Coaching/tutor	69	2.28
20.Yourself	357	11.84
Total of Answer=Yes	**3015**	**100**

The responses of this multiple response item revealed the significant individuals who motivated undergraduate students to pursue higher education. The father (16.38%) and the mother (15.92%) emerged as the most common source of encouragement. This indicates the central role of parents in influencing educational aspirations. Siblings, particularly brothers (8.59%) and sisters (6.99%), also played an important motivational role. 11.84% respondents reported that they were self-motivated. Teachers from schools (3.58%) and colleges (3.15%), friends (5.5%) and senior students (2.42%), also appeared as influencers. Extended family members like maternal and paternal grandparents, uncles and aunts had a more modest presence, generally ranging from 1.82 to 2.71%. Coaching or tutor (2.28%) and neighbors (1.39%) had relatively lower influence.

Table 6.11: Involvement in Choosing Undergraduate College/University of Students

Option	GCID: 5.2	
	Answer = Yes (number)	**Answer = Yes (% of answer=Yes)**
1. Mother	296	15.69
2. Father	380	20.14
3. Sister/s (sibling)	130	6.89
4. Brother/s (sibling)	186	9.86
5.Maternalgrandmother	22	1.16
6.Maternal grandfather	26	0.90
7.Paternal grandmother	26	0.90
8.Paternal grandfather	22	1.90
9. Maternal aunt/s	17	0.90
10. Maternal uncle/s	24	1.27
11. Paternal aunt/s	20	1.06
12. Paternal uncle/s	31	1.64
13. Cousin/s	55	2.91
14. School teacher/s	44	4.45
15.College/university teacher/s	54	8.61
16.Friend/s	131	6.94
17.Senior student/s	32	1.69
18.Neighbour/s	21	1.11
19.Coaching/tutor	30	1.59
20.Yourself	339	17.97
Total of Answer=Yes	**1886**	**100**

Table 6.11 reflects the individuals who were involved in the process of selecting the college for the surveyed students. GCID recorded 100% valid responses. Father emerged as the most

influential figure, mentioned by 20.14% of respondents, followed by the student themselves (17.97%). Mother also played a substantial role, with 15.69% of respondents acknowledging her involvement. Siblings, both brothers (9.88%) and sisters (6.89%) were involved in choosing college. Extended family members, such as maternal and paternal grandparents, uncles and aunts had a limited presence, ranging from 0.90-1.6%. Friends (6.94%), college/university teachers (2.86%), and school teachers (4.45%) also contributed to the decision-making process. Coaching (1.59%) and senior students (1.69%) had a minor but visible influence.

Table 6.12: Involvement in Choosing Undergraduate course/subject of Students

Option	GCID: 5.2	
	Answer = Yes (number)	**Answer = Yes (% of answer=Yes)**
1. Mother	226	13.76
2. Father	300	18.27
3. Sister/s (sibling)	114	6.94
4. Brother/s (sibling)	154	9.37
5.Maternal grandmother	18	1.09
6. Maternal grandfather	18	1.10
7.Paternal grandmother	14	0.85
8.Paternal grandfather	15	0.91
9. Maternal aunt/s	15	0.91
10. Maternal uncle/s	22	1.34
11. Paternal aunt/s	19	1.16
12. Paternal uncle/s	26	1.58
13. Cousin/s	44	2.68
14. School teacher/s	34	2.07
15.College/university teacher/s	41	2.50
16.Friend/s	103	6.27
17.Senior student/s	33	2.01
18.Neighbour/s	25	1.52
19.Coaching/tutor	25	1.52
20.Yourself	396	24.11
Total of Answer=Yes	**1642**	**100**

Table 6.12 presents analysis of the individuals who influenced students' choices of undergraduate course or subject. GCID reported 100% VRS.

The student themself emerged as the most significant decision maker, with 23.11% reporting self-drive in course selection. The father's role was also quite prominent, with 18.27% of respondents acknowledging his involvement. The mother's influence was noted by 13.76% of the respondents, indicating that paternal imports continue to be substantial. Among siblings,

brothers (9.37%) had a greater impact than sister (6.94%). Extended family members, such as grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins played a minor role,ranging between 0.91% and 1.58%. Friends (6.27%), College/ University teachers (2.50%), and schoolteachers (2.07%) were also reported. Senior students influenced 2.01%. Neighbours and coaching tutors influenced 1.52% students.

6.4.5. Involvement of Faculty Members in HE Access

6.4.5.1 State University (SU)

Table 6.13: Nature of Connection with Faculty Members Involved in Undergraduate College Access

Option	**SU: 5.1**	
	Answer = Yes (number)	**Answer = Yes (% of answer=Yes)**
1. Neighbour	04	11.43
2. Family Member	13	37.14
3.Family connection	10	28.57
4. In a faith-based setting e.g., mosque, temple	00	00
5.In a community group	00	00
6. Through NGO work	00	00
7. Through local politics	00	00
8. They were also working as a tuition teacher/in a coaching institute	02	5.716.06
9. Met them when I visited their college/university	04	11.43
10. Met them when they visited my school	01	2.86
11. Met them when they visited another community setting	00	00
12. Met them during the admissions process at their college/university	01	2.86
Total of Answer=Yes	**35**	**100**

Table 6.13 shows how students who acknowledged the involvement of faculty members in their undergraduate college choices came to know those faculty members. A total of 35 yes answers were recorded. 37.14% of the yes answers indicated that students knew the faculty member through a family relationship. Specifically, 13 responses identified the faculty member as a family member, while 10 responses (28.57%) cited a family connection. 11.43% of students indicated familiarity through neighborhood coaching classes (5.71%) and visiting the faculty

members during the admissions process or during school visits was 2.86% each. No response was recorded for contact through faith – based settings, community groups, NGOs, or politics.

Timing of Faculty Involvement in Undergraduate College Access:

We tried to outline the timing of faculty members' involvement in the college decision-making process, based on responses from students who acknowledged such environment at SU.

In SU, a total of 32 responses regarding timing of faculty involvements in UG college access were recorded. Among these, 18 (56.25%) students stated that faculty members were involved during the admission process, while 14 (43.75%) students reported faculty involvement during the process of making choices about higher education.

Table 6.14: Nature of Involvement in Higher Education Process

Option	SU: 5.1	
	Answer = Yes (number)	**Answer = Yes (% of answer=Yes)**
1. Advice on whether to go for higher education or other options	10	18.87
2.Choice of which colleges/universities to apply to	07	13.21
3. Choice of course/subject	17	32.08
4. About the admissions process	12	22.64
5. About covering tuition expenses/funding options	01	1.89
6. About HE entry exams preparation	01	1.89
7. Checking application form/other documents	03	5.66
8. Accompanying for a visit to another college/university	02	3.77
Total of Answer=Yes	**53**	**100**

The specific ways in which college or university teachers, that is, faculty members, supported students in their journey towards access in higher education is shown in Table 6.14. The most common form of involvement was related to advice about course or subject choice, selected by 32.08% respondents.. The next most reported form of help was regarding the admissions process itself, with 22.64% students indicating that teachers offered guidance on the necessary steps involved in joining college or university. Following that, 18.87% students noted that they had received general advice on whether to perceive higher education or consider other career

alternatives. Other kind of support reported by students included checking admission forms and documents 5.66%, accompanying students to visit other institutions 3.77%, and help with entrance exam preparation , tuition fee concerns , and funding information 1.89% each. There was responses on faculty advice on reservation policies or guidance on choosing between multiple offers of admission.

Table 6.15: Information about before Enrollment in College / University for UG studies

Option	**SU: 5.1**	
	Answer = Yes (number)	**Answer = Yes (% of answer=Yes)**
1. Visited the college/university, i.e., physically stepped to the campus you pursued	28	13.66
2.Visited other college/universities to compare options	15	7.32
3. Discussed options for higher education study with other college/university staff (e.g., administrative staff)	11	5.37
4. Explored various online platforms, such as College Dunia, as well as your current college/university website	17	8.29
5. Referenced the college/university brochures for detailed information	22	10.73
6. Watched informative videos on YouTube related to college/university	23	11.22
7. Used social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram) to gather information and insights about college/university	11	5.37
8. Read about college/university in newspapers	04	1.95
9. Listened to radio FM providing information about higher education institutions	03	1.46
10. Visited Common service centres (e.g., Akshaya Kendra/e-Kendras, Saral, etc.,) to inquire about higher education options	05	2.44
11. Consulted with representatives or designated contact persons from various non-governmental organisations (NGOs) for advice related to higher education study	17	8.29
12.Visited College Fairs	06	2.93
13. Obtained information from the local administration, such as Gram Panchayat, Nagar Panchayat, Village Administrative Officers, Municipal Councils/Corporations and District Administration	22	10.73
14. None of the above	21	10.24
Total of Answer=Yes	**205**	**100**

The extent to which students engaged in exploratory or preparatory activities before enrolling in their undergraduate programmes is presented in table 6.15 we received 205 yes responses from SU, reflecting variations in both student outreach and institutional infrastructural support systems. The most common preparatory activity was visiting the physical campus of the college or university they ultimately joined, with 13.66% reporting such a visit. Students showed relatively moderate engagement across most activities. For example, watching videos on YouTube was cited by 11.22%, referencing brochures by 10.73%, and exploring online platforms by 8.29%. and same percentage was reported on consulting with NGOs. 5.37% used platforms like Facebook or Instagram and an equal proportion of students reported having discussed with administrative staff. 7.32% visited other University /college campuses to compare options. University website was explored by 8.29% students. Least common sources were newspapers (1.95%) and FM radio (1.46%) Common service centers and college fairs were reported by 2.44% and 2.93% respectively.

6.4.5.2 Government College in-depth (GCID)

Table 6.16: Nature of Connection with Faculty Members Involved in Undergraduate College Access

Option	GCID: 5.2	
	Answer = Yes (number)	**Answer = Yes (% of answer=Yes)**
1. Neighbour	23	11.79
2. Family Member	35	17.95
3.Family connection	30	15.38
4. In a faith-based setting e.g., mosque, temple	08	4.10
5.In a community group	08	4.10
6. Through NGO work	07	3.59
7. Through local politics	04	2.05
8. They were also working as a tuition teacher/in a coaching institute	12	6.15
9. Met them when I visited their college/university	29	14.87
10. Met them when they visited my school	13	6.67
11. Met them when they visited another community setting	07	3.59
12. Met them during the admissions process at their college/university	19	9.74
Total of Answer=Yes	**195**	**100**

Table 6.16 shows how students who acknowledged the involvement of faculty members in their undergraduate college choices came to know those faculty members. The response rate to the question of involvement of faculty members in undergraduate college choices is high, 98.13% of the survey total sample. The proportion of students who acknowledged faculty involvement was 16.66% while 83.34% of respondents reported no interaction with faculty in this regard. The most common form of contact was through family, with (17.95%) responses. Identifying the faculty member as a family member and (15.38%) citing a broader family connection. Neighborhood interaction (11.79%), college visits (14.87%), and meetings during the admission process (9.74%) also formed substantial pathways of contact. Some students reported contact through faith – based organizations, community groups (4.1% each), NGOs (3.59%), and local political settings (2.05%). 6.15 % students said that they got connected to faculty members through coaching institute, while 6.67% reported that they got connected through school visits.

Timing of Faculty Involvement in Undergraduate College Access:

65.03% of GCID respondets reported Faculty members' involvement in the college decision making process mainly during admissions students, while 34.97% indicated that faculty members had already been involved during the process of making choices about higher education (that is before admission).

Table 6.17: Nature of Involvement in Higher Education Process

Option	GCID: 5.2	
	Answer = Yes (number)	**Answer = Yes (% of answer=Yes)**
1. Advice on whether to go for higher education or other options	51	18.96
2.Choice of which colleges/universities to apply to	32	11.90
3. Choice of course/subject	64	23.79
4. About the admissions process	38	14.13
5. About covering tuition expenses/funding options	08	2.97
6. About HE entry exams preparation	12	4.46
7. About special admissions programs/processes e.g., reservations	14	5.20
8. Checking application form/other documents	12	4.46
9. Choice of which colleges/universities to enrol in if selected in more than one	19	7.06
10. Accompanying for a visit to the college/university where they worked	10	3.72
11. Accompanying for a visit to another college/university	09	3.35
Total of Answer=Yes	**269**	**100**

Table 6.17 shows the ways in which faculty members supported students in their journey towards access to higher education. The most common form of assistance here was subject/course choice advice, mentioned by 23.79% respondents. This was followed by advice on whether to go for higher education or other options (18.96%) admission process (14.13%) choice of college / university (11.9%) 7.06% students received help choosing between multiple admissions offers. 5.2% students received advice on reservation policies and special admission processes, support with entrance exam preparation and checking application form documents (4.46%) each. Accompanying for a visit to college was reported by 3.72%, to visit other colleges was reported by 3.35% of the respondents. Yes response to help in funding options was the lowest (2.97%)

Table 6.18: Information about before Enrollment in College / University for UG studies

Option	GCID: 5.2	
	Answer = Yes (number)	**Answer = Yes (% of answer=Yes)**
1. Visited the college/university, i.e., physically stepped to the campus you pursued	391	34.79
2.Visited other college/universities to compare options	154	13.70
3. Discussed options for higher education study with other college/university staff (e.g., administrative staff)	79	7.03
4. Explored various online platforms, such as College Dunia, as well as your current college/university website	53	4.72
5. Referenced the college/university brochures for detailed information	61	5.43
6. Watched informative videos on YouTube related to college/university	84	7.47
7. Used social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram) to gather information and insights about college/university	41	3.65
8. Read about college/university in newspapers	62	5.52
9. Listened to radio FM providing information about higher education institutions	17	1.51
10. Visited Common service centres (e.g., Akshaya Kendra/e-Kendras, Saral, etc.,) to inquire about higher education options	24	2.14
11. Consulted with representatives or designated contact persons from various non-governmental organisations (NGOs) for advice related to higher education study	16	1.42
12.Visited College Fairs	61	5.43
13. Obtained information from the local administration, such as Gram Panchayat, Nagar Panchayat, Village Administrative Officers, Municipal Councils/Corporations and District Administration	18	1.60
14. None of the above	63	5.60
Total of Answer=Yes	**1124**	**100**

Table 6.18 shows the extent to which students from GCID were engaged in exploratory or preparatory activities before enrolling in their undergraduate programmes. There were 1124 affirmative responses from GCID. 34.79% students had visited their college campus before enrolment. Besides physical campus visits, other prominent activities included visiting other

colleges for comparison (13.70%), watching YouTube videos (7.47%), and referencing College brochures and visit to college fairs (5.43% each). Discussion with administrative staff received 7.03% of total yes answers. Lowest yes answers were recorded for NGOs advice (1.42%) FM radio (1.51%) common service center (2.14%), local administrative (1.6%) 4.72% reported use of college website ad 5.52% used newspapers for the information.

6.4.6 HE Outreach: Current and Future Opportunities

6.4.6.1 State University

Table 6.19: Areas Where Further Guidance Is Needed to Attract and Support Rural Students in Higher Education

Option	SU: 5.1	
	Answer = Yes (number)	**Answer = Yes (% of answer=Yes)**
1. Advice on whether to go for higher education or other options	75	7.24
2. Choice of which colleges/universities to apply to	63	6.08
3. Choice of course/subject	89	8.59
4. About the admission process	68	6.56
5.About covering tuition expenses/funding options	55	5.31
6. About HE entry exams preparation	67	6.47
7.About special admissions programs/processes e.g., reservations	44	4.25
8.Checking application form/other documents	39	3.76
9.Choice of which colleges/universities to enrol in if selected in more than one	44	4.25
10.Organising a visit to the college/university	65	6.27
11.Advice on accommodation	60	5.79
12.Advice about college/university facilities, activities, provisions	67	6.47
13.About campus safety and security	103	9.94
14.About employability prospects	59	5.69
15.About whether the college/university has good academic functioning	70	6.76
16.About transport facilities	68	6.56
Total of Answer=Yes	**1036**	**100**

Table 6.19 gives students perspectives on which aspects of higher education require greater guidance from college and universities, especially in relation to attracting and supporting students from rural backgrounds. From the SU sample, the highest priority area for additional

support was guidance on campus safety and security with 9.94% of respondents expressing this need. Guidance related to course or subject selection was marked as a priority was chosen by 8.59% students. Similarly, support in the area of the admission process was also in demand, with 6.56% seeking such assistance. Interestingly, 7.24% respondents wanted advice on whether to pursue higher education. Concerns about tuition and funding were cited by 5.31%. Preparation for entrance exams attracted the attention of 6.47% students. 6.56% students sought guidance about transport facilities, while 5.79% wanted advice on accommodation. Organizing campus visits was desired by 6.27% students. Other relevant areas included help with understanding special admission programmes such as reservations (4.25%) and document verification/ application form support (3.76%).

Student Perceptions on the Comfort Level of Rural Students in Choosing Current HEI (SU):
In the case of SU, 134 out of 163, respondents affirmed that rural students would feel comfortable choosing their institution. Conversely, the proportion of students who disagreed – that is, those who believed rural students would not be comfortable was relatively small i.e. 17.80% respondents expressed this view.

Student Perceptions on Institutional Efforts to Attract Rural Students
The collected data explores students' awareness of whether their respective higher education institution is actively engaged in conducting any outreach activities aimed at attracting students from rural areas. The responses are evenly split: 50% students affirmed that their university was conducting activities targeted at attracting rural students, while an equal number – also 50% – students reported no such awareness.

6.4.6.2 Government College in-depth (GCID)

Table 6.20: Areas Where Further Guidance Is Needed to Attract and Support Rural Students in Higher Education

Option	GCID: 5.2	
	Answer = Yes (number)	**Answer = Yes (% of answer=Yes)**
1. Advice on whether to go for higher education or other options	407	9.43
2. Choice of which colleges/universities to apply to	332	7.69
3. Choice of course/subject	375	8.68
4. About the admission process	352	8.15
5.About covering tuition expenses/funding options	250	5.79
6. About HE entry exams preparation	309	7.16
7.About special admissions programs/processes e.g., reservations	199	4.61
8.Checking application form/other documents	217	5.03
9.Choice of which colleges/universities to enrol in if selected in more than one	178	4.12
10.Organising a visit to the college/university	235	5.44
11.Advice on accommodation	189	4.38
12.Advice about college/university facilities, activities, provisions	244	5.65
13.About campus safety and security	334	7.74
14.About employability prospects	236	5.47
15.About whether the college/university has good academic functioning	235	5.44
16.About transport facilities	226	5.23
Total of Answer=Yes	**4318**	**100**

Table 6.20 shows students perspectives on which aspects of higher education require greater guidance from college and universities, especially in relation to attracting and supporting students from rural backgrounds. From the sample, the highest priority area for additional support was guidance on campus safety and security, with 7.74% of respondents expressing this need. Guidance related to course or subject selection was marked as a priority by 8.68% students. Similarly, support in the area of the admission process was also in demand, with 8.15% seeking such assistance. Concerns about tuition and funding were cited by 5.79%. Similarly, preparation for entrance exams attracted the attention of 7.16% students. 5.23% students sought guidance about transport facilities, 4.38% wanted advice on accommodation.

About 37.76% of respondents expressed interest in receiving more information on employability prospects. 5.44% of students students desired information on whether the college has good academic functioning. Organizing campus visits was desired by 5.44% students. Other relevant areas included help with understanding special admission programmes such as reservations (4.61%) and document verification/application form support (5.03%).

Student Perceptions on the Comfort Level of Rural Students in Choosing Current HEI (GCID):

In the case of GCID, with 530 of the 617 respondents agreed that rural students would be comfortable enrolling in their higher education institution (GCID).The proportion of students who disagreed, that is, those who believed rural students would not be comfortable, was 14.10%.

Student Perceptions on Institutional Efforts to Attract Rural Students:

The collected data explores students' awareness of whether their respective higher education institutions are actively engaged in conducting any outreach activities aimed at attracting students from rural areas. (51.06%) students from GCID agreed that their institution is conducting rural outreach activities, while 48.94% students reported the opposite.

6.5 Summary and Conclusion

This chapter mapped who today's undergraduate students are across SU and GCID and how their family background, place of residence and financial situation shape their higher- education journey. We observed largely local, first-generation learning cohort with modest household incomes, commuting from nearby areas to urban campuses, and financing study mainly through family support and with scholarships as an important secondary source.

Demographically, students in SU were male majority, while students in GCID were female majority. AT SU, men constituted 78.5% of respondents; with no students identified as transgender in the sample. At GCID 60.13% students were female, 39.72% were male, with a minimal transgender representation, indicating some gender diversity in the GCID cohort. Caste

and religion distributions at SU was skewed toward General, SC, and OBC groups, with Hindu students in majority and smaller share of Buddhist and Muslim students, underscoring both social plurality and regional anchoring. Language data reinforces this regional imprint: Marathi is the mother tongue for 78.5% of the students at SU and 87.04% at GCID, with limited linguistic minorities in both SU and GCID Place and mobility pointed to near campus lives. Most students attended urban located institutions in both SU and GCID and average one-way travel times from place of residence to SU/ GCID was around half an hour. These facts imply that access is mediated less by long distance migration and more by daily commute, emphasizing the importance of safe, affordable last mile transport and time compatible timetables.

Subject choices diverge by institution. SU tilts strongly towards engineering and technical sciences (40%) with sizeable science and social science enrollments, indicating a professional and applied orientation. GCID is commerce dominant (53%), followed by humanities / arts and science. These patterns should inform program design, laboratory and internship planning and career services that match each institution's disciplinary core.

Financially, students study on tight budgets. At SU, 45.57% reported monthly family income below ₹25,000, with another 34.082% between ₹ 25,001- ₹ 50,000; GCID showed a similar distribution, with 47.81% and 35.23% in these bands. Mean household dependents are around four, sharpening constraints on discretionary spend. Students overwhelmingly finance fees via families (SU 55.90%; GCID 76.23%), with scholarships critical for 29.19% students in SU and 19.36% students in GCID. Loans were rare, and self-funding through jobs was limited. This mix signals the continued centrality of fee affordability and scholarship pipelines, and a need to streamline access to bursaries.

Reservation use is present but not universal: roughly two in five SU students and about one in three GCID students reported availing reservation at admission. Targeted outreach and counseling for eligible group can therefore still expand equitable entry.

Family remains the primary encourager. At GCID, father and mother featured most often as sources of encouragement, with peers and teachers secondary. This pattern suggests that

information interventions that equip families – not only students – could improve informed choices and persistence.

In SU students emphasized the need for campus safety followed by advice on choice of course/ subject and proper advice on whether to go for higher education or other options. In GCID students emphasized mainly on the need for advice on whether to go for higher education or other options followed by need for guidance on course/ subject and about admission process.

Taken together, the evidence sketches a grounded picture: students are predominantly local, commute short to moderate distances, study in urban campuses, and come from modest income households. Institutional profiles differ - technical / professional at SU, commerce oriented at GCID - yet both rely heavily on family financing with scholarships at a crucial level. Gender composition differs substantially across the two system, calling for tailored supports and inclusive campus environments.

In policy and practice terms, three priorities follow:

1. Strengthen last- mile access and timetable design for commuters.
2. Expand and simplify scholarships and fee- waiver access, with proactive identification of eligible students; and
3. Align academic guidance, internships, and placement ecosystems with each institution dominant subject mix while widening bridges to adjacent fields. If implemented, these steps would meet students where they are socially, financially, and geographically and translate the chapter's descriptive profile into practical gains in access, equity and outcomes.

Chapter 7: Discussion

7.1 Introduction

The present chapter discusses the analysis of the responses received to research questions pertaining to the background details of the FMs and ILs and how they perceive the role of HEIs in HE outreach. It also discusses outreach activities already happening, details of the students and what their experiences/perceptions of HE outreach are. This section also consolidates the responses on how contribution of FMs from rural and semi-urban colleges may be utilized and maximized, and how FMs' role in ensuring HE access/choice can be embedded at a policy level to ensure sustainable change.

7.2 Synthesis of RQ1a: who are the faculty members and institutional leaders?

It is evident from the data that the social, economic and geographical background of the faculty members involved in teaching and guiding students about the enrolment in higher education, is relevant in several ways and in the case of Maharashtra, it is observed that they play a crucial role in offering help to students beyond the boundaries of their institutions.

The FMs and ILs came from different social and economic backgrounds and were recruited in the HEIs after completion of essential educational qualification. ILs began their career as institutional leader after due experience as FMs for certain years. They belonged to different reserved categories like Scheduled Caste (SC and Other Backward Classes (OBC), as recognized by the Government of Maharashtra and India.

The FMs reside in urban areas, at the place of their work, but the majority of them hailed from rural areas and most of them were first-generation learners and the first ones employed in the higher education teaching field. This condition helped them to understand the challenges faced by students coming from rural areas for admissions in HEIs. The majority of the FMs fell under early-mid and mid-career category, suggesting there may be a smaller number of teachers from early and late career stages. In SU, there are 66.7% of male teachers and 33.3% were female, whereas there were 42.6% male teachers and 56.4% female teachers in GCID. The differences in gender distribution between SU and GCID could be influenced by institutional policies,

regional variations, or differences in hiring patterns. More than 80% teachers in SU & GCID were Hindu and the rest are identified as Buddhist, Jain, or Muslim.

The educational background of the grandparents, parents, siblings of FMs and ILs could be seen as increasing education level through generations. FMs and ILs completed their pre-degree education while staying with their parents and then moved to different place for pursuing their HE. More than 66% of the FMs from GCID completed their undergraduate education without any financial support like scholarship and in case of SU, there were 35% FMs who didn't receive such financial help. The rest of the FMs confirmed that they received financial assistance from the Government throughout their higher studies.

In case of both ILs and FMs, the major source of motivation in attending HE came from their parents. They not only encouraged their ward but also equally helped them to select programs and institutions. Primarily, it was their parents who helped them in decision of selecting HEIs and programs, and the assistance they received from FMs from HEIs came at later stage i.e. during admission process. There was no presence of active support from any faculty members who reached out to them during their school or pre-degree education to guide them for access and choices of career opportunities and process of enrolment.

7.3 Synthesis of RQ1b & RQ1c: what do institutional leaders and faculty members perceive to be the role of HEIs in HE outreach?

ILs and FMs identify HEIs' role as crucial in offering effective HE outreach and believed that outreach activities are useful for the prospective students from rural areas.

As the number of students hailing from rural areas is higher than that from urban areas, the FMs and ILs perceived the role of active involvement of FMs in guiding the students from rural areas as most important. It is also applicable to the students from the reserved categories. The outreach practices implemented by the institutions, through which the FMs and ILs received the inspiration and assistance during their journey to HE, were considered very important by them. They emphasised and suggested that such activities need to be initiated by the institutions in more formal ways. Beside, they admitted that there are no institutionalized outreach activities that are solely designed to encourage students to go for higher education.

Both FMs and ILs opined that poverty and lack of awareness about education were predominant in rural areas and the personal approach and counseling, more formalized National Service Scheme (NSS) activities and organization of career awareness campaigns in schools from rural areas are required.

FMs recommend that HEIs should make financial provisions for such outreach activities, create awareness among all its faculty members, include the initiative under priority lists of outreach activities and formally distribute the work amongst all FMs. HEIs should also strengthen the programs like 'earn and learn'. They also believed that outreach activities like dissemination of information regarding HE and different career and learning opportunities in HE through exhibitions, fairs, orientation programs for 12th class students and school students could be very helpful. They also suggested that systematic awareness programs about availability of different scholarships, free ships and other Government support schemes and institutional facilities available for students, need to be organized and institutions should offer special financial support to students from rural areas. To achieve positive result of these initiatives, FMs opined that the institutions should offer more administrative support.

7.4 Synthesis of RQ1b (second part): How much HE outreach activity is already happening?

Outreach activities under National Service Scheme (NSS) was a common feature among the institutions considered under the study. Through the NSS initiative, special rural camps are organized and during the camps in nearby villages, students and FMs stay there for five days and organize different activities ranging from cleanliness drives, constructing nala-bunds, social awareness program activities to organizing talks on different contemporary issues like the importance of education, career opportunities, skill development and preparation for competitive exams after graduation studies.

Similarly, the institution deputes a HE counseling committee at a higher secondary school attached to HEIs. Besides, there are several institutional activities organized by HE and they are attended by parents and students from different schools and higher secondary schools. They create awareness among attendees for HE. Such activities include fairs, competitions, quiz programs, research fests, open days, lecture series, cultural programs and cultural competitions, literary festivals, sports day celebrations, national day celebrations and talks by

renowned personalities. Advertisements made by institutions to attract the students for admission also offer them ideas of availability of different programs and support schemes for students available with the institutions. SU and GCID have their own community radio centers and they disseminate useful information to the local community about opportunities in HE. The talks of faculty members broadcast through the community radio on various subjects and fields highlighting the opportunities available in the institutions. The institutions often give wide publicity of the activities organized by them on their campus through newspapers and local community radio centers. These news items also offer ideas to parents and students about the nature of activities being run in HE along with several academic and research development issues.

The outreach activities carried out by individual FMs appear to be more effective and outcome-based as compared to the results of the institutional outreach activities under NSS addressing the issue indirectly. Though the individual efforts are limited by access, opportunity, availability, choices, time and space, certain FMs are seen to engage themselves regularly in helping students to enroll in undergraduate programs. It is interesting to witness how each institution i.e. SU, GCID, GC-A and GC-B, have FMs developing their different ways to assist students for access to higher education.

The outreach activities carried out individually by FMs include offering advice to neighbors and their wards, helping relatives and their wards in making choice of programs and institutions, informing wards of their acquaintances about career opportunities in HE, informing students about job opportunities in particular areas and sectors, advising the students on the choice of appropriate institutions for particular programs, visiting nearby schools and orienting students regarding the HE opportunities available for them and offering HE enrolment guidance to students from professional connections and even beyond.

7.5 Synthesis of RQ1d: who are the students and what are their experiences/perceptions of HE outreach?

Conclusions drawn from students' profile from SU and GCID offer comprehensive understanding regarding their educational history, program selection, family background, institutional access and motivational factors. It also elucidates how family, community, institutional professionals, different social channels and certain social and economic

conditions affect the choices and decisions of the students accessing higher education. Rural background and socially disadvantaged conditions of the students characterize the progression of the students to HE.

The students reported Marathi as predominant language of instruction during their school education and more than 68% students in SU came from science streams whereas the majority of students in GCID were from Commerce stream. The percentage of students taking their school education while being day scholars residing in their home is higher than those living as paying guest or residing in hostels. It is observed that the preferences of the students both from SU and GCID, towards traditional courses like BA, B. Com and B.Sc. are higher than professional courses within the stream of science and technology. Students reported that they highly depend on their family for financial support and that family support was crucial in their access to HE. 70% students from SU and 53.57% from GCID were dependent entirely on their family for funds. 39.26% students of SU and 36.49% from GCID availed reservation under different categories and received scholarships.

In both institutions, the parents were the main influencers who played significant role in decision-making of their wards before enrolling to HE. Furthermore, it is siblings and their other relatives, followed by teachers who were cited as the people who motivated them to go for HE.

Students asserted the need of outreach activities by HEIs in terms of assistance in admission process, course choice, funding, safety, and transport facilities and suggested that HEIs create social media platforms and HEI websites to offer adequate information to students. Students also suggested that the FMs from HEIs should visit schools and pre-degree colleges to inform school students about career choices. They also suggested that pre-degree programs should have short term course on 'HE and career opportunities' for enhancing employability. They acknowledged the impact of newspaper publicity of the HEIs academic activities, media releases, activities through NSS, publicity of meritorious students in sports, cultural activities and successful alumni. They also suggested that parents and students from rural areas need to be oriented and offered help. Some students felt safety was major concern for parents of girl students and secure hostel facilities were essential.

To sum up, students' ideas on the need of conducting outreach activities by HEIs are connected with financial support, social, psychological and information dissemination related activities.

7.6 Preliminary views on RQ2: How can the potential contribution of rural and semi-urban college faculty members to fair HE access and choice be consolidated and maximized?

Identification, recognition, rectification and evaluation are the most important stages through which FMs and ILs need to work on the challenges of HE access and choice in Maharashtra. The aspects related to these challenges are lack of awareness of education, poverty, distrust and dissatisfaction towards existing potential of HEI's. To achieve desired effects of promoting fair access to HE, especially to the students from rural and tribal areas, and evaluate the efforts made by HEIs towards it, it is important to institutionalize HE outreach practices.

In the rural and semi-urban areas in Maharashtra, the challenges of the low GER and problem of choice in HE can be addressed on both levels i.e. individual and institutional. Working on individual levels with clear objectives of offering every student information and support in accessing HE, FMs and ILs must also recognize that equal importance should be given to achieving balance in terms of access to all reserved category students, promotion of education to girl students, access to HE for rural students, and assurance to all students about appropriate choice of course, subject and HEI. Beyond the institutional efforts, FMs and ILs, as seen in several cases, can act as an important agent in disseminating information about HE opportunities and offer appropriate support to the students from their personal and professional connections (as most of them hailed from rural areas).

The efforts towards ensuring access to HE made by institutions yields more positive results. Institutionalization of HE outreach will be key to bring about changes in the lives of students progressing to HE. At SU and GC level, through formation of different committees and cells, appointment of ombudsman positions, appointment of ambassadors from FMs and students to promote the work of access to HE, taking certain initiatives and designing best practices in this regard, HEIs can play an important role in ensuring access to HE especially in rural areas. It is through institutional efforts that more students and other stakeholders can be made beneficiaries of this initiative. Use of ICT in providing ease of access to students from rural

places can work well as a part of the institutional HE outreach initiative. Kakodkar (2011) feels that “access to eLearning and eAdministrative services demand a combination of various networking technologies which can be used by the Students, Teachers” and it can be further facilitated by institutional network or data centres for access to HE.

Based on the survey data and interview data, it is seen that motivation to ILs and FMs to act as a catalyst in promoting access to higher education, can be achieved through creating a criteria and assigning API score to outreach activities carried out by FMs with ‘career advancement scheme’. Incentives, recognition and awards to the FMs, ILs and HEIs working in this field, of widening access to HE offering financial support to FMs and ILs to support their outreach activities and identifying the institutions as mentor institutions should be designed by State Government.

7.7 Preliminary views on RQ3: How can a consolidated HE access/choice role for faculty members be embedded at a policy level to ensure sustainable change?

Currently, the roles and responsibilities of FMs are associated with the activities in terms of academic duties like teaching and evaluation, performing necessary administrative responsibilities, research and development work, completion of certain training programs and the work of development of curriculum. It is prescribed under rules and regulations in Maharashtra University Act-2016 and Career Advancement Scheme (CAS) by University Grants Commission, New Delhi. To make the outreach work by FMs, the documents can include outreach activities as one of the criteria of evaluation of the faculty members. This can also be a part of necessary administrative duties to be carried out by each FM in addition to integrating outreach activities as a criteria for promotion under CAS.

FMs have to complete different induction, refresher, short-term faculty development programs in order to be eligible for promotion under CAS as per UGC’s rules and regulations. There are several interdisciplinary courses organized by the training institutions and it would be very helpful if the FMs, especially those that are in their early career stage, are encouraged to complete a dedicated short-term course on ‘access to HE’. This can also be a part of the

programs on gender sensitization, regional disparities, NEP-2020, and social justice. These can be arranged under the various UGC Malviya Mission Teachers Training Centers across India.

The policy document of the National Education Policy-2020 prescribes co-curricular course to all UG programs and NSS, yoga and physical education are given as choices under it. Under NSS, now, every student can get an opportunity to be part of all outreach activities. Activities on access to higher education should be made an integral part of the NSS activities. Similarly, at 11th and 12th class level, outreach activities promoting access to HE will prove very helpful.

The professional programme-offering institutions generate sufficient funds through the fees, whereas HEIs offering traditional programs like B.A, B.Com and B.Sc. are not able to generate sufficient funds to support their outreach activities. In such cases, it should be mandated that HEIs must organize outreach activities on the issue and funds should be provided by the affiliating University or Government to the HEIs to carry out the activities.

There is a notable gap in disseminating the information among school and higher secondary school students and their parents regarding the different scholarships offered by Government of Maharashtra and Government of India. There is also a gap of communication among schools and Government agencies. It makes the condition worse. “When schools don’t have coordination among the schools itself, it can hardly be expected of them to have coordination at the higher education level” (Pandia 2017: 27). This could be solved with systematic response mechanism. A formal program can be designed in collaboration with the relevant Government offices involving FMs from the local HEIs in the region, wherein the sensitization drives can be organized in the nearby schools. FMs can be assigned certain schools to guide the students to visit HEIs in the regions and facilities like Government hostels and public libraries should be made available. Government’s recognition is important on the issues pertaining to skill education, challenges with girls’ education and vocational education .

Chapter 8: Conclusion

8.1 Conclusions

The National Education Policy – 2020 aims "to increase the Gross Enrolment Ratio in higher education including vocational education from 26.3% (2018) to 50% by 2035" (Ministry of Human Resource Development: 2020: 35). The policy, with its emphasis on interdisciplinary education and skill development, plans to offer wide ranges of choices of HE to students both in terms of multi-disciplinary HEIs and programs. To fulfill this ambitious goal, the challenges are required to be systematically mapped and addressed at various.

The present research identifies key issues pertaining to motivation and assistance that students receive to make their decisions to enroll in HE. During the diary study, FGDs, personal interviews and surveys, participants were actively involved in discussion pertaining to the importance of access and choices of HE and the need for HE outreach practices. Central Government, State Government, UGC, state Universities and several other autonomous bodies work to ease the access to higher education. However, the efforts to achieve this goal are exercised only through financial assistance like scholarships directly credited to the accounts of the beneficiaries, provision of facilities like hostels and other allowances. In addition to financial help and physical facilities, awareness that systematic efforts are required to promote the overall access and choices to higher education for students from SEDGs and rural areas. Colleges and Universities undertake different outreach activities under the National Service Scheme (NSS), Unnat Bharat Abhiyaan (UBA), and National Cadet Corps (NCC) which address issues like gender, superstition, education of girls, health awareness, social responsibility awareness, local culture awareness. These activities do not directly address the issues of choices and access to HE for which a separate initiative needs to be designed.

Along with the identification of necessity of the outreach activities by HEIs, the need of modeling and prescribing the design of the outreach activities with timeline is felt. It is also observed that FMs can play a significant role in offering help and guidance to students to access higher education and know about different choices of HE. The students who face challenges in accessing HE because of financial crunches, lack of information, insufficient family support and lack of motivation, are best to be reached during their pre-degree program. In this regard, the

need of the linkage between HEIs and pre-degree colleges can prove to be very helpful wherein the outreach activities like guidance sessions offered by the FMs from HEIs can yield positive results in the form of providing the students information about availability of programs and career opportunities in different possible fields, availability of different support schemes (Government as well as institutional), process of entrance exams and admissions (both in the region and in their respective institution).

Ensuring access to higher education for all has been realized as one of the essential aspects of social justice and national development perspective. Understanding of social and economic conditions of the people, especially in the rural areas, along with the challenges faced by the students from SEDGs, and identifying the appropriate persons and institutions that could offer help to them are discussed based on the experiences shared by the FMs and students during FGDs.

Data collected through survey, FDGs, diary writing, pre and post diary interviews of the FMs and interviews with ILs offered comprehensive ideas about trends in the educational journey of the stakeholders, the support they received, their social and family background, the help they offered and experiences they recorded during their diary sessions. ILs and FMs also expressed the need for formal connection between HEIs and pre-degree institutions. This is also identified in existing research as one of the reasons “why backward students do not attend higher education” (Naresh & Krishnaiah; 2023:116).

It is observed that the major support and motivation the students and FMs receive to access HE comes from their parents. Challenges are related to the ability to afford the facilities like accommodation and transportation. The help and guidance received from the teachers from pre-degree institutions and FMs are also visible but they do not appear as significant and formal. Hence, more efforts from the teachers and FMs in this regard are potentially valuable in ensuring access to higher education for girl students, students from rural areas and SEDGs. HE outreach practices from FMs and HEIs are required to ensure growth in GER and to offer choices to learners.

8.2 Recommendations

The challenges in issues of choices and access to HE are multifaceted and predominantly related to: financial constraints, dissemination of and access to information, individual and institutional support systems, absence of inclusive institutional outreach activities, regional educational structures and traditions, geographical and social conditions, gender, educational background of families, availability of resources, realization of education as means knowledge gaining and personal advancement, and proper advice on choice of course/subject and HEI. These need to be addressed with proper planning and designing programs with short- and long-term goals, and also preparing "targeted policies...ensuring equitable access, gender parity, and improved quality" (Poddar; 2023:3). Following are the recommendations for easing the access to HE and offering choices based on the data collected during this study.

Recommendations for HE Outreach at College Level

- Colleges must identify HE outreach as an essential part of their social outreach activities in line with National Service Scheme, *Unnat Bharat Abhiyaan* and National Cadet.
- During the five-day residential camp of NSS in the nearby villages, special HE outreach activities need to be conducted.
- HE outreach practices need to be made a part of curricular and extra-curricular activities of the colleges.
- Colleges need to organize rallies and awareness campaigns in the nearby villages informing individuals about the importance of higher education.
- Community Radio Stations are to continue to be promoted for effective disseminating information about HE opportunities and choices available in the region through its programs on career guidance, talks by experts on learning opportunities in different subjects and field in HE.
- Colleges to encourage their FMs to reach out to the students from the villages of the FMs and offer them counseling about HE.
- Students to carry out different projects during their academic programs in the HEIs, their project areas to include several social challenges and students to undertake surveys and data collection work in their villages and region. These projects should also address the issues pertaining to access to higher education.

- Colleges need to systematically work targeting the students in the region offering them information of different financial schemes by the Government, institutional student support schemes like fee concession, hostel accommodation, availability of scholarships offered by Government especially to students from SEDGs and girl students to pursue HE.
- Colleges need to set up a dedicated HE Outreach Cell to offer help to students throughout the year as a regular practice and allocate funds for the same.
- Colleges need to identify pre-degree institutions as their mentee institutions to offer them mentoring support regarding choices and access to higher education.
- Counseling committees comprising of FMs from different SEDGs should be formulated to guide students of pre-degree institutions.
- Colleges to deploy FMs to different pre-degree institutions (junior colleges) as to address the students quarries regarding opportunities in HE and facilities offered by the institutions before the final exam of the students.
- Colleges need to assign responsibilities to FMs to organize programs like fairs, competitions and exhibitions for 11^{th} and 12^{th} grade students on the campus to introduce the students with the programs and facilities available with them.

Recommendations for HE Outreach at University Level

- Universities to establish dedicated career counselling offices and pre-admission information centers with online and offline support.
- Universities to encourage the HEIs to establish HE Outreach Cell in all HEIs affiliated to it.
- Universities must institutionalize pre-admission guidance by developing robust, structured programs that priorities outreach to rural, first-generation, and marginalized learners. Actionable recommendations include the creation of mentoring programs, financial and emotional support services, structured career counselling sessions in rural schools, and family awareness workshops.
- Universities offer funds to HEIs affiliated to it to carry out different social outreach activities and also direct the HEIs about the activities to be carried out.

- Curriculum developed under NEP-2020 by Universities has a Co-curricular Course addressing certain practical work from students. The course should include HE outreach along with general social outreach activities.
- University to collaborate with Higher Secondary Education Department (pre-degree institutions) in the region in order to create awareness among students about HE.
- University should organize 'train the trainer' programs for the FMs to equip them with practical understanding about training the fellow colleagues of their institutions about HE outreach practices.

Recommendations for HE Outreach at Individual Faculty Member Level

- FMs to recognize their role in helping students in accessing higher education as their responsibility and as a part of professional activities.
- FMs to volunteer the work of HE outreach practice and align it with their day-to-day activities.
- FMs to understand that their support and assistance is decisive in students' journey to HE.
- FMs to ensure that they offer help to students from their professional circle, region and local areas, in accessing higher education.
- FMs to realize the necessity of offering help to pre-degree students in preparing for HEIs entrance exams, complete the admission process and provide both financial support and institutional facilities, available with the institutions as their professional duty and necessary part of their institutional responsibilities.

Recommendations for Policymakers: Central Government, State Government, UGC, AICTE

- UGC, Central Government and State Government to emphasize taking up HE outreach activities as a part of fulfilling the objective of NEP-2020 to increase GER by 50% by 2035.
- In the NEP, clear separate GER targets should be set for each group within SEDGs especially for the categories like SC, ST, OBC, etc. and it should include more details on undertaking HE outreach activities in order to increase GER.

- State Government to issue mandates to all pre-degree institutions to collaborate with HEIs to jointly run HE outreach programs orienting the students about opportunities and availability of different higher education career options and facilities.
- State University Act documents to include provisions about promoting access to higher education wherein HEIs would be given certain responsibilities to ensure ease of access to HE for students from rural areas and from SEDGs.
- National Accreditation and Assessment Council (NAAC), an autonomous body of UGC, conducts audit of all HEIs in India and it has assessment framework wherein there are metrics that assess institutions on number and quality of outreach activities conducted by the HEIs. The framework should also indicate the necessity to organize HE outreach activities along with regular social outreach activities by the HEIs.
- UGC and AICTE have certain mandates about existence of certain cells in order to have continuation of recognition of the HEIs under them. One such mandate could be presence of HE Outreach Activity Cell in all HEIs under AICTE and UGC.
- Central Government collects data of students' enrollment, FMs and other academic activities, etc. for its All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) every year. Number and details of HE outreach activities are to be made the part of the survey data requisition.
- Government to identify the challenges faced by the students in accessing HE and the challenges like transportation facilities, accommodation facilities, procurement of study equipment and expenses towards additional professional learning are to be addressed in the form of specified financial assistance schemes other than regular scholarships and free ship schemes.
- Government to set up HE Education Access Facilitation Centers in rural and semi-urban areas in order to offer counseling and digital services about availability and access to higher education options and career opportunities.
- Currently FMs' professional advancement and promotion scheme has a criterion evaluating FMs' contribution to HEIs in the form of their contribution in administrative work. It should also include the contribution of the FMs in HE outreach practices.
- Government to promote choice and access to HE with wide publicity to the best practices in HE outreach activities undertaken by different institutions across India.

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