

Assessing the Prime Minister Fellowship Award

Fellows' Perspectives



Governance Innovation Unit, Prime Minister's Office



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Assessing the Prime Minister Fellowship Award: Fellow Perspectives

Abstract

The Governance Innovation Unit (GIU) at the Prime Minister's Office has been awarding Prime Minister Fellowships to government officials, university educators, and high-achieving individuals in higher education since 2018 under the Prime Minister Fellowship program. Under this program, this initiative has sent 211 individuals for Master's degrees and 93 for PhD studies at top-ranking global universities. The GIU has initiated the evaluation process for the Fellowship program, utilizing the four-stage Kirkpatrick Model (Reaction, Learning, Behavior, and Results). This paper focuses on the initial step of review, referred to as "reaction. Using a mixed-method approach, a survey questionnaire was sent to the respondents, and 66 individuals who completed their Master's degrees from different universities responded. The survey period was done between 11/11/2021 and 14/02/2022. The findings indicate that a vast majority of fellows were satisfied with the funding, efficient financial management of the fellowship authority, and a transparent selection process. The program's alignment with Sustainable Development Goals and cultural diversity opportunities was also appreciated. However, some limitations emerged, such as insufficient funding for Master's programs longer than one year and challenges in managing high tuition fees alongside daily expenses. Issues like relying solely on overall university rankings, neglecting discipline-specific rankings, and lacking Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with prestigious universities were identified. Implementing necessary improvements can further empower fellows, promote academic excellence, and contribute to individual and societal development through the Prime Minister's Fellowship program.

1.0 Introduction

The importance of higher education in enhancing skills and capabilities in public administration is undeniable. A skilled and effective administrative system is essential for the development of a progressive Bangladesh. In view of this objective, the Governance Innovation Unit (GIU) of the Prime Minister's Office was established in 2012. The unit's activities are managed through various initiatives and projects since its establishment. Since the fiscal year 2017-18, under the visionary initiatives of the Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the unit has been implementing projects aimed at enhancing the capacity and skills of government institutions and employees, creating result-oriented public administration, achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) declared by the United Nations, and creating an efficient and citizen-friendly public sector. In line with the aforementioned objectives, a project titled "Strengthening the Capacity of Public Administration for Achieving Sustainable Development Goals" has been undertaken for a period of five years. To enhance the capacity of the civil servants of Bangladesh through higher education from internationally reputed, a component titled 'Prime Minister's Fellowship' was included in the aforementioned project. The project concluded on 31st December 2022. As the project concluded, the Project Steering Committee of the project titled "Enhancing Administrative Capacity through Technological Advancement for Sustainable Development" was held and a meeting of the Project Implementation Committee was also held. During these meetings, a decision was made to manage the activities of the Governance Innovation Unit (GIU), including the Prime Minister's Fellowship, under a special initiative of the government. Later, after getting the consent from Finance Division, the decision has been approved by Honorable Prime Minister to continue the fellowship program under special activity.

The Governance Innovation Unit, under the Prime Minister's Office, has been awarding Prime Minister Fellowships to government officials, university teachers-researchers, and high-achieving individuals in higher education since 2018. Inspired by the visionary thoughts of the HPM Sheikh Hasina, under this unique initiative already 211 individuals have been sent to the world's highest-ranking universities for pursuing Master's degrees, while 93 have been sent for PhD studies (Table 1). A significant number of them have already returned to the country upon successfully completing their courses and have been employed in various sectors to serve the nation. This timely inspiration by the honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is an exceptional

initiative for the aspiring citizens of Bangladesh, both in the government and non-government sectors.

Table 1: Prime Minister Fellowship Project Information Fiscal Year Wise

| Fiscal year | Course | | Total Fellows | Amount in BDT (crore) | Remarks |
|--------------|-----------|------------|---------------|-----------------------|--|
| | PhD | Masters | | | |
| 2018-19 | 38 | 66 | 104 | 34.92 | -- |
| 2019-20 | 39 | 88 | 127 | 77.95 | -- |
| 2020-21 | - | - | - | 41.45 | Due to coronavirus no new fellows have been selected for the 2020-21 FY. However, the said expenditure has been incurred for payment of regular allowances to the selected fellows for the FY 2018-19 and 2019-20. |
| 2021-22 | 16 | 57 | 73 | 66.20 | -- |
| Total | 93 | 211 | 304 | 220.52 | |

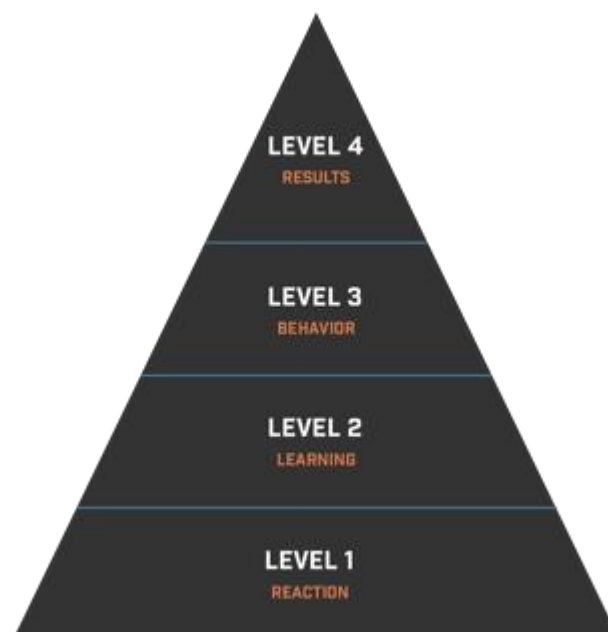
The fellowship project concluded on 30 June 22 and transitioned into a regular government activity from FY2022-23. As the project concluded already, the Governance Innovation Unit (GIU), Prime Minister’s Office took an initiative to evaluate the effectiveness of the fellowship program after the closing of the project. In this regard, a survey has been conducted. Based on the responses from the participants, the fellowship program has been evaluated using Kirkpatrick Model of training evaluation.

2.0 Data and Methods

2.1 Evaluation Methods

To evaluate training and development program, four-level Kirkpatrick Model is the most well-known and widely used evaluation model. It assesses any training and development programs against four level of criteria i) Reaction, ii) Learning, iii) Behavior and iv) Results.

- i) **Reaction:** The initial criterion level is "reaction," which evaluates whether learners perceive the training as engaging, favorable, and applicable to their job roles. Typically, this level is evaluated through a post-training survey commonly known as a "smile sheet," where students rate their overall experience.
- ii) **Learning:** Level 2 evaluates the individual learning of each participant by determining if they have acquired the intended knowledge, skills, attitudes, confidence, and commitment from the training. The assessment of learning can be conducted using various formal and informal methods, and it is recommended to utilize pre-learning and post-learning assessments to assess accuracy and comprehension. Assessment methods may involve exams or interview-style evaluations.



Graph 1: Level of criteria of Kirkpatrick Model

- iii) **Behavior:** In the Kirkpatrick Model, Level 3 is a significant stage that assesses the actual impact of the learning on participants and their application of the acquired knowledge. Evaluating behavioral changes helps determine not only the understanding of skills but also the feasibility of using those skills in the workplace. Evaluating behavior often reveals workplace-related issues. A lack of behavioral change does not necessarily indicate ineffective training but rather highlights potential challenges in the organization's existing processes and cultural conditions that hinder the creation of an optimal learning environment for the desired change.

- iv) **Results:** Level 4 in the Kirkpatrick Model focuses on measuring direct results. It evaluates how the learning aligns with an organization's business outcomes, specifically the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that were established prior to the implementation of the training. Common KPIs include improved return on investments, reduced workplace accidents, and increased sales. By utilizing the Kirkpatrick Model, organizations can develop a practical measurement plan that sets clear goals, measures the outcomes, and identifies areas of significant impact.

Learner and Reaction levels are basically evaluated based on the perception of the participants through interview and Behavior and Results levels are evaluated based on the behavioral change analysis and performance evaluation of individual participants. To evaluate the Prime Minister's Fellowship Program, a questionnaire survey has been conducted through closed and open-end question to assess the reaction and learning levels of Kirkpatrick Model.

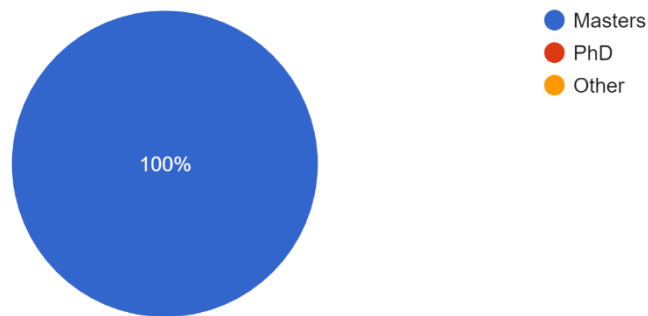
2.2 Data Collection Method

To evaluate the program, primary data have been collected through online questionnaire survey. The fellows, who have completed their study before starting this survey, were the respondents of this survey.

3.0 Impact of Prime Minister’s Fellowship

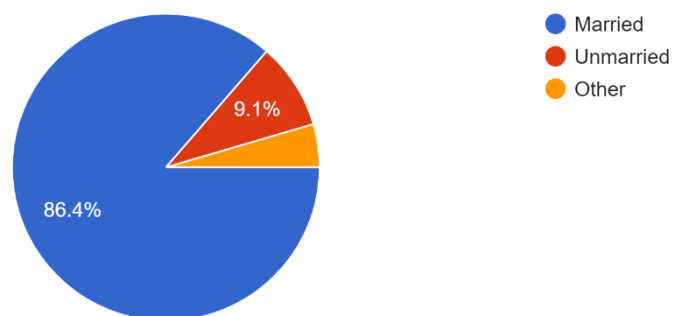
3.1 About the Respondents

The survey respondents, consisting of 66 individuals, are all master's students, as no participants had completed their PhD program at the time of the survey. Therefore, the findings from this survey primarily reflect the perceptions of master's fellows.



Graph 2: About the respondents

Out of the 66 fellows surveyed, 86.4% of the respondents are married, while 9.1% of the respondents are unmarried.



Graph 3: Marital Status

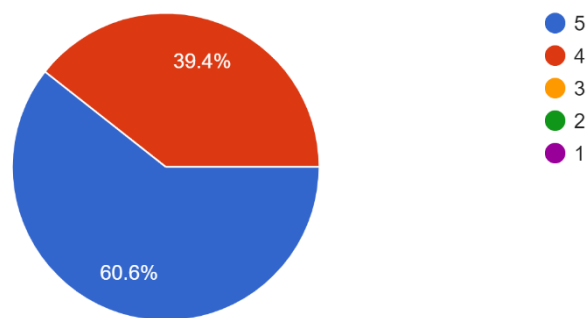
3.2 Contribution of the study to the personal and professional level

To evaluate the impact of the fellowship on a personal and professional level, the participants were asked to rate its contribution in various areas, such as developing research capability,

critical thinking ability, problem-solving skills, presentation skills, communication skills, acquiring new knowledge and skills, and more. A rating scale ranging from 1 (very poor) to 5 (excellent) was used, with 5 indicating the highest level of contribution.

3.2.1 Development of research capability

According to the study, the majority of respondents (approximately 60.6 percent) believe that the fellowship program has significantly developed their research capability, rating it as excellent. On the other hand, 39.4 percent of respondents consider the program to have made a very good contribution to enhancing their research capability.

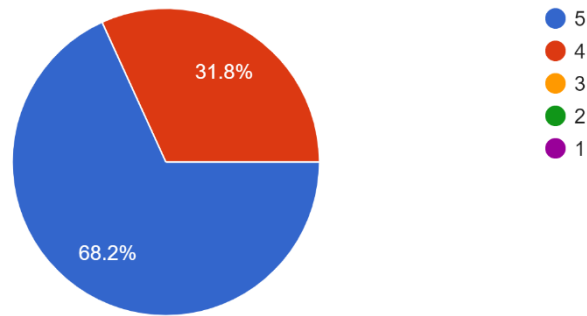


(5 = Excellent, 4 = Very Good, 3 = Average, 2 = Poor, 1 = Very Poor)

Graph 4: Development of research capability

3.2.2 Critical thinking capability

The fellowship program has proven effective in developing the critical thinking ability of the fellows. Approximately 68.2 percent of the respondents believe that the program has significantly enhanced their critical thinking skills, rating it as excellent. Additionally, 31.8 percent of the respondents perceive the program as having brought about a very good change in developing their critical thinking ability.

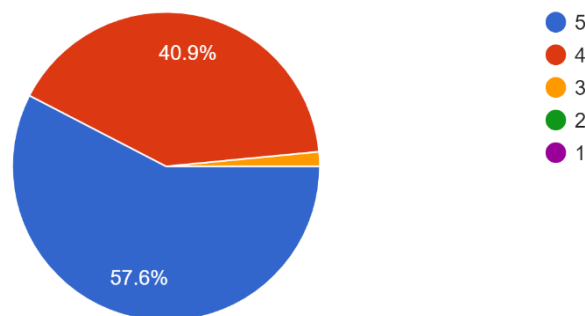


(5 = Excellent, 4 = Very Good, 3 = Average, 2 = Poor, 1 = Very Poor)

Graph 5: Ability to think critically

3.2.3 Problem solving skills

Problem-solving skills are indeed crucial for public servants, and the fellowship program has proven effective in improving these skills. Approximately 57.6 percent of the respondents believe that the program has significantly developed their problem-solving skills, rating it as excellent. Additionally, 40.9 percent of the respondents perceive the program as having brought about a very good change in developing their problem-solving skills. Only 1.5 percent of the respondents considered the improvement in problem-solving skills to be average.



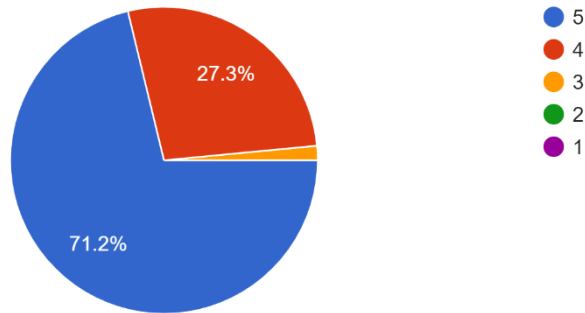
(5 = Excellent, 4 = Very Good, 3 = Average, 2 = Poor, 1 = Very Poor)

Graph 6: Problem solving skills

3.2.4 Acquiring new knowledge and skills

The program has been highly successful in enabling the fellows to acquire new knowledge and skills. According to the responses of the participants, a significant majority, approximately 71.2 percent, consider the program's contribution to acquiring new knowledge and skills as

excellent. Additionally, 27.3 percent of the respondents perceive the program's impact in this area as very good. This demonstrates the program's effectiveness in facilitating the acquisition of valuable knowledge and skills by the fellows.

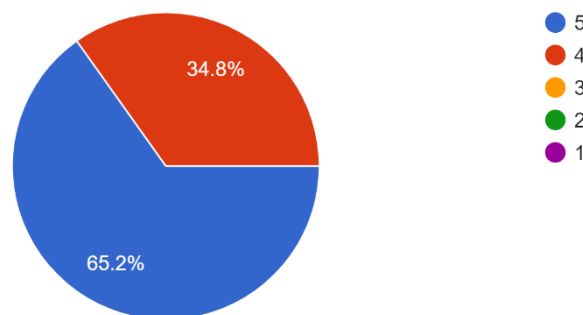


(5 = Excellent, 4 = Very Good, 3 = Average, 2 = Poor, 1 = Very Poor)

Graph 7: Acquiring new knowledge and skills

3.2.5 Communication skills

The program has made a positive contribution to enhancing the communication skills of the fellows. Approximately 65.2 percent of the respondents consider the program's impact on communication skills to be excellent. Additionally, 34.8 percent of the respondents perceive the program's contribution to enhancing communication skills as very good. This indicates that the program has effectively helped the fellows improve their communication abilities, enabling them to effectively convey their ideas and messages.

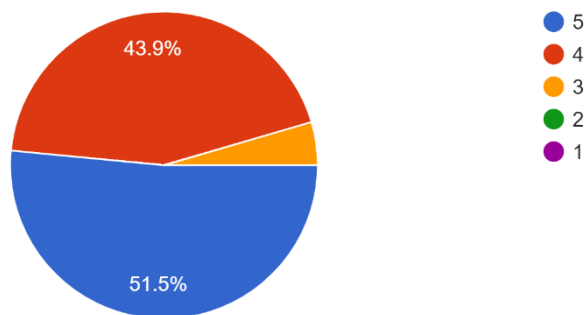


(5 = Excellent, 4 = Very Good, 3 = Average, 2 = Poor, 1 = Very Poor)

Graph 8: Communication skills

3.2.6 Presentation skills

The program has demonstrated significant improvements in the presentation skills of the fellows who have completed their studies under this program. According to the responses of the participants, 51.5 percent consider the program's contribution to improving presentation skills as excellent. Additionally, 43.9 percent of the respondents perceive the program's impact in this area as very good. Only a small percentage, 4.6 percent, consider the program's contribution to be average in enhancing presentation skills. Overall, the program has been effective in enhancing the fellows' abilities to deliver effective and impactful presentations.

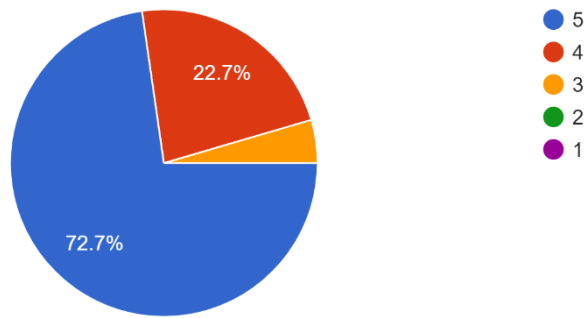


(5 = Excellent, 4 = Very Good, 3 = Average, 2 = Poor, 1 = Very Poor)

Graph 9: Presentation skills

3.2.7 Ability to work in a team

The program has made significant improvements in the ability to work in a team according to the participants. Approximately 72.7 percent of the respondents found the program's contribution to be excellent in enhancing their ability to work effectively in a team. Additionally, 22.7 percent of the respondents perceived the program's impact in this area as very good. This indicates that the program has effectively developed the fellows' skills and capabilities to collaborate and work efficiently as a team, which is an essential attribute in many professional settings.

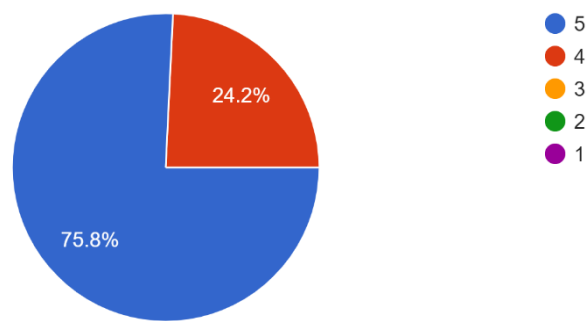


(5 = Excellent, 4 = Very Good, 3 = Average, 2 = Poor, 1 = Very Poor)

Graph 10: Ability to work in a team

3.2.8 Ability to work under pressure

The ability to work under pressure is indeed a crucial attribute for effective public service delivery in a country like Bangladesh. The program has made a significant contribution to developing this ability among the fellows, who are primarily public servants. Approximately 75.8 percent of the participants believe that the program has an excellent contribution in enhancing their ability to work under pressure. Additionally, 24.2 percent of the respondents found the program's impact in this area to be very good. This highlights the program's effectiveness in preparing the fellows to handle high-pressure situations and perform their duties efficiently in challenging circumstances.



(5 = Excellent, 4 = Very Good, 3 = Average, 2 = Poor, 1 = Very Poor)

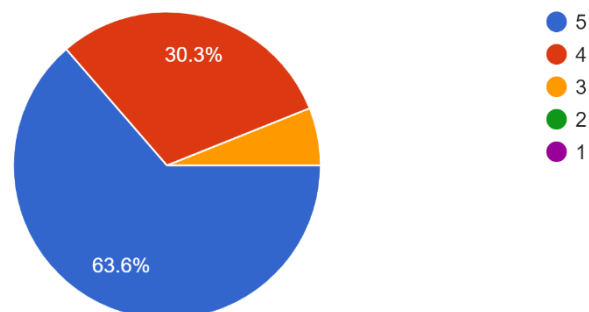
Graph 11: Ability to work under pressure

3.3 Social experience with other international and home country students

Undeniably, learning extends beyond the context of textbooks and encompasses various important areas such as the community, society, and peer groups. In the fellowship program, fellows have the opportunity to gather knowledge and experience from international students, engaging with co-curricular activities, participating in social works and voluntary activities, interacting with local communities, and engaging with diverse societies and cultures. These experiences provide valuable insights and practical learning opportunities that go beyond academic knowledge, fostering a holistic and well-rounded development among the fellows. It allows them to gain a deeper understanding of different perspectives, cultures, and societal dynamics, enhancing their overall learning experience and preparing them for real-world challenges.

3.3.1 Level of cooperation in class room

During their study, the fellows had the valuable opportunity to actively participate, engage, and collaborate with other international students and teachers, exchanging ideas, information, and perspectives. The study findings reveal that the level of cooperation among the fellows has increased significantly as a result of the program. Approximately 63.6 percent of the respondents consider the program's contribution to increasing the level of cooperation in the classroom as excellent. Additionally, 30.3 percent of the respondents perceive the program's impact in this area as very good. Only a small percentage, 6.1 percent, consider the program's contribution to be average in enhancing cooperation among the fellows. This highlights the program's success in fostering a cooperative and collaborative learning environment, where the fellows can benefit from the diverse perspectives and experiences of their peers and teachers.



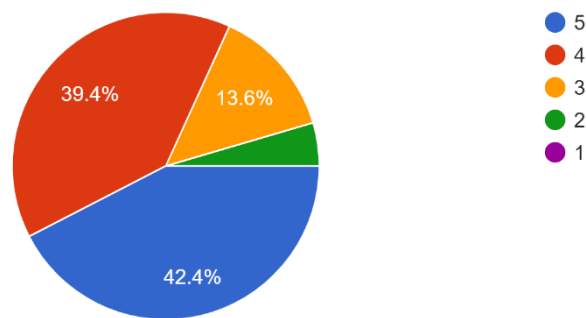
(5 = Excellent, 4 = Very Good, 3 = Average, 2 = Poor, 1 = Very Poor)

Graph 12: Level of cooperation in class room

3.3.2 Access to and participation in extra-curricular activities

The availability of extra-curricular facilities can indeed differ among universities. According to the survey results, approximately 42.4 percent of the respondents reported excellent access to these facilities, indicating that they had abundant opportunities to engage in various non-academic activities. Furthermore, 39.4 percent of the respondents considered the access to be very good, suggesting that they had satisfactory options for extra-curricular involvement.

On the other hand, 13.6 percent of the respondents perceived the access to be average, indicating that there might be some room for improvement in terms of the range and quality of extra-curricular facilities provided by their universities. Lastly, a portion of the respondents expressed their dissatisfaction, deeming the access to be poor or very poor.

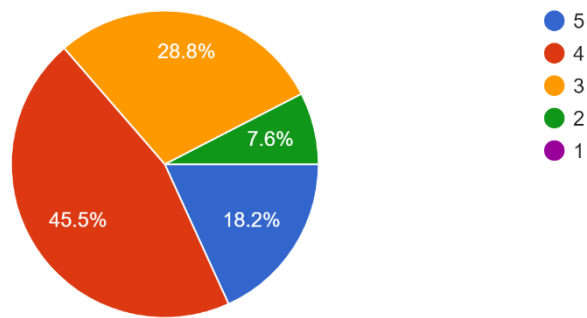


(5 = Excellent, 4 = Very Good, 3 = Average, 2 = Poor, 1 = Very Poor)

Graph 13: Access to extra-curricular activities

Despite the availability of extra-curricular facilities, the level of participation among the fellows varied. According to the survey results, only 18.2 percent of the fellows' participation in extra-curricular activities was considered excellent, indicating a high level of engagement and active involvement. Additionally, 45.5 percent of the fellows' participation was deemed very good, suggesting a satisfactory level of participation.

However, 28.8 percent of the fellows' participation was rated as average, indicating that there might be room for improvement in terms of their level of involvement in extra-curricular activities. It is worth noting that 7.6 percent of the fellows' participation was regarded as poor, suggesting a low level of engagement in these activities.

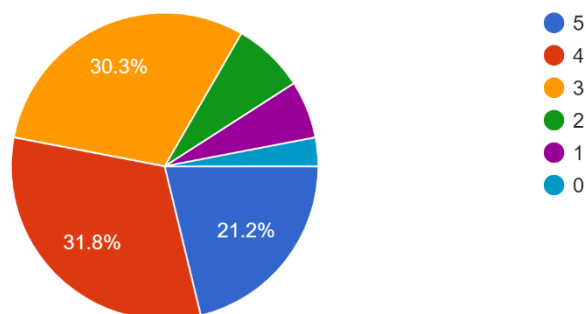


(5 = Excellent, 4 = Very Good, 3 = Average, 2 = Poor, 1 = Very Poor)

Graph 14: Level of participation in extra-curricular activities

3.3.3 Participation in voluntary activities

Increasing participation in voluntary activities can foster a sense of social responsibility and contribute to the development of well-rounded individuals. The level of participation in voluntary activities among the fellows was perceived differently. According to the survey results, approximately 53 percent of the participants considered the level of participation to be very good to excellent. This indicates that a significant portion of the fellows actively engaged in voluntary activities, demonstrating their commitment to giving back to the community and making a positive impact. On the other hand, 47 percent of the participants opined that the level of participation in voluntary activities was very poor to average. This suggests that there is room for improvement in motivating and encouraging fellows to actively participate in voluntary initiatives.



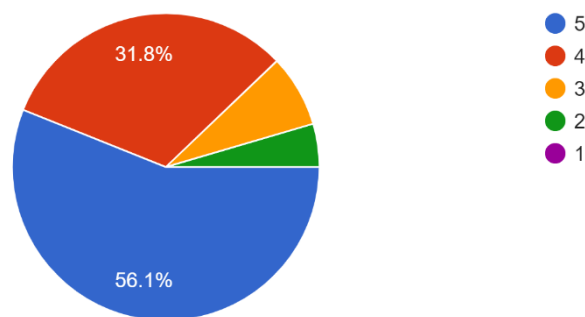
(5 = Excellent, 4 = Very Good, 3 = Average, 2 = Poor, 1 = Very Poor)

Graph 15: Level of participation in voluntary activities

3.3.4 Attaining cultural diversity

During their studies abroad, the majority of the fellows reported attaining a very satisfactory level of cultural diversity. According to the survey responses, approximately 56.1 percent of the respondents considered their experience in this regard to be excellent. This indicates that the fellows had extensive exposure to diverse cultures and gained valuable insights and understanding through their interactions with people from different backgrounds.

Furthermore, 31.8 percent of the respondents found the level of attaining cultural diversity during their study to be very good. This suggests that a significant portion of the fellows had meaningful experiences in embracing cultural diversity and engaging with individuals from various cultural backgrounds.



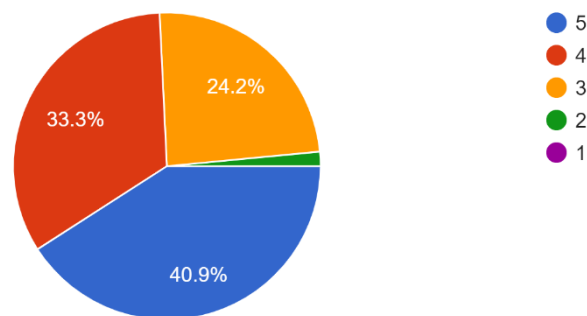
(5 = Excellent, 4 = Very Good, 3 = Average, 2 = Poor, 1 = Very Poor)

Graph 16: Level of attaining cultural diversity

3.3.5 Engagement with the local community

Engagement with the local community during their studies abroad proved to be a valuable experience for the fellows, enriching their knowledge, understanding of customs, and exposure to good practices. According to the survey responses, approximately 40.9 percent of the participants reported excellent engagement with the local community. This indicates that a significant number of fellows actively participated in community activities, fostering meaningful connections and gaining insights into the local culture. Additionally, 33.3 percent of the respondents considered their engagement with the local community to be very good.

This suggests that a substantial portion of the fellows had positive interactions and meaningful involvement with the local community. Furthermore, 24.2 percent of the respondents reported their engagement with the local community as average. This suggests that there is room for improvement in terms of further enhancing the fellows' involvement and creating more impactful connections with the local community.



(5 = Excellent, 4 = Very Good, 3 = Average, 2 = Poor, 1 = Very Poor)

Graph 17: Level of engagement with the local community

3.3.7 Good practices and learnings from the localities or countries studied

During their time abroad, the fellows had the opportunity to engage with local communities and gain valuable insights into the social and cultural practices of the country they resided in. Through their experiences, they identified several positive practices and socio-cultural learnings from the developed country. These include:

- ✓ **Citizens being responsible and guided by the rule of law:** The fellows observed that the residents of the country were conscious of their responsibilities as citizens and abided by the rule of law, contributing to a well-functioning society.
- ✓ **Kindness and responsibility towards the young, elderly, and disabled people:** The local community demonstrated a caring attitude towards vulnerable groups, showing kindness, and taking responsibility for their well-being.
- ✓ **Honesty and sincerity:** The fellows noted that people in the community displayed honesty and sincerity in their interactions and dealings, fostering trust and reliability.
- ✓ **Self-discipline:** The residents showed self-discipline in various aspects of life, such as following rules and regulations, maintaining cleanliness, and respecting public spaces.
- ✓ **Guided by ethics and principles:** The community upheld strong ethical values and principles, which influenced their behavior and decision-making processes.

- ✓ **Cooperative and helpful:** The locals were cooperative and willing to assist others, fostering a sense of unity and support within the community.
- ✓ **Well-mannered:** The fellows observed that the residents displayed good manners and courteous behavior, contributing to a positive social environment.
- ✓ **Good listener and respectful of others' cultures, values, and beliefs:** The community demonstrated active listening skills and respect for diverse cultures, values, and beliefs, fostering an inclusive and tolerant society.
- ✓ **Friendliness and welcoming nature:** The locals were known for their friendliness and welcoming nature, creating a warm and inclusive environment for newcomers.
- ✓ **Non-judgmental and open to embracing diversity:** The fellows noticed that the community was non-judgmental and open-minded, accepting and embracing diversity in all its forms.
- ✓ **Upholding the spirit of equal opportunities for all:** The residents had a mentality of promoting equal opportunities for all individuals, irrespective of their background, fostering a sense of fairness and equality.

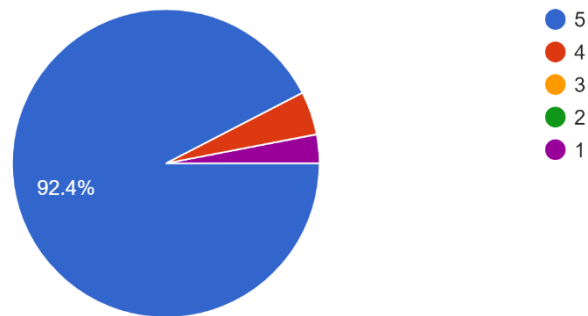
These learnings highlight the positive attributes and practices observed by the fellows during their stay in a developed country. They serve as valuable insights for the fellows to apply and incorporate into their own personal and professional lives, contributing to their growth and development as responsible individuals and future public servants.

3.4 Fellowship's contribution to SDGs

3.4.1 Area of study and contribution to SDGs

One of the primary objectives of the PM Fellowship is to facilitate the process of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). According to the study conducted, a significant percentage of respondents, approximately 92.4 percent, strongly agree that their area of study will contribute to the attainment of the SDGs in Bangladesh. This indicates that the fellowship program is successfully aligning with the goal of achieving the SDGs in the country.

The high agreement among the respondents showcases their understanding and recognition of the potential impact their studies can have on addressing the various sustainable development challenges faced by Bangladesh. The PM Fellowship program plays a crucial role in equipping fellows with the necessary knowledge, skills, and perspectives to actively contribute to the achievement of the SDGs.



(5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly Disagree)

Graph 18: Area of study and contribution to SDGs

Overall, the positive response from the respondents affirms that the PM Fellowship program is successfully fulfilling its objective of facilitating the achievement of the SDGs in Bangladesh by empowering fellows to make meaningful contributions in their respective fields of study.

3.4.1 Study area and its contribution in achieving SDGs in Bangladesh

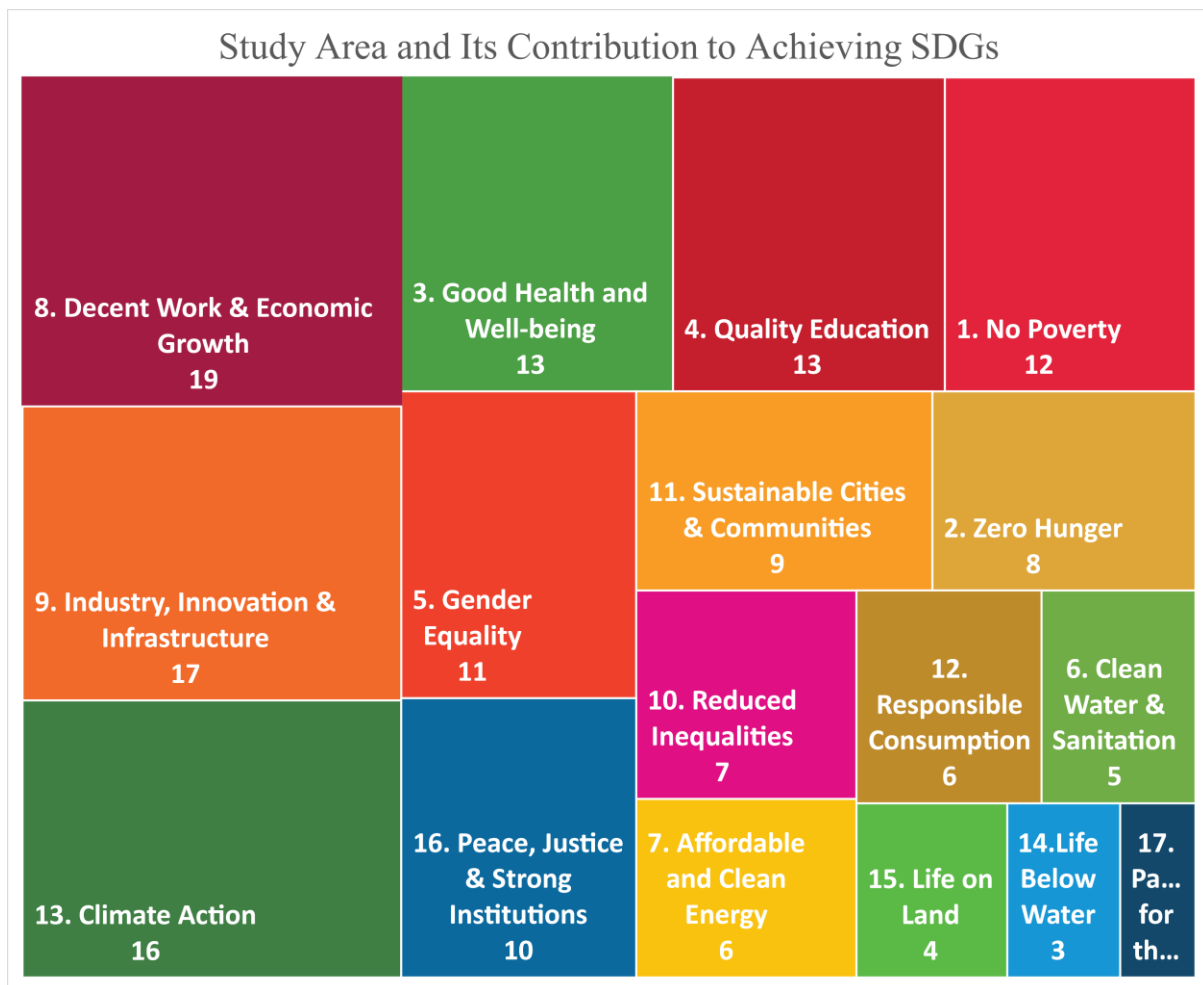
One of the primary objectives of the fellowship program is to equip officials with the necessary knowledge and skills to contribute towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Bangladesh. Through the study conducted, it was discovered that a significant number of participants identified their main area of learning and contribution to be Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth. This indicates the recognition of the importance of fostering an environment of inclusive economic growth and employment opportunities.

The study also revealed that the fellowship program had notable contributions in several other areas of the SDGs. These areas include Goal 9: Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure, Goal 13: Climate Action, Goal 3: Good Health and Well-being, Goal 4: Quality Education, Goal 1: No Poverty, Goal 5: Gender Equality, and Goal 16: Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions. These goals hold significant importance for a transitioning country like Bangladesh, as they address key challenges and aspirations related to economic development, sustainability, social equality, and governance.

On the other hand, comparatively less contribution was observed in the areas of Goal 14: Life Below Water, Goal 15: Life on Land, and Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals. While these goals may have received less emphasis in the fellowship program, it is important to recognize

their significance in addressing environmental conservation, biodiversity, and collaborative efforts for sustainable development.

Overall, the findings of the study highlight the alignment of the fellowship program's contributions with key SDGs, showcasing the program's impact in crucial areas of development in Bangladesh. It also provides insights into areas where further attention and focus may be required to enhance contributions towards specific goals.



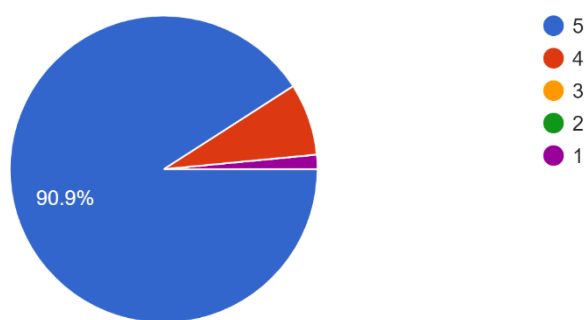
(A larger area signifies a stronger focus on SDG-related goals within participants' fields of study)

Graph 19: The role of fellowship in higher education

3.5 Assessment of the overall aspects of the scholarship

3.5.1 The role of fellowship in higher education

The scholarship proved to be instrumental in empowering and facilitating the recipients in their pursuit of higher education. According to the study, It was observed that an overwhelming majority, approximately 90.9 percent, of the respondents recognized and appreciated the scholarship's noteworthy contribution towards their educational endeavors. This recognition underscores the profound influence that the scholarship had on their ability to achieve higher education and unlock future opportunities.

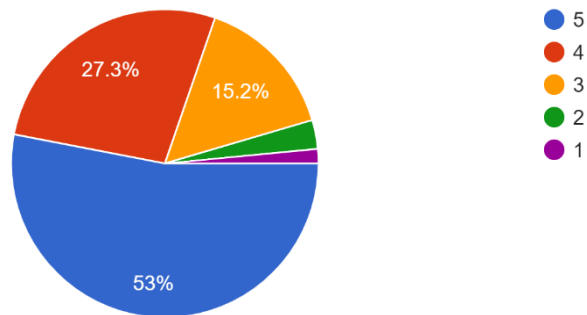


(5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly Disagree)

Graph 19: The role of fellowship in higher education

3.5.2 Adequacy of the fund

Adequate funding is essential for pursuing higher education at a prestigious university. A significant number of the fellows are currently enrolled in renowned universities worldwide. These fellows were surveyed to determine their perception of the sufficiency of the funds provided for completing their higher education at their respective institutions. According to the survey results, 53 percent of the respondents regarded the funding as excellent, 27.3 percent considered it very good, and 15.2 percent rated it as average in terms of adequacy. This indicates that a majority of the respondents recognized the funding as being highly satisfactory, while a significant portion deemed it to be good. Only a small percentage viewed it as average, implying that the fund allocation generally met the financial requirements for their educational pursuits.



(5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly Disagree)

Graph 20: Adequacy of Fund

3.5.3 Positive features about the fellowship

Upon gathering responses from the fellows regarding positive aspects of the program, several noteworthy features have been identified:

- ✓ **Adequate Funding:** The program provides sufficient financial support to cover all expenses, enabling the fellows to study at some of the world's best universities.
- ✓ **Timely and Excellent Financial Management:** The overall financial management of the program is commendable, ensuring that funds are allocated and managed efficiently.
- ✓ **Responsive Support System:** The program boasts a quick and efficient support system, with management promptly addressing queries and concerns raised by the fellows.
- ✓ **Transparent and Fair Selection Process:** The selection process is transparent, fair, and systematic, ensuring equal opportunities for all applicants.
- ✓ **Alignment with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):** The program's area of study is primarily focused on and aligned with the SDGs, reflecting a commitment to addressing global challenges and promoting sustainable development.
- ✓ **Culturally Diverse Environment:** The fellows have the opportunity to work in a culturally diverse environment, which enhances their communication skills and exposes them to different perspectives and backgrounds.
- ✓ **Equitable Representation:** The fellowship program maintains an equitable system by accommodating both government employees and non-government applicants, fostering inclusivity and diversity.

These identified features highlight the program's strengths and positive aspects, making it an attractive and beneficial opportunity for the fellows involved.

3.5.4 Limitations of the scholarship

The fellows have identified several limitations of the program, which are as follows:

- ✓ **Insufficient Funding for Programs Longer Than One Year:** While the fund adequacy is acceptable for one-year Master's programs, it becomes challenging for fellows pursuing programs longer than a year due to limited funding.
- ✓ **Difficulty in Maintaining Day-to-Day Life with High Tuition Fees:** When the tuition fees are high and need to be adjusted with other allowances, it becomes complex for the fellows to manage their day-to-day expenses effectively.
- ✓ **Lack of Formal Socialization and Networking Platforms:** Unlike other international scholarship programs, this program lacks formal socialization and networking platforms and events for the fellows, hindering opportunities for building connections and collaborations.
- ✓ **Lengthy Application Process and Tight Timeline for Visa Processing:** The application process is perceived as lengthy, and the limited time provided for visa processing and other preparations creates challenges for the fellows in managing these tasks effectively.
- ✓ **Reliance on Overall University Ranking:** The fellowship program primarily considers the overall university ranking, disregarding instances where a particular discipline within a university may have a top rank despite the overall university ranking being lower. This discrepancy poses limitations in assessing the quality of specific academic programs.
- ✓ **Lack of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Top-Ranked Universities:** The program does not have formal agreements (MoUs) with prestigious universities such as Harvard, Oxford, MIT, etc., as seen in other scholarships. Given the program's prestige, it is suggested that arrangements should be made for collaboration with such renowned institutions.
- ✓ **Limitations in Mail Responses and Emergency Support:** There are constraints in terms of timely mail responses and support in emergency situations. Establishing an official e-mail and phone number-based help desk support system would enhance assistance for fellows.

- ✓ **Need for User-Friendly and Dynamic Fellowship Website:** The fellowship website should be improved to be more user-friendly and dynamic, allowing for easy navigation and access to necessary information.

These limitations, as identified by the fellows, point towards areas where improvements and enhancements could further enhance the program's effectiveness and support for the recipients.

4 Conclusions

To establish a competent and efficient administrative system, the Prime Minister's Fellowship program is provided, which sends public servants as well as academicians to various prestigious universities worldwide for higher education. The Prime Minister's Fellowship program plays a significant role in fostering skilled public administrators. The study on the Prime Minister's Fellowship program has provided valuable insights into its impact and areas for improvement. The findings highlighted the program's positive aspects, such as adequate funding, efficient financial management, and a transparent selection process. Additionally, the program's focus on aligning with the Sustainable Development Goals and providing opportunities for cultural diversity were appreciated by the fellows.

However, the study also identified several limitations that deserve attention. The funding was deemed insufficient for programs longer than one year, and the challenge of balancing high tuition fees with day-to-day expenses was highlighted. The absence of formal socialization and networking platforms, a lengthy application process, and tight timelines for visa processing were identified as areas of concern. Furthermore, the reliance on overall university rankings rather than considering discipline-specific rankings and the absence of MoUs with prestigious universities were noted as potential shortcomings. The study also pointed out the need for better mail responses, emergency support, a user-friendly website, and a more dynamic online presence.

These limitations offer valuable insights for program administrators to address the concerns and enhance the program's effectiveness. By increasing funding for longer programs, providing support for managing high tuition fees, and improving the application process and visa timelines, the program can better meet the needs of the fellows. Establishing socialization and networking opportunities, considering discipline-specific rankings, and signing MoUs with top-ranked universities can enhance the program's overall value.

By taking these considerations into account and implementing necessary improvements, the Prime Minister's Fellowship program can further empower and support its fellows in pursuing higher education, fostering academic excellence, and contributing to the development of individuals and society as a whole.