

The Empowering youth in need through  
holistic skilling and employment  
at Don Bosco BEST Academy

# BEST Story



The BEST Story

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The  
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*Story*

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## Note from the EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**D**on Boscos are known for their skill training centres through which young people are offered quality human formation and preparation for work, enabling them to face the future with confidence and responsibility.

Don Bosco BREADS' Employment and Skill Training (DB BEST) Academy is one such skilling centre started in 2016, to respond to the concrete needs of the young people, especially the poor and most needy living in the urban slums and rural settings of Karnataka and across the country as well. Since its inception, this project has grown steadily, and we now celebrate the successful completion of 25 batches. It is a joy to reflect on this journey and to see whether it lives up to the hopes and dreams with which it was started.

It gives me great satisfaction to present this report on the completion of 25 batches through which, 1616 young men and women were skilled and helped to find employment. BREADS conducted a study of DB BEST's past

students to evaluate the impact of the skilling courses in their lives. We are pleased to share the findings of the study, which will help us further improve this initiative. The findings overwhelmingly confirm the value of DB BEST as an institution and as an intervention in the lives of the youth we serve. Both the findings and the lives of the youth are a happy testament to the vision and efforts of BREADS towards creating better futures for underserved communities.

It was inspiring to know how this initiative for vulnerable young persons is providing them a bright future. I offer my congratulations and appreciation to all the past and present Directors, staff and trainees of both BREADS and DB BEST Academy on this momentous occasion. Wishing you all the best as you continue to create good and honest citizens of India!!

**FR GEORGE PS**  
Executive Director-BREADS

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**D**edicated efforts from individuals and institutions went into making DB BEST Academy a reality. Heartfelt appreciation to all of them:

## **FR JOY NEDUMPARAMBIL**

Founder & Executive Director, BREADS (2010-2021)

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# GENESIS

As all good stories go—once upon a time (in 2015 actually), in a low-income area called Lingarajapuram in Bangalore, the dream of DB BEST sprouted. The Salesian pastoral work in the locality started in 1990 with the Don Bosco Church; and in typical Don Bosco fashion, its activities extended to youth animation and training programmes.

At the time, the Salesians usually implemented formal skilling programmes through industrial training institutions

(ITIs), while non-formal skilling programmes of 1-2 years were conducted as means of rehabilitation for children/youth rescued from the streets or child labour.

In 2010, the Indian Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) began to promote short-term skilling programmes through various partners across India to take advantage of the huge young population that was mostly unskilled. All the Don Bosco training institutions came







together under the DB Tech umbrella to promote the 3-month skill training programmes in various domains. The MoRD prescribed a particular format of 3 domains and 5 trainers for every centre, wherein the trainees received domain skills as well as English and Computer training.

BREADS took up the MoRD project under the DB Tech umbrella, implementing various domain trainings through 24 centres across Kerala, Karnataka and Goa. BREADS also ran a short-term hospitality skill training supported by Bosch in the BREADS premises, which was in high demand. The programme could not be expanded for lack of infrastructure. However, by 2012, the MoRD project ended and as a result many skilling centres had to be closed. BREADS sustained some of the domains with the support of corporate partnerships with Accenture, Landmark Institute of Skill Training (LIST), and Bosch for the following three years, but

support died out and certain skilling courses also reached a saturation point in terms of demand.

However, the situation in Bangalore and in Lingarajapuram in particular, was ripe for social initiatives as the socioeconomic situation was poor due to unemployment and low income. The youth were largely aimless, unoccupied and unskilled, due to incomplete education and the lack of access to skilling opportunities. At the same time, there were lots of entry level jobs available because of the booming information technology sector in Bangalore.

BREADS, under the leadership of Fr Joy Nedumparambil, resolved to address these issues with a long-term solution, which took the form of a skill training initiative that would provide direction, accompaniment through skills and personality development, and gainful formal employment in industries that could provide sustained livelihoods.

# The DB BEST Structure

**B**READS was already in possession of a plot of land with a run-down house in Lingarajapuram near the Banaswadi railway station, since 2003. In 2015, BREADS decided to put this asset to best use as an exclusive skill training centre with boarding facilities, which could also function as a transit home for other trainees from Don Bosco ITIs, skill training centres, and colleges, who came from other smaller towns looking for jobs in Bangalore.

In 2015, BREADS approached Don Bosco Mondo, Germany for their support in

setting up a skill training centre on the available site in Lingarajapuram and after their assessment, they quickly agreed to support the construction of a Skill Training Centre for Urban and Migrant Youth in Bangalore.

The construction of the 651.51 square meters (7012.80 sq. ft) building began in 2016 after acquiring the required permissions. The training centre comprises three storeys (excluding the ground floor set aside for parking) with the necessary facilities. The first floor consists of two classrooms with a





capacity of 30 trainees each, one office and the computer lab. The second floor has a kitchen, the Director's office, Warden's room and the dormitory. The third floor has an assembly hall which doubles up as the hospitality classroom and two hospitality labs, which were designed with the input from the Taj Group of hotels: one designed as a hotel suite and another set up for Food & Beverages services. The terrace has open space for gatherings and washing facilities.

The building was designed exclusively for the short-term skilling format in three domains-Hospitality Management, Retail Management and Business Process Outsourcing-while also providing boarding facilities for the youth in need. BREADS already had the experience of placing hospitality trainees in luxury hotels such as the Oberoi and Taj, who left their jobs very quickly

because of the culture shock they experienced. Their lives in disadvantaged backgrounds could not prepare them for the luxurious and alien setup of the hotels and their processes. Therefore, BREADS resolved to help the trainees acclimatise to the hotel setups during their trainings, which would then ensure that they stayed on in their future jobs. For this purpose, two exclusive hospitality labs were designed: a suite as well as a food and beverage lab.

**The building was completed according to schedule within a year and the Don Bosco BREADS' Employment and Skill Training Academy (DB BEST) was inaugurated on 10 October 2016.**

The building was inaugurated by the representatives of Deutsche Bank and Axa Business Services and Fr Joyce Thonikuzhiyil - Provincial of the Salesian province of Bangalore, in the presence of other collaborators.

# Corporate Partnerships - A Unique Sustainability Model

**D**B BEST Academy is a unique case study in corporate social responsibility (CSR), highlighting the importance of corporate participation especially in the realm of skilling and employment. This is also a unique model of sustainability as a social initiative, as the academy has been completely operating on CSR funding after the initial capital expenditure on infrastructure.

Even before the first training took place, BREADS was fortunate to bring on board the Deutsche Bank Foundation as a partner in the running of DB BEST. This operational partnership has continued until the present day. This long-standing relationship is no small accomplishment and highlights the commitment of both Deutsche Bank Foundation and BREADS towards the vision of skilling underprivileged youth in Bangalore city.



Similarly, another important corporate partner was AXA Global Business Services, which generously supported the initial cost of furnishing the classrooms and the dormitory to start up the centre.

Over the past 25 batches, DB BEST Academy has reached out to numerous corporates to establish linkages for exposure visits, on-the-job training, and employment of its trainees. Over the years, numerous brands/institutions collaborated with DB BEST in offering job placements for their trainees. Some of the current collaborators are:

- WINGS India Pvt Ltd
- Muthoot Finance Ltd
- Q&A
- Grassroot Solutions & Services Pvt Ltd
- Startechnology Pvt Ltd
- Omega Healthcare Management Services Pvt. Ltd
- Landmark Group (Max)
- Trent Limited, Tata Group (Zudio)
- Aditya Birla Fashion and Retail Ltd (ABFRL) (Pantaloons)
- Skechers USA, Inc.
- INDIEJEWEL Fashions Private Limited (Giva jewellery)
- Lifestyle (Jims Tableware)
- Jalakara (U and I Resorts Pvt Ltd) (Kahani Paradise)
- First Origin LLP (Infinitea)
- Orange County Resorts & Hotels Ltd., (Revolve Back Resort)
- Radiant Nest Pvt Ltd (Hotel Geo)

- Rosetta by Ferns (Rosetta)
- The Indian Hotels Company Ltd, TATA group (Taj West End, Taj Vivanta)
- Concept Hospitality Pvt Ltd (Fern Residency)
- Albuquerque Hotels Private Limited (St Marks Hotel)
- The Indian Hotels Company Ltd, TATA group
- St. Marks Hotel Private Limited

## Platform for Volunteering

DB BEST is a popular platform for volunteering especially for corporate employees and college students. They share their expertise in computer skills and prepare the students for jobs by teaching them about resumes and facing job interviews. Other volunteers teach the trainees about life skills and other pertinent issues. DB BEST offers the volunteers enriching experiences in working with young people who need their support.

Working partnerships with colleges offer other services such as individual counselling and self-development sessions, which have immense value for the students, who are at very vulnerable and sensitive phases of their lives. These inputs, though not part of the formal programme design, become highly important for the overall progress of the trainee during the course and after they leave the centre as well.

# The Impact of DB BEST

Having reached the milestone of 25 batches, BREADS conducted a study of all the trainees to assess the programmatic impact of DB BEST Academy as a free skill training institution, as well as its impact on the lives of underprivileged youth, who come into its ambit.

## I. Methodology of the Study

A short questionnaire was designed on Google Forms, which was filled by the caller during a telephonic interview with each of the trainees. The results were tabulated and analysed to derive relevant information regarding the skill training programmes and their impact on the trainees' lives.

All the **1616** trainees who successfully completed their trainings were given a call. Each trainee was called thrice at different times until a response was received. If no response was received, the guardian was called if their contact details were available. If neither method was successful, it was recorded as *No Response* from the trainee.



The trainees were telephoned by their respective domain trainers to ensure familiarity and ease of conversation. Other volunteers were also deployed to cover the entire sample.

The limitations of the method:

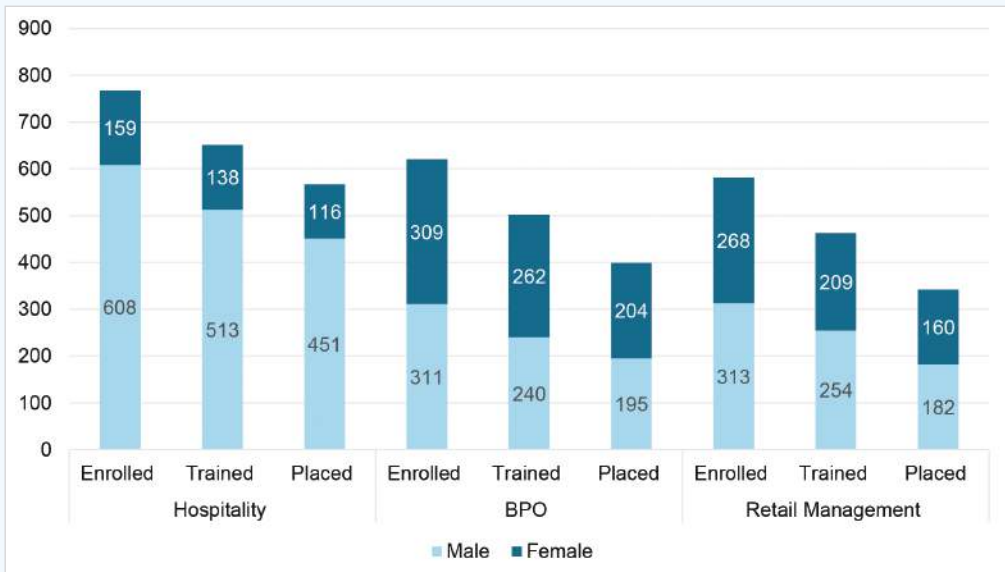
- Many of the phone numbers of the older students were no longer in use and there were no alternative numbers available.
- There was a lack of data regarding the contact details of some of the trainees.
- Many of the trainees could also not be reached for various reasons.

At final tally, we received **635** responses from the survey, amounting to a sample



size of **39.2%**, with representation from each batch and a minimum of **30%** representation from each domain. The responses have been tabulated and analysed to arrive at the various conclusions in this report.

## II. DB BEST Journey 2016-2024



	Enrolled	Trained	Dropout	Placed
Male	1232	1007	225	827
Female	736	609	127	480
<b>Total</b>	<b>1968</b>	<b>1616</b>	<b>352</b>	<b>1307</b>

### Findings from the data

- DB BEST has enrolled **1968** young men and women and fully trained **1616**. This figure is less than the

envisaged 225 trainees per year (225\*8=1800). However, there were a few genuine challenges such as the COVID pandemic and lockdowns,



during which DB BEST tried to run an online batch for Retail management and BPO.

- Among the three courses, the hospitality management domain continues to have the highest demand and has the highest enrollment, especially of men. The hospitality sector also provides relatively higher chances of job opportunities. Hospitality has the highest male participation at **79.3%**, with a significant gender gap as females make up only **20.7%**. One of the reasons is the strenuous, long and irregular work hours that conventional families do not approve of for women.
- BPO and retail management have a more balanced gender distribution, with BPO having nearly equal male and female participation (50.2% males, 49.8% females), and retail having slightly more males (53.9% males, 46.1% females).
- Overall, males constitute **62.6%** of the total enrolled students, while females make up **37.4%**, indicating a higher male enrollment across all sectors. The gender distribution across enrollment numbers is **1.67** meaning that for every 1 female enrolled, there are approximately 1.67 males enrolled. This is close to the national average of 32.8% females aged 15 years and above participating in the labour force as against 77.2% males. This could be an area of improvement as more young women need to be enrolled, skilled and introduced into the workforce if we are to see greater improvement in the living standards of the lower-middle and low-income classes of our society.
- The retention rate of trainees in the programme is quite high with the females showing a slightly higher rate of retention at **82.75%** as compared to **81.7%** for the males. This



indicates the good standards of execution maintained by DB BEST, while also indicating some room for improvement.

- The overall dropout rate for the programme is **17.8%** that could be attributed to various reasons including personal ones, which were not examined in this survey. The COVID pandemic and its aftermath was also a factor.
- DB BEST has maintained a very commendable placement rate over the years at **80.8%** that can be attributed to a robust placement process and partnerships with the Human Resource personnel of various companies during the period of training itself. It further indicates that the companies are willing to trust the candidates groomed by DB BEST as they demonstrate adequate standards.
- This figure also indicates the good collaboration between DB BEST and the Don Bosco Job Placement Network for the successful placement of candidates.

## DOMINIC KIRAN

25 years, 12<sup>th</sup> class, Bangalore  
DB BEST Retail Management, Batch 4

*My family now comprises of just my mother and I, since my father passed away during the COVID pandemic. I had also lost my elder brother earlier. I was from a totally poor background without any source of income as my mother was an unemployed homemaker. I grew up with*

*a lot of difficulties and I thought I would not be able to sustain myself because even after trying in different places and attending multiple job interviews, I got nowhere. I already tried being a Swiggy delivery boy as well as a salesperson in a store.*



*At this point, one of my uncles referred me to DB BEST. My journey in DB BEST was best and I'm glad that I'm a part of DB BEST Academy, which helped me start my career. The course helped me a lot through the classes and life skills, helping me to change and improve my working skills, which then helped me in the workplace. The staff and the entire atmosphere were so good that I felt at home and gained more knowledge about my domain subject. Through all the competitions in which I took part, my fears disappeared, and my public speaking improved.*

*I thank everyone there, all the staff and all my classmates who studied with me on the wonderful journey with DB BEST that made my life. Now I'm in a good position, earning INR*

*35,000 monthly as a lab technician in Livewell hospital. The training helped me build my career in such a way that now I finished a nursing course, I have built my own house where me and my*

*mum are happily staying. I am writing this because of the training and the placement given by DB BEST that shaped my career. My thanks for the wonders that DB BEST gave me.*



### III. Serving the Underserved

A demographic dividend is defined by the United Nations Population Fund as economic growth resulting from a shift in a population's age structure, mainly when the working-age population is larger than the number of dependents. The current average age of India's 1.3 billion people is 29 years and over the past decade, both the government and NGOs have been trying to leverage this factor for the best possible growth of the country.

However, youth also face various development challenges: access to education, gainful employment, gender inequality, child marriage, youth-friendly health services and early pregnancy. Like all the Salesian interventions, DB BEST works with the youth in a holistic manner that addresses each of them as a person.

#### 1. Age

The DB BEST Academy caters to the age range of 18-35 years as a service not only for skilling but also for reskilling and job placement. However, the focus is on the younger age groups in order to skill them sufficiently to at least enter the job market.

- The age distribution of the DB BEST trainees is largely **18-22** years. However, the age of many respondents extended to 25 years as the data included all the previous batches of students.
- The findings indicate that DB BEST is reaching out to its target population very successfully.

#### 2. Socio-Economic Background

The motivation and aim to start DB BEST was to provide viable options for the youth from disadvantaged and



underserved communities and families. Almost all the youth who come to DB BEST are disadvantaged in some way. Potential candidates are mobilised from low-income areas in various parts of Bangalore as well as in other places. They are recruited through social workers, former trainees, parishes, word of mouth, local advertising such as public announcements and pamphlets.

- The free training is offered to youth of all religions, castes and communities without any discrimination whatsoever. Even as a statistic, the religions and castes of the students were not examined in this survey.
- Going by the national Below Poverty Line (BPL) criteria (INR 816 per capita per month for rural areas and INR 1,000 per capita per month for urban areas), we do not have the relevant data to categorise the students' economic background. While only **48.2%** of DB BEST student families acknowledged possession of BPL ration cards, it does not mean that the figure represents the total BPL population.

However, **an overwhelming majority of the trainees would fall under one or several** of the categories of deprivation as identified by the Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC) criteria.

- Households with only one room with no solid walls and roof
- Households with no adult male aged 15-59
- Female headed households
- Households with differently abled members
- Households with no able-bodied members
- SC/ST households with no literate member above the age of 25
- Landless households deriving major portion of their income from manual labour

## KAILASH BAHADUR CHHETRI

*24 years, 9<sup>th</sup> class, West Bengal  
DB BEST Hospitality Management,  
Batch - 3*

*I'm here to express my sincere gratitude towards DB BEST Academy for moulding*

*me into the person I am today, a confident and responsible individual.*



*My father is a teacher, and my mother is a homemaker. When I entered DB BEST, it was my first time in Bangalore, a new place with new people and it was difficult for me to communicate because I only knew Bengali. I chose hospitality management as my domain and I finished my 3-month training with good communication skills, which helped me to progress in my career, especially in the hotel field.*

*DB BEST provided me with a hostel facility and every afternoon I had good nutritious food which was prepared in DB BEST itself. I had good trainers who cared for me and kept me in a good place. I had a good atmosphere in which to develop.*

*After completing my training, I was first placed in Taj Exotica Resort and Spa, Goa for on-the-job training with a stipend of INR 1500. After one year's experience, I worked as Former Bartender and various positions at Massive Restaurant for 2 years. Currently I am the Assistant Manager at Kylin Experience with INR 700,000 as my annual salary.*

*I would also like to share that now I have improved my standard of living and with the blessing of God, I have a good family. I'm always grateful to DB BEST for the encouragement and opportunity that they have given to me. This was the place where I learnt values for life, and I will carry that throughout my life. Thank you for guiding me in my career and empowering me to be a successful individual.*

### **3. Interstate and Intrastate Migrants**

It is a fact that modern development is concentrated around the cities. The availability of resources as well as employment is disproportionately inclined towards urban areas, which forces most young people to migrate to the cities and towns in search of options for themselves. One of DB BEST's objectives was to provide a safe option for migrant youth from rural and





underserved localities to access skilling, employment and create a better life for themselves either in the cities or back in their native places.

Though there is plenty of anecdotal information, for lack of numerical data, we cannot offer a statistic on the number and nature of young migrants supported for skilling and job placement. DB BEST regularly receives young people from various districts of Karnataka and even from far away Goa, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and the Northeast states, who come in search of a life, not just a livelihood. For these youngsters, DB BEST is a home away from home.

One of the ways that BREADS and the Sacred Heart Province supported the youth of Manipur state during the ethnic and civil unrest and violence there, was to offer free training and stay for them, helping them to find employment and get a footing in life. **Fifty** youth benefited from DB BEST during this perilous time in their lives.

## TD CATHERINE NIANGZOUZAM ZOU

*19 years, 12<sup>th</sup> class, Manipur  
DB BEST Hospitality Management,  
Batch 21*

*I studied in Don Bosco Higher Secondary School in Imphal. We're eight members in the family and I have five brothers. Because of the civil and political crisis going on in Manipur, I came to Bangalore searching for a job. I was new to the place and without anyone to guide me. By God's grace, one of my friends called me up and introduced me to the DB BEST Coordinator.*

*I got a chance to join this academy. I selected Hotel Management because it is an interesting course, and I'm also interested to learn new things. Our HM trainer Mervin Sir taught us many things. We were taught to have good discipline, how to welcome guests. I learnt how to make beds, set up a suite room, handle machines which help me to*

*work in a hotel. In the Food & Beverage department, I learnt table setup, cover setup and different types of services which help me to work confidently in my workplace. I was taught how to get through job interviews. With computers, we learned Microsoft Office and Tally ERP-9. I've improved so much in my communication skills and confidence to speak in English with anyone. Every Saturday, there was a session on life skills, which help me to solve problems.*



*DB BEST helped me get a job placement with an opportunity to work in Taj Bangalore Kempegowda International Airport. As an apprentice, I was offered a monthly salary of INR 14340 with food, accommodation and transport, so this way I can save my money. I want to express my heartfelt appreciation to the entire management of DB BEST Academy for all the support you have given me during my stay there. A special thanks to Fr Deepu for always guiding and supporting me in every way possible. THANK YOU, DB BEST ACADEMY!*

## IV. Skilling Designed for the Young

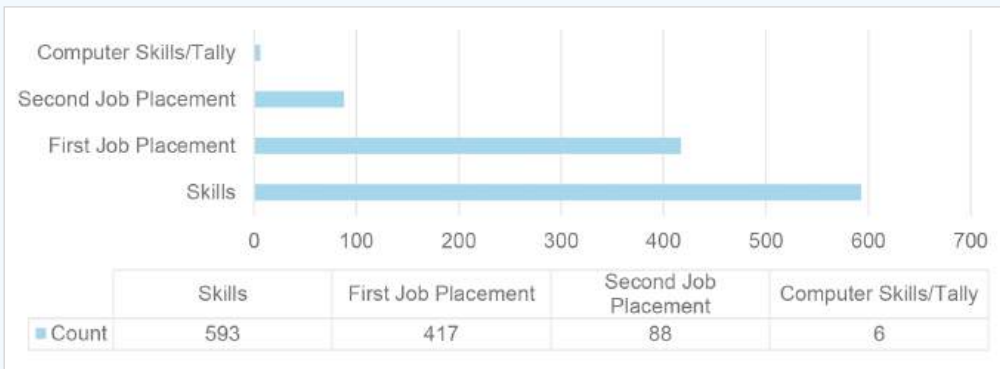
DB BEST Academy provides trainings in three domains- Retail management, Business Process Outsourcing and Hospitality management. The selected curriculum meets the apprentice standards of the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) and the subject matter experts of each domain equip trainees with competencies for the current market needs. An interest inventory helps students determine a domain for specialisation.

In addition, the holistic development of students is facilitated through life skills and personality enhancement, strengthening of communication skills and other extracurricular activities. Irrespective of the domain, the students are also taught basic computer skills and are introduced to the Tally accounting software. DB BEST partners with the Don Bosco Tech Society (DB Tech) as well as with corporate partners in knowledge and resource sharing.

To assess DB BEST as a skilling and employment initiative and its perceived usefulness to its beneficiaries, the respondents were asked to choose multiple options about how the training helped them.

### 1. How did DB BEST training help you?

- 93% of the respondents said the skills learned were most useful
- 65.6% of respondents found the first job placement useful



- 13.8% of respondents were helped by the second job placement
- 0.9% of respondents acknowledged computer and Tally skills as useful

From the above responses, we can observe that:

- DB BEST is proving to be relevant to the students in terms of skilling, which is further borne out when they graduate into the workplace.
- There are numerous instances where students have been educated but were not employable. Coming to DB BEST enabled them with employability skills and subsequently helped them settle into jobs.
- DB BEST follows up with the trainees after they are placed in their jobs. It is very common that youngsters give up on their first jobs when they find it tough. At that time, support is crucial. DB BEST also assists the trainees to find alternative employment opportunities, which helps to stabilises them.
- DB BEST continues to be effective as a programme designed to teach skills, improve employability and provide employment opportunities.

## DINAKARAN R

*25 years, currently pursuing MBA, Bangalore*

*DB BEST Hospitality Management, Batch 21*

*I want to express my sincere gratitude to DB BEST Academy for the invaluable support and guidance I have received during my time as a student and, more recently, as a Placement Coordinator. My family comprises of my mother, who is a cook; my brother, an office worker and myself, currently self-employed.*



*As a student at DB BEST Academy, I had the opportunity to study Hotel Management, a course that equipped me with*

*essential skills and practical knowledge that have proven to be highly beneficial in my career. The quality of education, the practical training, and the dedicated faculty all played a significant role in shaping my professional journey.*

*What truly stands out, however, is the continued support I received after completing my studies. Through the Don Bosco Job Placement Network, I was fortunate enough to secure a job within the same institution as a Placement Coordinator. Over the past year, I have had the privilege of working with the team to help other students and job seekers find meaningful employment opportunities. The trust and confidence the institution placed in me allowed me to grow personally and professionally, and I am deeply grateful for that.*

*I would also like to acknowledge the thoughtful care given to the well-being of students through the healthy, nutritious lunch every afternoon. This was not only a welcome part of our daily routine but also contributed to maintaining our energy and focus throughout the day.*

*The skills, mentorship, and real-world experience I gained at DB BEST have been truly transformative. The academy's commitment to not only providing education but also empowering its students with opportunities for growth and success has had a profound impact on my life.*

*I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the entire team at DB BEST for their continuous support, guidance, and belief in me. The experience here has been nothing short of exceptional, and I will always carry the lessons learned and the relationships built with me throughout my career. Thank you once again for all the opportunities and for being a crucial part of my professional journey.*

## **2. The most important aspects of DB BEST training**

A good programme design caters to various needs to produce the desired results and achieve objectives. Don Bosco already provided an effective and successful model with his oratory style, which is to blend learning with various



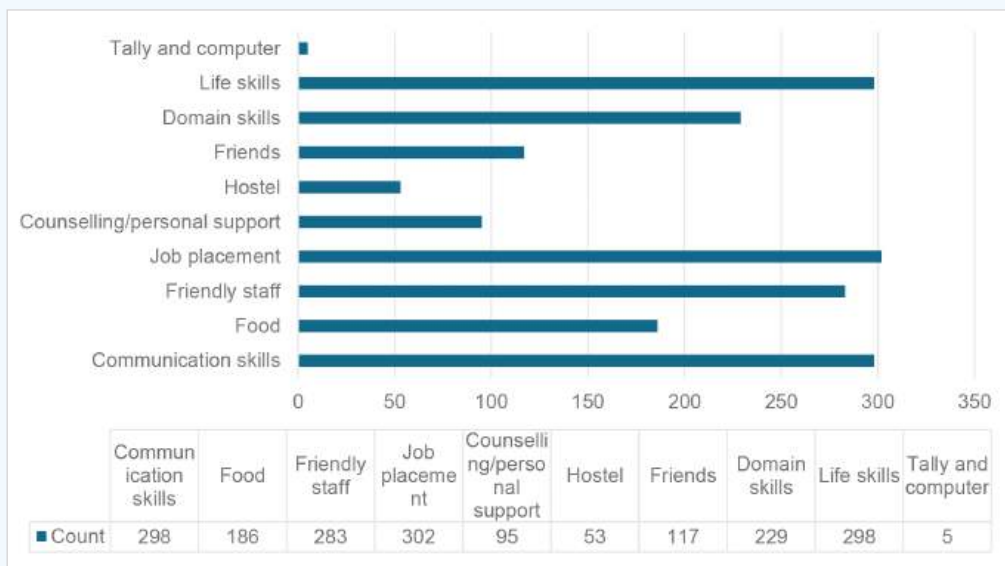


components of play in an environment of camaraderie and care. The typical Salesian oratory-style vibe makes DB BEST a lively and interesting place which is a significant draw for youngsters. The pleasant bright building design as well as the youthful vibe creates a positive atmosphere for training and learning.

Understanding that these young people face developmental challenges and numerous deprivations, DB BEST Academy is useful not only to young people who need skilling; it also supports those in need of direction and guidance with caring trainers who take personal interest in helping the trainees grow into successful individuals. DB BEST also makes available professional counselling and mentoring services for trainees, according to their needs. Life skills and cocurricular activities offer a good blend of learning and enjoyment. And the young people naturally bring in high energy and fun.



The free hostel facility is a crucial factor in offering underprivileged interstate trainees the opportunity to avail themselves of the free training and job placement. They learn to manage themselves financially as well and become independent. Also, important is the free freshly cooked lunch which provides nutrition for the youngsters and takes some of the load off their economically challenged households in providing for them.





From the responses received, we can observe what matters most to the youth:

- **Job placement** is the most important aspect of DB BEST as the trainees are from economically marginalised communities, in which it is highly important that every able member earns. For a young person, a job is also a gateway to independence—financial or otherwise. A job and earnings are also what allows him or her to command respect in his family.

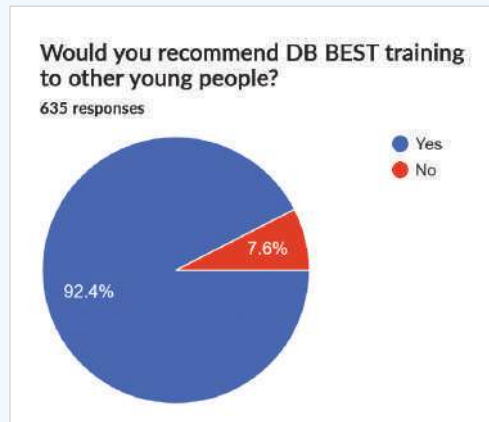
- **Communication and life skills** were equally prioritised by the young people as they struggle with these aspects in their lives. Communication skills especially in English are crucial for finding decent employment in cities like Bangalore. Communication skills also have direct bearing on the confidence levels of the candidates. DB BEST places a lot of emphasis on making trainees only communicate in English in the centre to build comfort, fluency and confidence.
- DB BEST is effective in developing **life skills** among the trainees that are foundational for workplace success. They form a core component of DB BEST's programme: time and money management, decision-making, and problem-solving help the trainees develop holistically beyond job-specific abilities. These skills are vital for young people, especially those who exhibit dysfunctional behaviours and addictions, many of whom are sent to DB BEST in the hope of their reformation.



- **The supportive environment** is highly valued by the trainees confirming that young people learn better in such situations. Trainees are better engaged and responsive growing in confidence with the guidance and encouragement of approachable staff.
- **Domain skills** were valued by the trainees as they made them more confident to enter the job market and enhanced their ability to persevere in their work. This also suggests that trainees found that the DB BEST training content was useful and relevant even in the real world. It would be good for DB BEST to continue to update their programme content to help trainees stay relevant in the workplace.
- **Social connections** and peer influences are very important to young people. It is a well-established fact that in the absence of supportive families and home environments, it is the peer circle that highly influences the lives of youth. Friendships and networks formed at this stage in life foster a sense of belonging and become support systems for life. When all the peers are simultaneously encouraged to develop positive behaviours, they automatically act as motivators to each other, strengthening the positive effect.
- **Counselling and personal support** acknowledged by the trainees highlights the need of mental

healthcare for the youth. Today's youth are more willing to express their needs and access help if available. It is one of the most effective ways of turning around the lives of youth who are on a self-destructive path. It might benefit the programme overall to increase access to both personal and group counselling and mentoring.

DB BEST's strength lies in its balanced approach to promoting job readiness and personal development. Though the satisfaction expressed by the respondents is evident (**92.4%**), it is important to be alert to the issues faced by certain individuals if they have any bearing on the programme as a whole. The survey could not go into the details of the factors that prompted dissatisfaction among **7.6%** of the respondents.



## JASWIN KARTHIK

21 years, BCom, Bangalore

DB BEST Retail Management, Batch 11

*Hailing from a single-wage family with three elder sisters, Jaswin was expected*

to support his father financially as the only male child. Yet his determination to pursue higher studies was irrepressible. Unlike his parents and siblings who gave up their education for various reasons, he was not willing to give up on his dream.



After completing class 12, Jaswin was discouraged from going to college, but he was determined and applied to a BCom course. He earned his fees by working in McDonald's after college hours. In the short span of his 21 years, he went through lots of ups and downs and tribulations, but he did not lose hope. By the time he completed his studies, his father's health issues added to his responsibilities. The inability to communicate in English and the lack of self-presentation skills prevented him from getting a decent job.

At this time, he heard about the free skill training programme at DBBEST Academy, and he decided to give it a chance. At the centre, he was active, keen to learn, but

always late to classes in the morning. Through counselling, the trainers learned about his background and night shift work. All the trainers appreciated his positivity; he was never upset or disappointed about life, instead he was passionate about living life to its fullest. Through the training, he developed his ability to address an audience, learning professional manners and behaviours, and communication skills in English.

He was initially placed in Lend Buddy through campus placement, with a salary of INR 8000. After six months of experience in the same, he attended an interview at YES Bank and began to work as a Field Executive- earning a monthly income of INR 18000. He is grateful for the training that helped him develop into a better professional and a successful person.

Jaswin Karthik happily says, "DB BEST Academy is a place where you can find yourself. The academy is like a light- it shows the light for you to succeed in your life. The academy really changed me and my life, personally as well as professionally. I'm so privileged to speak about my academy and I will refer my friends to also come to the centre."

## GOUTAM SENAPATI

24 years, Odisha

DB BEST Hospitality Management

Goutam hails from Sahapur in Odisha, where he studied in a local government school and secured 42% in his SSLC examinations. His mother worked as a domestic maid while his father was

a small-time seller of clothes. Though from a poor family, it did not discourage or deter Goutam from wanting to take up higher studies.



Since both his parents returned late at night after work, he had to manage his own care and studies at the same time. Both his elder sisters left their education midway due to their impoverished condition. Since he was a male, and had passed his exams, he was allowed to continue his education. He was also able to earn enough for his schooling and higher studies by helping his father during his free time. He decided he would never give up his education and would gain a decent job.

After the completion of his studies, he heard about DB BEST Academy from a priest in his hometown and travelled to Bangalore. After the interest inventory and induction classes, he was given the suggestion to take up hospitality as his domain. In the beginning, he could not adjust to the language and food. But the trainers motivated him and helped him survive through the difficulties. After three months of training, he was placed in the Biere Club F & B Services.

Subsequently, he was able to support his family as well. He shares that he gained confidence and improved his

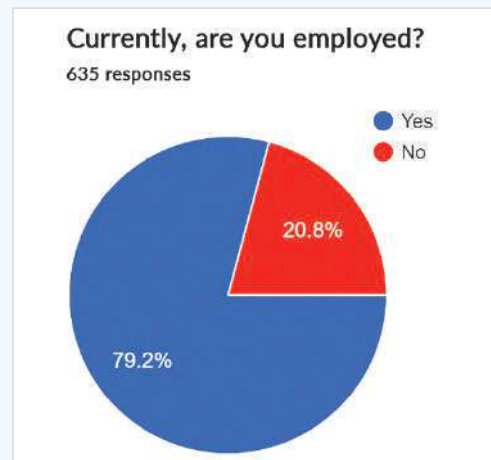
communication skills through the training and is grateful to DB BEST Academy for all the motivation and guidance provided.

## V. An Investment in Lives and Society

DB BEST or any other skilling or education initiative can be viewed as an investment in youth, with the understanding that investments in their participation and leadership can motivate young people to transform the social and economic fortunes of their communities and the country.

One could be skeptical about the worth/ability of a 3-month skilling course to contribute and create real value in terms of wealth and positive experience for its users. To evaluate this viewpoint, besides the positive anecdotal evidence of trainees about their growth, we examined the viability of the programme in terms of salaries earned by trainees after completing the skilling programme and placement.

### 1. Current Employment Status



## Proportional Analysis of Employment between Sexes

Sex	Employed (%)	Unemployed (%)
Female	66.04%	33.96%
Male	85.82%	14.18%

From the survey, the findings about employment after skilling and placement were as follows:

- Employment among the DB BEST graduates was a commendably high **79.2%** indicating that the youth continue to be gainfully employed and pursuing a livelihood. This also indicates that the various employability skills learned in DB BEST help the trainee continue to stay employed.
- The unemployed or in-between jobs section of graduates at **20.8%** is not the best statistic. However, the reasons for unemployment are not known as the survey did not delve into the details of this aspect.
- The employment rate among women was **66.04%**. Given that the population is of the conventional marriageable age, and that marriages and pregnancies often cause disruption in careers and work options especially for women, it is encouraging that most women continued to be in the work force.
- A significantly large proportion of men **85.82%** continued to be employed which is a positive finding. This could also be attributed to the traditional role of men as breadwinners of the family.

## YESUDAS K.A

32 years, BCom, BEd, MA Literature,  
Bangalore

DB BEST Business Process Outsourcing  
(BPO), Batch 16

*I would like to share my little story. I started my work career managing my father's tuition centre and teaching there from 2011 to 2020, earning between 10,000-12,000 per month. Unfortunately, due to the COVID pandemic, we had to shut down the centre and I had to work as a Picker Packer in Swiggy and Instamart for five months.*



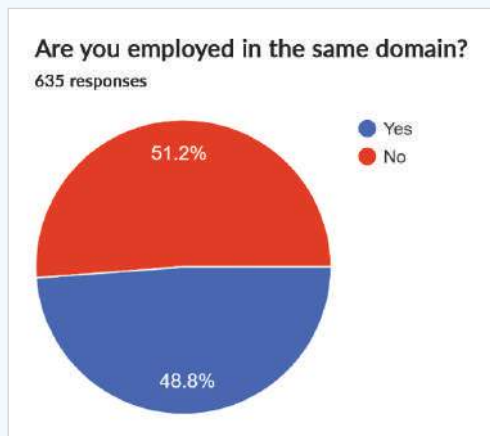
*I was unhappy with my job and wanted more out of my life. At this time, I was introduced to DB BEST through a family friend in September 2021. At DB Best Academy I gained a lot of knowledge and developed confidence in public speaking. I liked the routine of the training programme where we start the day with a prayer, and I enjoyed having*

*lunch with my friends. I didn't want to work under any person and for any organisation, but DB BEST taught me to adapt to a professional environment and develop professional relationships. The staff were very friendly and approachable, with selfless attitudes, very service oriented, serving with a smile.*

*After the training, I was more confident of achieving my goal and I applied for a job with Seshadripuram Public School, Yelahanka and have been a teacher since Feb 2022. I enjoy teaching and would like to continue in this profession. I learnt public speaking from DB Best Academy which I still practise in my profession. I often have been called to judge various debate events.*

*I have been blessed with a great career and I encourage the youngsters who join DB BEST Academy to explore more opportunities and build a career. I am a proud past pupil of DB Best Academy.*

## 2. Domains of Employment



- The survey presented a trend of **51.2%** placed trainees switching

from the domains in which they were originally trained. It is an interesting trend that half the trainees switched domains, but the survey did not examine the reasons for the shift.

Shift In Domain		
Domain	No of students	Percentage
Hospitality	12	3.6%
Retail	45	13.8%
BPO	35	10.7%
Own Business	10	3.0%
Self employed	2	0.6%
Unemployed	3	0.9%
Unwilling to work	7	2.1%
Small services	16	4.9%
Medical	5	1.5%
Commerce	7	2.1%
Analyst	3	0.9%
Teacher	2	0.6%
Entertainment	1	0.3%
Sports	1	0.3%
Higher studies	12	3.6%
Others	36	11.0%
NA	128	39.38%
<b>Total</b>	<b>325</b>	

- Analysis of the data received indicates that trainees rotated among hospitality, retail and BPO domains. The largest switch was towards the retail industry, probably indicating that jobs were more readily accessible in that industry and their fundamental training was sufficient for them to get into the retail sector.

- The data also indicates that the trainees were confident enough to switch to other domains, including setting up their own enterprises. That is a positive indication of the usefulness of the skillset provided by DB BEST.

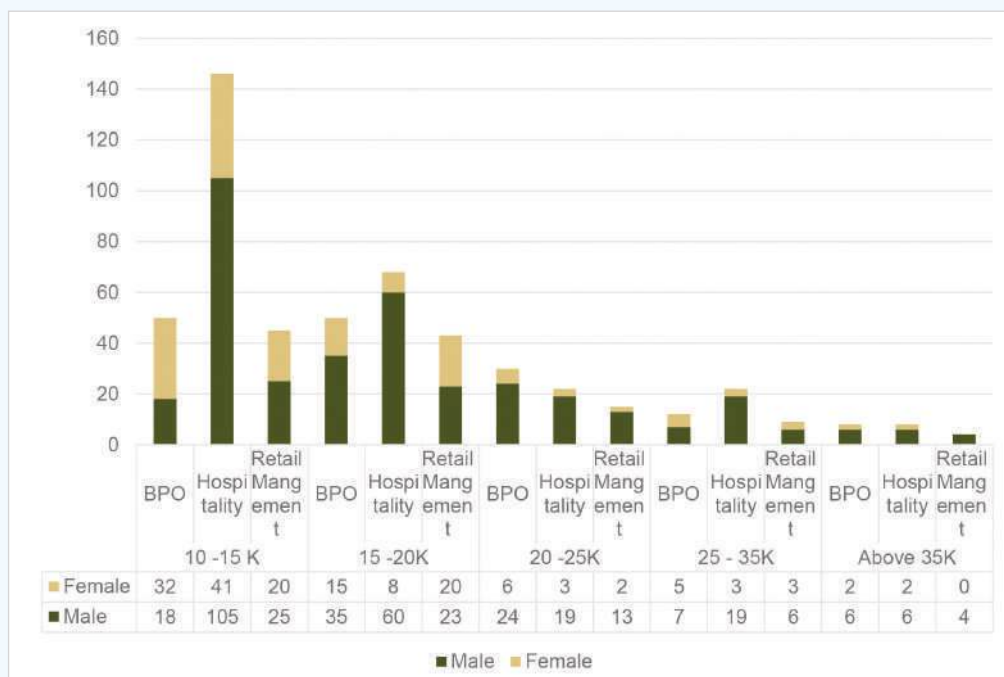
### 3. Distribution of Income across Domain and Gender

Since the data was not even across the domains nor gender, a proportional analysis of the trainees' income across different variables was made to gain some insights.

reasons for this could be that a greater proportion of respondents were from the recent batches and therefore are recent employees with starting salaries. Another differentiator is that the hospitality industry often offers food and accommodation as separate benefits with lower salaries.

#### • 15000-20000 income range

Proportions for BPO (27.32%) and Retail Management (29.05%) are similar, with Hospitality slightly lower at 22.37%.



#### • 10000-15000 income range

Most of the surveyed trainees fell in this category. Hospitality management had 48.03% trainees in this range as compared to BPO (27.32%) and Retail Management (30.41%). One of the

#### • 20000-25000 income range

BPO graduates have a higher representation here (16.39%) compared to Hospitality (7.24%) and Retail Management (14.19%). BPO and retail management seem to offer better mid-range op-





portunities than the other two courses, which also coincides with the data about half the graduates switching their domains to BPO and retail.

- **25000-35000 income range and beyond**

The percentages in the highest salary brackets are fairly low across all courses, but Hospitality has the largest proportion in the Above 35000 range (5.26%) compared to BPO (4.37%) and Retail Management (2.7%). These high-income hospitality graduates are those who got opportunities to work abroad, which is particularly an opportunity more available to the hospitality candidates.

- **Female Representation in the Income brackets**

- ❖ **BPO:** 64% of women earned in the 10-15K range, 41.67% in 25-35K range, 30% in the 15-20K range, 20% in the 20-25K range

and 25% in the highest salary range.

- ❖ **Hospitality:** Female representation is higher in the 10-15K range (28.08%), 11.76% in the 15-20K range and 12.5% in the above 35K range.

- ❖ **Retail Management:** Female representation is more balanced in the 10-15K range (44.44%) and 15-20K range (46.51%), but women are not represented in the Above 35K range (0%).

- The proportional analysis suggests that the observed trends are not merely due to sample size but reflect genuine differences across the domains in terms of salary outcomes. As pointed out earlier, compensation is packaged differently across the three domains.
- Women are better represented in the mid-income brackets in retail

management and BPO sectors, which could be attributed to the fact that they are present in greater numbers in those industries. The number of women who choose hospitality management are quite few. It also indicates that women are probably able to sustain better in jobs (indoor/desk) that are approved by families rather than hospitality jobs.

- Women are not equally represented in the higher salary brackets which is a common trend.

## YAMUNA

20 years, Class 12, Bangalore

DB BEST Retail Management, Batch 10

*Yamuna, a cheerful and enthusiastic girl, joined DB BEST, ambitious of a good future and longing for a decent job. She lives in Bangalore with her parents and younger siblings. After the interest inventory, she chose to pursue her domain training in retail management. During the 3-month course, she exhibited her skills in both extracurricular activities and her academics. Realising her potential, the trainers encouraged her to resume higher education by correspondence as she had discontinued after class 12 due to familial and financial issues. The life skill trainings helped Yamuna gain confidence about her abilities. Through the monitoring of the trainers, she overcame her fear of public presentations and rejection. Successfully completing her course, she became a Customer Loan Executive in Lend Buddy with a salary of 8000*

*through the placement service at DB BEST.*

*At her farewell ceremony, she shared, "The lesson I learnt from my experience here is that we have to overcome our fears and not let them control us, because we don't realise our capabilities where fear rules us".*

*She is all set to climb to greater heights having moved to a better job at the Regional Transport Office while continuing her studies.*

### 4. Cost Benefit Analysis

From a project/investment point of view, it is important to assess whether a programme is worth the investment. Using the return on investment (ROI) method for a development initiative is difficult as net profit is hard to calculate as timelines are long, data is hard to gather, and resources are always tight.

If we were to do a cost-benefit analysis of DB BEST based on the data received in the survey, we can make the following observations about its profitability as a social enterprise:

- Based on the salary distribution of **539** respondents in the survey, we find that the average monthly salary per candidate is **INR 17,674**.
- Based on the survey findings of the employed section (79.3% i.e. 1036) and the per capita salary of the trainees, the average annual salary of the employed section of respondents is calculated at **INR 219,728,103.9**.



- The average cost of training of 1616 candidates over the years, including the initial cost on infrastructure, amounts to **INR 20,969.62** per trainee.
- Therefore, we can observe that an investment of **INR 20,969.62** per trainee over the period of 3 months, is able to generate an income of **INR 219,728,103.9.** per annum at present. As time goes by and the trainee grows in experience and skills, s/he will be able to improve on the benefits received from DB BEST.
- DB BEST is open to its past trainees for assistance, especially for job placement. Therefore, another long-term benefit that the trainee continues to receive is help in finding a job even after leaving the institution.
- The skills, jobs and regular income have life-changing impact on not just the trainee but also his/her family as well as the local community, in terms of behavioural as well as monetary change. Due to the training and mentoring, many trainees are enabled to change their problematic behaviour and live peacefully and productively with their families.
- As a result of the training, many trainees are motivated to either restart their academic careers or at least complete basic levels of certification while they continue to work, understanding the benefit of education in improving their livelihood options. Thus, DB BEST contributes a more productive and educated workforce to various industries and the economy.
- Estimating that the **1036** employed trainees are earning **INR 219,728,103.9** per annum, we can propose that DB BEST is helping to generate GDP in different industries and the economy. This is also a

contribution towards the uplifting of sections of society out of poverty into a better standard of living.

Overall, the various layers of benefits and the volume of returns, makes DB BEST a highly efficient, effective and impactful social initiative as well as a wise financial investment.

## JOB FRANCIS

27 years, BTech Mechanical Engineering, Tamil Nadu  
DB BEST Hospitality Management, Batch 21

*Any place you go, anything you do, is not the end goal; rather it opens up new opportunities in life, to take more risks and to make ourselves stronger by continuously learning and sharing that knowledge to make the world a better place for all.*



*I have always wanted to do something that would make me successful in life and kept myself busy thinking about the ways to be successful. But I never*

*thought once about the definition for success. Lost and confused, I was unemployed and broke for more than a year, when one day, my aunt, who is a nun, called up and told me about DB BEST academy. Initially, I thought it was a course mostly designed for very young people and what could happen in my life with a three-month diploma? At the same time, I didn't ignore it fully either, as I had heard a lot about the Don Bosco missions and education programmes. And for a broke man whose life has come to a full stop, the fact that the course is free and has placement assistance wasn't something that I could totally ignore. I did think about it a lot and finally took that leap of faith in my 26th year of life.*

*I reached Bangalore, as guided by Mrs. Baby who was my only point of contact in this new city. I was welcomed with warmth into the gates of the academy by Mr. Kennady. Days went by, all the trainees were younger than me. Funnily, I was nearly as old as some of the trainers, and as a person who had worked at different jobs for two years, I felt very uncomfortable and unable to fit in. But through fate, as I would call it, I was elected student representative, and this is when I started to see things differently and go with the flow.*

*The three-month course pushed me to try new things, face new people and break my ego, which finally resulted in me growing myself from the inside. When I look back, I would call that place my home, and those people, my family.*

*I got my first job in Bangalore at Hotel Geo as a Housekeeping Supervisor and I thought my problems would end, but things got rough. God, as I would call that energy, pushed me into the darkest of times in my life, yet slowly it whispered to me, "Life doesn't get easier, so make yourself stronger." I grew to be the CRS executive and Guest Relations Executive for the same group of hotels and resorts, Radiant Nest Pvt Ltd. I also worked as a Front Office executive at Ankit Vista resort in Bangalore. Currently, with the blessings of the Almighty, I am the Manager of one of*

*the few restobars in my hometown, The Topsy Bison's Restobar, Coonoor in the Nilgiris.*

*"Success is not a destination but a way of life, which can be proved only after one's death" I know that this is not the end of my life but just the beginning of many more things yet to come. I also realised that I'm not alone in this, my God will work through different people and incidents so that I'm stronger through him.*

*Humbly thanking all those who were the reason for making me who I am now."*



# CONCLUSION

Based on this survey to assess the impact of DB BEST on its beneficiaries, it is satisfying to note that there is clearly a very consistent positive impact over the years.

DB BEST has shown up as an important intervention in the lives of the youth trained and their families. It has also proved to be an important source of hope and direction for them. Viewed in the context of India's economically and socially stratified society, DB BEST contributes positively towards the socioeconomic upliftment of the marginalised sections through personal development and financial independence.

There is a high satisfaction index expressed by the beneficiaries of DB BEST as they perceive its relevance to their needs and their suggestions for improvement are about increasing the number of courses and increasing the length of the courses so that the student can learn more about the domain.

While programme efficiency and upgrading should be a constant effort from any institution, the survey suggests that DB BEST is focused on the right aspects of skilling for employability.

As the numbers and the testimonials indicate, the trainees find the intervention impactful in their lives. DB BEST could build on this foundation to improve quality and relevance to the fluid job market.

It is a testament to BREADS' efficient management that DB BEST has been sustained through meaningful CSR partnerships since its inception. This is a commendable model, which can continue to be improved upon.

We can conclude that DB BEST Academy is a small but smart initiative that is fulfilling Don Bosco's vision of creating good and honest citizens out of youth who are at risk. Long may DB BEST flourish and bear fruit.



*Jaswin Karthik happily says, "DB BEST Academy is a place where you can find yourself. The academy is like a light- it shows the light for you to succeed in your life. The academy really changed me and my life, personally as well as professionally. I'm so privileged to speak about my academy and I will refer my friends to also come to the centre."*

Jaswin is one of the 1616 successful graduates from DB BEST Academy, who are represented in the study conducted by BREADS to assess the impact of its skill training initiative, DB BEST Academy.

Don Bosco BREADS' Employment and Skill Training (DB BEST) Academy, set up in Bangalore in 2016, to offer skilling and employment assistance for youth who are school dropouts, or economically disadvantaged especially from rural areas; celebrates 25 successful batches of skilled youth. The academy offers free three-month skilling in three domains \_ Hospitality and Retail Management, and Business Process Outsourcing (BPO). Trainees engage in hands-on, industry-focused training in a supportive environment under the supervision of the Don Bosco team, learning communication, computer and life skills alongside.

This publication documents the findings from the impact assessment of DB BEST Academy through the eyes of the youth that it serves. The trainees were unanimous in their appreciation of the positive impact of DB BEST in their personal and professional lives. They see DB BEST as a source of hope and direction for them; an important intervention in their individual lives that impacts their families as well.

Viewed in the context of India's economically and socially stratified society, DB BEST contributes positively towards the socioeconomic upliftment of the marginalised sections through personal development and financial independence. DB BEST is also a model of a sustainable social intervention through well-developed corporate partnerships.

DB BEST Academy stands out as a small but smart initiative that is fulfilling Don Bosco's vision of creating good and honest citizens out of youth who are in need.



**BREADS**  
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