



**Pudumai
Penn**



Pudumaipenn 2017-18 Annual Report

Message from the Founding Trustee

Our journey at Pudumai Penn Foundation started in May 2014 with just 8 students, few donors and lot of well-wishers. Within a year, support grew by qualified professionals moving in as volunteers and freely giving their time, willing to share their experience and knowledge . We have grown in strength to 89 students in less than 4 years – a proud achievement for all of us personally involved in activities as well as to the donors who are silently contributing and encouraging our growth.

Our primary objective is to provide Financial Empowerment to high performing girls from economically marginalised groups through Higher education, Skills building and Mentoring. Apart from regular college courses we also sponsor them for training in competitive examinations and professional courses such as Chartered Accountancy. We sponsor and support our students in preparing for Athletic events under sports category. Glad to report that as part of 2018 initiative our involvement with girls commence earlier now as we have started to conduct aptitude tests and counselling to 10th standard students so they choose the right path and excel in the chosen area.

2017-18 has been an extremely gratifying year and we are happy to see our first graduates from the initial batch secure jobs in various industries. A couple of sports scholars have done us proud by winning medals at State level competitions. As we look forward to a new year and a new batch in 2018-19, Special humble thanks to all the volunteers, Sponsors and Donors. We could not have achieved without your dedication and commitment.

VANAJA ARVIND
FOUNDING TRUSTEE



Empowering bright young girls through *Education - Training - Mentoring*

Founded in 2014, Pudumai Penn Foundation is registered as a society under the Tamilnadu Societies Registration Act 1975 . It is administered by a board of trustees and supported by a think tank of experts, mentors and volunteers.

Our vision is to empower selected girl-school leavers from underprivileged backgrounds by fostering all round life skills to achieve personal excellence, career aspirations, economic independence and social impact. We aim to impart knowledge and provide opportunities to learn so that they can work and achieve highly, regardless of individual, social and economic challenges.



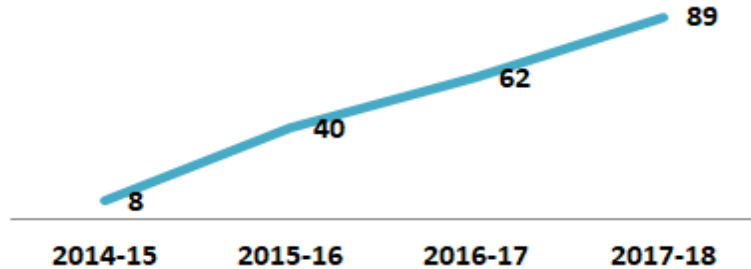
We do this by providing our scholars with the following:

- Academic and sports scholarships for a graduate degree qualification
- Grooming for employability to enable financial independence
- Coaching, mentoring and support
- Internship and placement guidance
- Professional, replicable processes and assessments
- A systematic 3-year skills enhancement program that includes spoken English, digital training, employability and workplace skills, interview techniques, teamwork and other life skills.



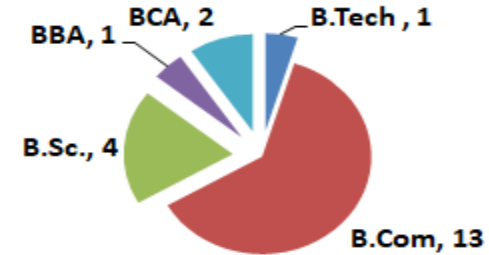
2017-18 Overview

Number of scholar students



From 8 to 89 students in 4 years. These years have been a journey of learning and growth.

Students graduating in 2018



21 students are to graduate in 2018 of which 20 are from 2015-16 batch and 1 from 2014-15 batch (Engineering)

Summary of Internal workshops/ Expert talk sessions in 2017-18

No. of workshops (including scheduled workshops until the end of the academic year)	10
Average participation in workshops	>80%
No. of Expert Talk sessions	3
Average participation in Expert talk sessions	81%
No. of Accountancy coaching classes conducted for B.Com students	12

Summary of Training & Recruitment through External Corporates

No. of students who underwent Digital training conducted by a leading IT service provider	36
Scholars recruited through program conducted by a leading IT service provider	9
No. of students who completed The Hindu STEP program	28

Cohort highlights

Our eventful journey from 8 to 89 students -

2014 batch – Of the first cohort of ten students , 7 have graduated, 1 will graduate in 2018, 2 dropped out.

- 7 girls have secured a degree. Most are the first graduates in their families. 1 student will receive her engineering degree in 2018. 2 dropped out in the first and third year respectively.
- 5 have successfully secured jobs through campus interviews and are employed in varied roles like an Accounting analyst (Real Estate services company) and Dentist (Paediatric Dental clinic).
- 1 student is a sports scholar, a pole vaulter who has already won medals in inter state competitions representing Tamilnadu. She is now training intensively to compete at higher levels.
- 1 of the graduates is set to appear for the Bank Officers examination in Aug 2018 and we are supporting her through this process.

2015 batch - Of the 42 students in the 2015 batch, 20 will graduate in 2018 and 12 in 2019; 10 dropped out.

- 13 girls pursue Commerce degree, 11 pursue Engineering degree, 4 pursue Science degree and rest pursue other courses such as BBA, BCA and B Pharm.
- They are mentored to be job ready with skills workshops, confidence building, resume preparation and interview training.
- 10 students dropped out

2016 and 2017 batches - 22 girls in 2016 and 27 girls in 2017

- In the 2016 Batch, 11 pursue Commerce degree, 3 Engineering degree, 5 Science degree and rest pursue various other degrees including BA LLB and BCA.
- Degrees pursued by 2017 batch scholars : Bcom (14), BSc (5), Engineering (4), Others (4)

Sports scholars – 2 Sports scholars

- We have 2 sports scholars who have made us proud by winning medals in multiple meets in the state.
- It is our goal to encourage talented young girls pursuing individual sports such as Tennis, Badminton, Boxing etc by providing sports scholarship.

Facilities

We strive to offer our scholars a conducive environment and an access to modern facilities to help them learn and develop new skills.

To this end we have a computer centre with workstations donated by a former colleague (who also paid a year's charges for the WIFI so the centre can kick off successfully), to enable the girls to become digitally literate and access the wealth of information available on the world wide web, explore employment opportunities and communicate globally.

During the early days, we used the premises of a church and the conference rooms of benevolent companies to conduct our Sunday training sessions. We have now expanded operations to a full time rented office premise at Adyar, which offers a comfortable and convenient location for the scholars to attend workshops, digital training sessions, English language skills classes as well as Volunteers meetings and interviews. The office can accommodate training for around 25 students and for larger classes we rent halls for specific sessions.

We provide our sports scholars with the equipment and nutrition to support their training and development.

In February 2017, the Foundation opened its library, stocked with a range of books donated by a well-wisher to provide the students with access to high quality reading material. We plan to develop this further by adding more suitable books, magazines and newspapers.

English proficiency

Our goal is to ensure that our students shine in the areas of their choice and grow successfully in their respective careers. For this, it is essential to equip them with supplemental communication skills to enhance curricular learning. Our training roadmap is designed to achieve this in a span of 3-4 years with every student.

English language proficiency

During the initial years we had outsourced English language training to an external training organization who had created a customised language training program for our scholars to help them develop confidence and participate effectively in presenting themselves in group discussions. Since 2017, The Hindu has been helping our scholars improve their English proficiency via their STEP program.

STEP program

Thanks to the generous support from **The Hindu**, our scholars have access to its successful STEP online English language testing, training and certification program. The program includes tests and training modules to improve English reading, writing, listening and speaking.

One-to-one mentoring

Another initiative in this regard is the spoken English mentorship program, which kicked off in January 2017. To provide more opportunities to practice speaking English, students identified as needing help were attached to volunteer 'mentors'. Over 15 students have benefitted from this program, showing remarkable improvement in speaking skills and confidence. We plan to introduce more mentors in 2018-19.

External assessments

To benchmark progress, recognise achievement and identify areas of improvement we conduct a half-day English assessment every six months and this comprises of both oral and written components. In the recently conducted assessment, though initially hesitant, all the girls spoke fluently and confidently, impressing the external assessors with the progress they had made over the past six months.

Workshops

Soft skills for employability

This is a key area for development of young graduate students from marginalised sections of society as their home environments are not conducive for the development of such skills. Following the positive response received to early informational sessions on a range of topics, we formalised an 'employability skills building program' in 2016.

Run entirely by volunteers, our soft skills program takes the form of interactive workshops to facilitate active participation by students. These workshops are led by experienced coaches and facilitators who generously give their time to our students. Each student receives around 80 hours of such training during the three years of their graduation.

Our aim is to make this a full-fledged certification program with suitable independent assessment processes in place by 2018. In 2017-18, 10 training sessions have been conducted. Participation rate: - >80%

- **Self Awareness** conducted by **R Ravishankar**, on leveraging strengths for success.
- **Goal Setting** by **Vidhya Raghu** on the importance of setting clear goals and realistic timelines to achieve them.
- **Reachout to Excellence** session by **Unni Nair**, on overcoming perceived handicaps and limitations for success.
- **Building Emotional Capability** for success by **Sarah Kachwalla**, on dealing with positive and negative emotions.
- **Workplace Etiquette and Managing Habits** conducted by **Pratap Anand**, on teamwork, communication and etiquette.
- **Critical Thinking and Problem Solving** by **Sarah Kachwalla**
- **Interview skills** by **Unni Nair** including interview practice and aptitude testing practice.
- **Giving Back** by **Sarah Kachwalla**
- **Interview Skills** by **Kalpana Sundaram**
- **Rise above the mindset** by **Jacintha Jayachandran**

Two expert talks were held, with 81% of scholars attending. Another is planned for the end of the academic year.

- **Story Telling** by **Savithri Ravichandran**
- **Book Reading** by **Thomas Abraham**
- **Developing Employability skills** by **Shyam C Raman** (scheduled)

Programs conducted by Corporates and External Supporters

A leading global IT services provider, as part of their CSR program, has conducted basic and advanced **digital literacy classes** for Pudumaipenn scholars over the past four years. All our students have benefited from this training, sometimes securing part time jobs to augment their income.

Activities conducted by the Leading IT services provider in 2017-18			
Level	Topic	Batch	No of students
Level 1 Digital Training	MS Office	2017-18	25
Level 2 Digital Training	ECommerce	2016-17	11

5 students in the 2016-17 batch and 4 from 2017-18 batch were recruited through this program. Average semester marks of these five 2016-17 batch scholars was **80.3%**.

In August 2017, **The Hindu** offered 30 of our scholars free access to its **STEP** (Standardized Test of English Proficiency) Program. STEP is an online English language testing, training and certification program with tests and training modules to improve English reading, writing, listening and speaking. 28 girls successfully completed the program during the year.

Going forward we plan to establish a “Minimum level of English fluency” and assess the fluency levels of our scholars. Based on this assessment, we shall recommend the course only to students who do not meet this minimum level. This is due to the fact that many students come from English medium and require only polishing of their communication skills. **The Hindu** has offered 30 free licences for the upcoming year as well.

Reaching out to potential future scholars

From regular interactions with our scholars, the Foundation volunteers gleaned that these students are selecting their Class 12 branch (or Groups) based on advice from friends and families. The branch (groups) they choose are not always based on their aptitude or career potential. As this decision is taken on completion of 10th standard, we decided to target the 10th students to assess their aptitude and provide counselling to them as to how they should choose their branch.

One of the volunteers who is spearheading a HR start up called **Future Captains** supported us in this study and counselling very successfully. Future Captains has conducted psychometric profiling of 52 girls from 6 different schools and followed it up with counselling. With the results presented, Pudumai Penn will be able to make an early assessment of these students and can choose scholars from this group on their completion of 12th standard.



Funding requirements and Way Forward

Foundation's first 2 years have been spent on establishing robust systems, processes, building a team of volunteers and testing the concept of our focus and employability. The focus and the process is now tested and ready for acceleration. Our desire is to accelerate, cover more schools, increase the number of students supported and spread the coverage to more schools in Chennai. Current funding will be sufficient to finance the existing students till they complete their graduation. We need to continue our support for fresh batch of students and their graduation with same dedication and focus . To support 30-35 students though their graduation of 3-6 years , we need corporates who can sponsor 8-10 students in an ongoing basis . We also need large training facilities to conduct multiple workshops.

We are limited by funding & infrastructure as raising funds/ grants is a huge challenge. One strategy we have initiated is requesting direct sponsorship by corporates - similar to our arraignment with a Leading IT service provider. In the last 3 years, they have sponsored 9 students chosen by us and enrolled under Pudumaipenn with direct money transfer to students under their CSR program. We are trying to find more such corporate sponsors who can adopt 8 -10 students from our 2018-19 group and pay their fees either through Pudumaipenn or directly. We hope to select 30-35 students in 2018 through the sponsorship as well as direct donations program.

We shall be grateful to Corporates interested in taking in students and they can directly reach out to Lakshmi Vasan at lakshmi.krutivasan@pudumaipenn.org copying Vanaja Arvind at vanaja.arvind@pudumaipenn.org.

Direct Corporate sponsorship helps fund scholars' tuition fees which is a significant portion of our expenses. Additionally there is a need to raise funds for conducting skills program , maintaining computer centres , paying office rent etc.

We are exploring newer avenues of fund raising such as signing up as charity partners with organizers conducting events . We had managed to raise about Rs.85,000 from The Chennai Wipro Marathon 2017 out of a target of Rs.5,00,000. Happy to report 2 volunteers ran Full Marathon and one volunteer ran 10Km Marathon to promote the cause of the Foundation.



Our Trustees

**Vanaja Arvind
S Arvind
Mohan Pravartikar
Anu Ramani**

Volunteers and Silent contributors (in alphabetic order)

**Anand Arvind
Annadurai V
Chandrasekaran S
Deepti Srivatsan
Giridhar Chakravarthi
Gita Muralidharan
Gogulamadhavan R
Jacintha Jayachandran
Jayanthi Sampathkumar
Lakshmi Krutivasan**

**Mohan Subramanian
Nandakumar Subbaraman
Prathima Rajan
Rajini Sriram
Ravishankar R
Sara Kachwalla
Tamilselvan Mahalingam
Thomas T Abraham
Unni Nair
Vidya Raghu**



List of Schools covered in 2017-18

Sl. No	School and Area
1	Govt Hr Secondary Secondary school (Thuraipakkam)
2	Chennai Hr Secondary school (Thiruvanmiyur)
3	Lady Sivaswami Ayyar Girls Higher Secondary (Mylapore)
4	Olcott Memorial Higher Secondary School (Besant Nagar)
5	St. Raphael's Girls Higher Secondary School (Mylapore)
6	Chennai Girls Higher Secondary School (Saidapet)
7	St. Joseph's Higher Secondary School (Vettuvankeni)
8	Government Girls Higher Secondary School (Porur)



**Pudumai
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Contact

Administrative Office

Apt 1B, Kanaka Krishna
14, 2nd Main Road
Gandhi Nagar
Chennai 600020
India
Phone: +91-44-4354 2003

Email: admin@pudumaipenn.org

Website: <http://www.pudumaipenn.org/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Pudumaipenn/>



**Pudumai
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The Pudumaipenn family - 2016



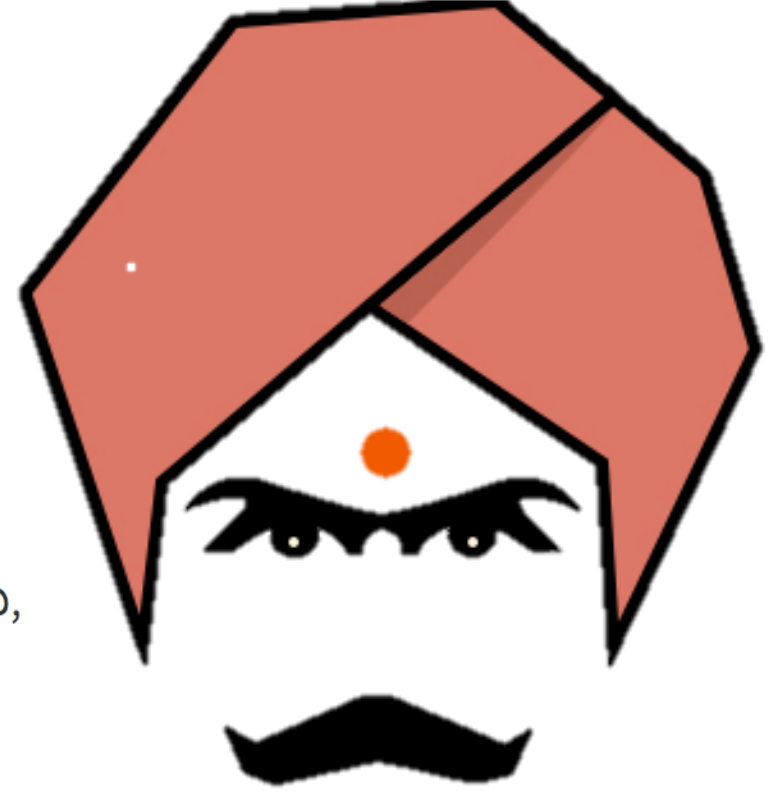
**Pudumai
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The Pudumaipenn family - 2017



**Pudumai
Penn**



நிமிர்ந்த நன்னடை நேர்கொண்ட பார்வையும்,
நிலத்தில் யார்க்கும் அஞ்சாத நெறிகளும்,
திமிர்ந்த ஞானச் செருக்கும் இருப்பதால்
செம்மை மாதர் திறம்புவ தில்லையாம்;

In English:

*Walking with assurance, their heads held high,
Fearless because of their principles,
Filled with pride because of their wisdom
Women of excellence do not deflect from their path.*