

# Draft Summary Report **Business School on Wheels and Chamber of Commerce**



## Summary Report

### Introduction

RBL Bank's Business School on Wheels and Chamber of Commerce, implemented in Kolhapur, Maharashtra from the year 2020 to 2023. This innovative initiative aimed to empower rural women through tailored courses on financial literacy, entrepreneurship, and business development. By leveraging mobile training units, the project sought to bring skills and opportunities directly to the women, breaking traditional barriers to learning and participation.

Rural women in India face significant challenges in accessing entrepreneurship opportunities, including limited financial literacy, lack of market linkages, and socio-cultural barriers. Despite contributing extensively to household incomes and agricultural labour, their participation in formal entrepreneurial ventures remains minimal. With the increasing availability of microfinance and skill development programmes, there is growing potential to tap into their entrepreneurial spirit and foster sustainable livelihoods.

The intervention focused on addressing these challenges by equipping rural women with essential skills, financial knowledge, and business acumen. Its primary objective was to foster entrepreneurship, enhance financial independence, and create a robust support ecosystem. By targeting inclusivity, relevance, and sustainability, the initiative aimed to empower women to start and grow businesses, contribute to their communities, and achieve economic self-reliance.



### Relevance of the project

RBL Bank's Business School on Wheels and Chamber of Commerce project is a significant and impactful initiative aimed at tackling the socio-economic challenges prevalent in rural communities, with a special focus on empowering women. In many parts of rural India, women face limited access to formal education, financial literacy, and entrepreneurial training—critical elements needed to achieve economic independence and self-sufficiency. The project has strategically bridged these gaps by bringing business education, vocational training, and financial resources directly to the doorsteps of rural populations. By equipping women with the knowledge, skills, and tools to start or expand their businesses, the initiative not only promoted individual growth but also contributed to the broader development of rural economies.

## Project Objectives

The project aimed to equip rural women with essential tools and knowledge to become successful entrepreneurs

- Deliver Accessible Business Education
- Enhance Livelihood Opportunities
- Promote Digital Financial Literacy
- Create Networking and Market Linkages
- Foster Self-Reliance and Confidence
- Support Sustainable Community Development

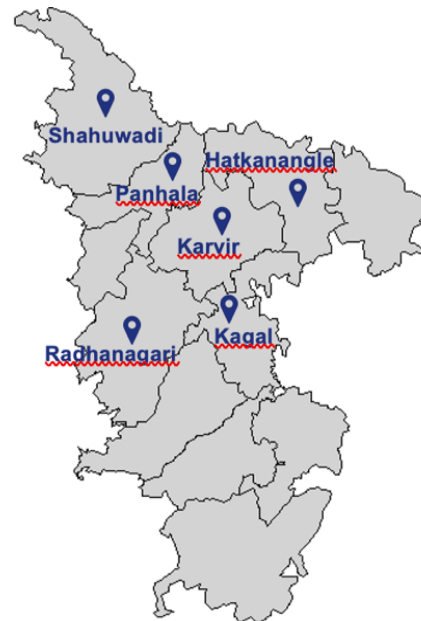
## Geographic Coverage & Socio-Demographic Profile

The project was implemented for the first time in Kolhapur, Maharashtra, focusing on targeting women from 6 talukas in Kolhapur. These blocks were strategically chosen to address the unique challenges faced by women in rural and underserved areas.

The project focused on villages within a 30–40 km radius of the project office in Kolhapur, ensuring accessibility for women from remote and marginalised communities.

The beneficiaries consisted of the following target groups:

- a) Women aspiring to start their own businesses
- b) Women already managing small businesses
- c) Women seeking training in financial literacy and vocational skills
- d) Women aged 18-55 years
- e) Participation was open to all, regardless of educational background
- f) Women from low-income households engaged in agriculture, daily wage labour, or informal economic activities



## Project Activities

The activities under the work scope of the implementation partner encompassed

Financial Literacy programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Financial literacy</li><li>• Digital financial literacy</li></ul>
Livelihood workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fashion designing</li><li>• Beauty parlour</li><li>• Agri-business</li></ul>
Business Development Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Entrepreneurship development workshops</li><li>• Skill development workshops</li></ul>
Deshi MBA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Deshi MBA Courses</li></ul>

## Sampling

A simple random sampling approach was followed to ensure the sample's representativeness, encompassing beneficiaries across all socio-economic strata. Following the technical sampling calculation methods, the total Sample size for the study was kept to be 355, However, on the field, the team achieved a sample of **409 surveys** from the primary beneficiaries. Along with 13 qualitative interviews/FGDs.

## Key Findings

Key Objective	Achievement Status	Remark
Deliver Accessible Business Education	Fully Achieved	Successfully implemented, with high participation and engagement from beneficiaries.
Enhance Livelihood Opportunities	Fully Achieved	Women were empowered to start businesses.
Promote Digital Financial Literacy	Fully Achieved	Beneficiaries developed strong digital finance skills; introducing advanced topics could add further
Create Networking and Market Linkage	Partially Achieved	Some progress has been made; however, establishing sustainable market linkages is a long-term process. Continued collaboration with the implementation agency will be crucial to achieving full success in the future.
Foster Self-Reliance and Confidence	Partially Achieved	Notable improvement observed; ongoing collaboration with the implementation agency can further strengthen confidence and independence
Support Sustainable Community Development	Partially Achieved	Encouraging strides made; maintaining close ties with the implementation agency can bolster long-term community growth and resilience.

In relation to the achievement of project objectives, the following analysis provides an in-depth understanding of the evaluation framework and key outcomes. The impact assessment for the Business School on Wheels and Chamber of Commerce was conducted on a sample of **409** beneficiaries, using the IRECS Framework. This framework evaluates five critical dimensions: Inclusiveness, Relevance, Expectations, Convergence, and Service Delivery. It offers a

structured approach to assessing the project's success in including diverse beneficiaries, meeting community needs, fulfilling participant expectations, integrating with other initiatives, and delivering services effectively.

This section presents a detailed analysis of the project's outcomes. Notable findings include significant improvements in financial literacy levels, increased entrepreneurial activity, and enhanced access to sustainable livelihood opportunities for women beneficiaries. These results highlight the project's transformative potential in empowering women and fostering long-term economic growth.

<b>Inclusiveness</b> (The extent to which communities equitably access the benefits of assets created and services delivered.)	<b>Age - 255</b> women beneficiaries, belonged between the age group of <b>26-40 years</b> , reflecting the project's effectiveness in engaging its core target demographic.
	<b>Marital status - 364</b> of the women beneficiaries were <b>married</b> , and <b>26 widowed</b> , ensuring the programme supported women who <b>manage households while striving for financial independence.</b>
	<b>Opening bank accounts - 158 of participants</b> opened their <b>first bank accounts</b> , marking a significant step towards <b>financial independence for rural women.</b>
	<b>Bank deposits and withdrawal - 349 of the beneficiaries</b> independently handle <b>deposits and withdrawals</b> at their banks.
	<b>Employment - The intervention increased women with self-owned businesses</b> from <b>177 to 338</b> and <b>reduced unemployment</b> among beneficiaries from <b>105 to 11.</b>
<b>Relevance</b> (The extent to which the project is geared to respond to the 'felt' needs of the community.)	<b>Pursuing multiple courses - 96 of the beneficiaries</b> pursued <b>multiple courses</b> as part of the project to identify their interests and enhance their business.
	<b>Awareness about the project - 214 of the beneficiaries</b> got to know about the <b>intervention through the project staff.</b>
	<b>Starting a new business - 209 of the beneficiaries</b> started a <b>new business</b> as a <b>direct result of the project.</b>
	<b>Profitable businesses - 397</b> of the beneficiaries <b>run profitable businesses.</b>
	<b>Digital payments - 32 of 34</b> beneficiaries who pursued <b>digital financial literacy</b> are <b>confident in making digital payments</b>

<p><b>Expectations</b> (The extent of intended and unintended positive benefits, socio-economic and cultural changes have accrued for beneficiaries.)</p>	<p><b>Making financial decisions - 401</b> of the women beneficiaries reported <b>confidence in making financial decisions.</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>Support provided through the project - 312</b> of the beneficiaries reported that they <b>received support such as skill training, help with licenses and buying machinery and financial support through the project.</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>Usage of digital tools - 102 beneficiaries used digital tools for digital payments and 30 for marketing.</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>Loans - 142</b> of participants successfully <b>availed financial support</b>, enabling them to grow their businesses. Out of which <b>141 of the women have even managed to fully repay the loan amount.</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>Savings - 82 of 104</b> women beneficiaries <b>have been saving money to support their long-term goals.</b></p>
<p><b>Convergence</b> (Assessing the degree of convergence with government / other partners; the degree of stakeholder buy-in achieved)</p>	<p><b>Alignment with SDG - Aligned with SDGs 1 (No Poverty) and 5 (Gender Equality)</b>, the initiative contributed to <b>poverty alleviation and women's empowerment.</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>Alignment with national initiatives</b> - The project <b>complemented national initiatives</b> such as the Skill India Mission and Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana, supporting broader socio-economic goals.</p> <hr/> <p><b>Local partnerships - Partnerships with local government bodies and self-help groups (SHGs) facilitated</b> project implementation and outreach.</p> <hr/> <p><b>Partnerships with other organisations with similar interests - Integration with existing microfinance and entrepreneurial support organisations ensured comprehensive support for participants.</b></p>
<p><b>Service Delivery</b> (The extent to which cost-efficient and time-efficient methods and processes were used to achieve results.)</p>	<p><b>Location of the workshops</b> - Workshops were <b>conducted within villages or at beneficiaries' homes (287)</b>, minimising travel challenges and ensuring higher participation.</p> <hr/> <p><b>Deshi MBA</b> - While most workshops were short-term, specialised training like the <b>Deshi MBA programme provided intensive and in-depth learning.</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>Provision of certificates - 247 of participants received certificates issued by Mann Deshi</b>, adding value to their skills and enhancing their credibility in the job and entrepreneurial markets.</p> <hr/> <p><b>Recommendations - 352 beneficiaries highly recommending</b> the courses to other women in their community.</p> <hr/> <p><b>Involvement in household financial decisions - 275 of women reported increased involvement in household financial decisions</b>, meeting their aspiration for greater autonomy.</p>

**Note:** The denominator for certain data points may vary based on the number of respondents relevant to each survey question

## Theory of change

The table below presents the outputs, outcomes, and overall impact achieved during the implementation phase of the project.

Activities	Output	Outcome	Impact
Financial literacy course	1518 women beneficiaries were provided with training on financial literacy	Improved understanding of budgeting, saving, and financial management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased financial independence for women and their families.</li> <li>• Enabled women to participate in digital finance, enhancing transaction security.</li> <li>• Supported income generation through self-employment in the fashion industry.</li> <li>• Expanded job opportunities and entrepreneurship in the beauty sector.</li> <li>• Improved livestock health, enhancing food security and farmer incomes.</li> <li>• Advanced sustainable agricultural livelihoods, benefiting the rural economy.</li> <li>• Stimulated local economies by fostering new businesses.</li> <li>• Equipped women to manage larger businesses, boosting community economic contributions.</li> </ul>
Digital financial literacy course	768 women beneficiaries were provided with training on Digital financial literacy	Enhanced access to online banking, digital payments, and financial tools.	
Livelihood workshop – fashion designing	676 women beneficiaries were provided with training in fashion design.	Increased capability to start small fashion businesses or secure employment in fashion-related fields.	
Livelihood workshop – beauty parlour	557 women beneficiaries were provided with training for beauty parlours.	Improved skill sets to start beauty parlours or work in the beauty industry.	
Livelihood workshop – Agri-business workshops	602 women beneficiaries were provided with training for agri-business.	Enhanced knowledge of agricultural practices, fostering small agribusiness ventures.	
Business development programme	1134 women beneficiaries were provided with trainings on skill and business development.	Increased knowledge of entrepreneurship, marketing, and business growth strategies.	
Deshi MBA programme	85 women beneficiaries were provided with Deshi MBAs	Equipped with advanced business and management skills.	
Goat Paravet programme	4 goat para vets trained for the goat project. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5870 farmer surveys conducted.</li> </ul>	Improved animal health and productivity through veterinary services and training.	

Activities	Output	Outcome	Impact
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 221 artificial inseminations were conducted.</li> <li>• 66442 chickens, sheep and goats vaccinated.</li> <li>• 4576 chickens, sheep and goats provided with primary treatment.</li> <li>• 748 beneficiaries trained through the project.</li> </ul>		

In **conclusion**, the project has successfully achieved its **core objectives** by delivering accessible business education, enhancing livelihood opportunities, promoting digital financial literacy, fostering self-reliance and confidence, creating networking and market linkages, and supporting sustainable community development. Through initiatives in fashion design, beauty parlours, and agri-business, beneficiaries have been empowered to establish their own businesses and generate employment opportunities. Additionally, the Deshi MBA programme has equipped women with advanced business management skills, enabling them to scale their enterprises effectively. These efforts have significantly contributed to local economies by boosting income generation, fostering sustainable livelihoods, and driving overall community growth. The project has made a lasting impact by empowering rural women with financial security and entrepreneurial capabilities.

### Recommendations

Following are the recommendations for the partners to enhance the project outcomes.

Sr. No.	Particulars	Impact Findings	Recommendations for Funding Agency	Recommendations for Implementation Agency
1	Increasing Loan Support	While revolving loans were beneficial, many beneficiaries expressed the need for higher loan amounts to scale their businesses.	Partner with financial institutions to expand loan options and offer flexible terms to women entrepreneurs.	- Revise the loan ceiling to meet women entrepreneurs' capital needs, partner with financial institutions for larger, flexible loans, and provide financial literacy training for responsible fund management. ensuring responsible borrowing and utilisation.
2	Enhance Marketing Training	Despite gaining essential skills, the use of digital tools for marketing remained limited.	Integration of advanced digital marketing training and tools into the Statement of Work.	- Offer advanced digital marketing modules, practical workshops on campaign creation, and access to affordable digital tools. - Introduce a marketing expert to work closely with the beneficiaries and provide tailored support.



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