

Executive Summary

RBL-FFE Scholarship Programme



Summary Report

Introduction

The RBL-FFE Scholarship Programme, launched in 2019-20, promotes social equity and quality education by supporting financially disadvantaged but academically outstanding engineering students. In collaboration with the Foundation for Excellence (FFE), the programme provided 100 students pursuing B.E./ B.Tech degrees with INR 40,000 annually for four years, along with mentorship, capacity building programme, and career-readiness support.

Key components of the programme included a rigorous selection process, which involved application reviews, document verification, and interviews to ensure that aid reaches those most in need. Scholars benefited from capacity building initiatives enhancing both technical and soft skills. Placement support and career development programmes equipped scholars with the tools necessary for successful careers or higher education, driving upward social mobility.

Beyond financial assistance, the programme fosters a culture of giving through an alumni network- known as – *Circle of Giving Initiative*, that encourages scholars to support future beneficiaries, ensuring the programme's long-term impact and sustainability. This initiative embodies RBL Bank's commitment to inclusive growth, aiming to create lasting socio-economic progress across communities.

Relevance of the project

Access to higher education in India has significantly improved in recent years, with enrolment reaching 4.33 crore students in 2021-22. However, students from economically weaker sections (EWS) and socially disadvantaged groups continue to face substantial barriers, particularly due to the high costs associated with private institutions, which dominate the education landscape. This financial hurdle prevents many capable students from accessing opportunities essential for upward social mobility and personal growth.

While government schemes provide scholarships and fee waivers, their limited coverage and stringent eligibility criteria often leave many deserving students without adequate support. Additionally, these schemes rarely address other critical challenges, such as access to mentorship, career guidance, and skill-building initiatives, which are vital for ensuring not just enrolment but also successful outcomes for students.

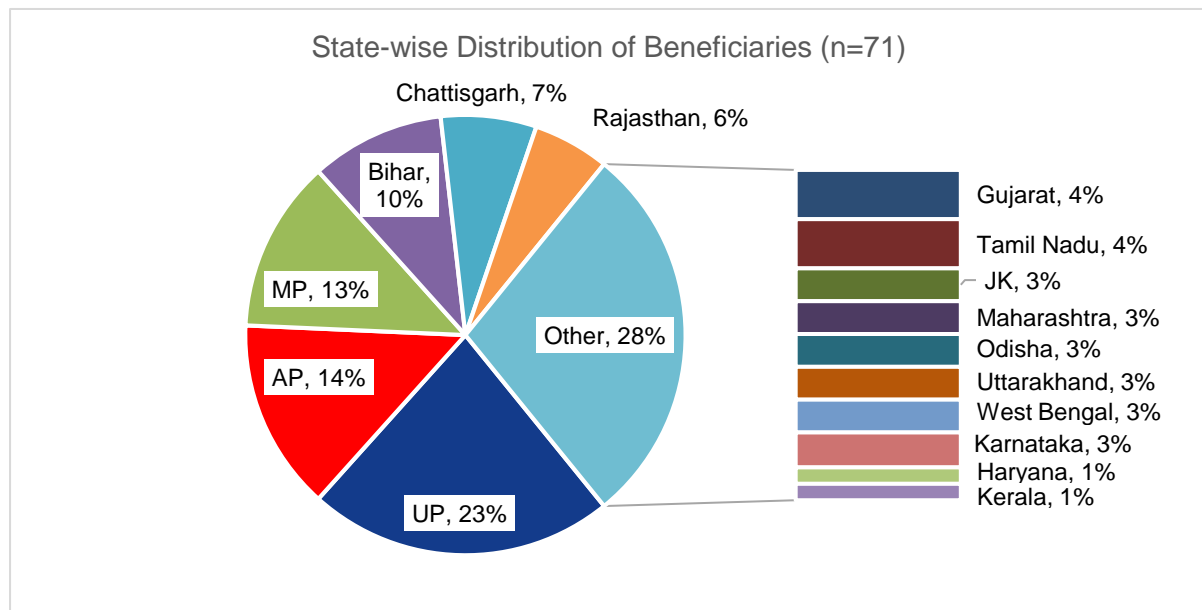
The RBL-FFE Scholarship Programme fills this critical gap by offering financial aid, mentorship, and career development support. By addressing both economic and developmental needs, the programme ensures that talented students from underprivileged backgrounds can access and thrive in quality higher education environments. This holistic approach not only enhances individual potential but also contributes to India's progress as a more inclusive and knowledge-driven society.

Project Objectives

The primary objectives of the RBL-FFE Scholarship were as follows:

- Sponsoring the Education of 100 academically gifted and financially deserving students
- Facilitating Access to Higher Education
- Economic Empowerment
- Career Readiness
- Fostering Social Responsibility

Geographic Coverage of the Programme



The programme was conducted on a pan-India scale so the scholars were selected from various states. The majority of beneficiaries, approximately **23%**, were from **Uttar Pradesh**, followed by **14% from Andhra Pradesh** and **13% from Madhya Pradesh**. The remaining scholars hailed from different states such as Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, and several others, representing around **17 states** in total. This highlights the **programme's wide geographical reach and its commitment to supporting scholars across the country**.

Project Activities

The implementation partner undertook key activities to ensure seamless execution, including:

Identification of Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of beneficiaries based on academic excellence and financial need for scholarship eligibility.
Student verification and final selection for provision of Scholarship.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verification of scholars through background checks and interviews, ensuring seamless online scholarship disbursement.
Capacity Building & Mentorship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The scholarship cohort received financial support along with soft skills training and technical courses.
Placement Support & Career Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of placement support enhanced scholars' skills, enabling employment or higher education for long-term growth.
Fostering Social Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 'Circle of Giving Initiative' encouraged scholars to support future students, strengthening community ties and ensuring programme sustainability.

Sampling

A simple random sampling approach was followed to ensure the sample's representativeness, encompassing beneficiaries across all socio-economic strata. The team determined the sample size based on a **95% Confidence Level** and a **5% Margin of Error** for the project. While the target sample size was **64**, data was successfully collected from **71 beneficiaries**.

Additionally, the team conducted **nine qualitative surveys** with secondary stakeholders, using a mix of In-Depth Interviews (IDIs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) as the mode of engagement.

Key Findings

Key Objective	Achievement Status	Remark
Identification of Beneficiaries	Fully Achieved	Successfully reviewed scholarship applications nationwide, verifying family background, academic performance, and income details. Eligible applicants uploaded documents for final processing.

Student Verification and Final Selection	Fully Achieved	Background checks and interviews were successfully conducted, leading to direct scholarship disbursement. 99% of beneficiaries reported reduced financial burdens and improved academic performance.
Capacity Building & Mentorship	Partially Achieved	As a part of the programme scholars received soft skills support, with 85% benefiting from capacity building and 82% participating in mentorship programmes.
Placement Support & Career Development	Fully Achieved	Placement support was provided to 100% of the graduates. Out of these 90% secured jobs, with 61% earning over ₹6 lakh annually.
Fostering Social Responsibility	Fully Achieved	93% of beneficiaries were aware about the 'Circle of Giving Initiative'.

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 RBL-FFE Scholarship Programme was conducted for a sample of **71 beneficiaries**, using the IRECS Framework. *IRECS Framework has been used to assess the inclusiveness, relevance, expectations, convergence, and service delivery effectiveness of the programme.* Each criterion examined specific aspects, such as the project's ability to include diverse beneficiaries, align with community needs, fulfill participant expectations, integrate with other initiatives, and deliver services efficiently.

The section below highlights the project's impacts, offering a detailed analysis of its key outcomes. Among the notable findings are addressing financial constraints to ensure students complete their higher education, transparent selection process of scholarship, mentorship support, soft-skills building and promoting Circle of Giving initiative by supporting future scholars.

Inclusiveness

(The extent to which communities equitably accessed the benefits of assets created and services delivered)

Age Group: 58 scholars were between the ages **23–25 years** , reflecting a focus on undergraduate engineering students.

Gender Representation: **68 beneficiaries** are male, highlighting the need for improved gender balance.

Caste Diversity: Of the 71 beneficiaries, **38 are OBC, 21 are General, 7 are ST, and 5 are SC**, ensuring representation across diverse socio-economic groups

Geographical Reach: Beneficiaries hail from **17 states**, with maximum coming from Uttar Pradesh (16 beneficiaries), Andhra Pradesh (10 beneficiaries), and Madhya Pradesh (9 beneficiaries).

Engineering Branches: Showcasing diversity in disciplines with 20 beneficiaries enrolled in Computer Science, 15 in Mechanical, and 12 in Electrical Engineering.

Awareness Channels: **66 beneficiaries** learned about the programme through colleges, followed by being informed by friends/family.

Relevance

(The extent to which communities equitably accessed the benefits of assets created and services delivered)

Households' Annual Income: **59 beneficiaries** come from households earning Rs 50,000–2,00,000 annually, indicating financial need.

Members per Family: **45 beneficiaries'** families have 3-4 members, with limited income, making higher education funding a significant challenge.

Primary Income Source: **39 families'** rely on unstable income sources like private jobs and daily wage labour, highlighting the need for financial support.

Financial Constraints (Pre-Intervention): **67 beneficiaries struggled** with tuition fees, 59 lacked funds for study materials, and 34 faced transportation costs before the intervention.

Need for Better Financial Support: **70 beneficiaries** cited requirement of better financial support as the primary reason for choosing the scholarship, highlighting its relevance.

Expectations

(The extent of intended and unintended positive (benefits), socio-economic, and cultural changes have accrued for beneficiaries)

Transparent Selection Procedure: 69 beneficiaries were interviewed for verification and selection, ensuring transparency.

Facilitator Support: 70 beneficiaries received **proactive facilitator support** for document verification, disbursement coordination, and mentorship.

Utilisation of Scholarship Amount: Scholarship utilisation was **diverse**, with **59 beneficiaries** using funds for hostel fees and 50 for tuition, highlighting support for both academic and living expenses.

Beneficiary Satisfaction: 70 beneficiaries expressed **satisfaction** with the **scholarship amount**.

Resolution of Challenges (Post-Intervention): 48 beneficiaries reported **complete resolution** of challenges after receiving the scholarship, emphasising the programme's effectiveness

Soft Skills Building: 60 beneficiaries benefited from **capacity building**, with English communication (54 beneficiaries) and aptitude skills (47 beneficiaries) being most valued.

Mentorship Programme: 58 beneficiaries participated in **mentorship programmes**, with 41 beneficiaries attending 1-5 sessions per month, **enhancing their career readiness**.

Placement Status: 64 beneficiaries secured **jobs** after graduation, with 39 of them earning **over ₹6 lakh annually**, demonstrating the programme's success in boosting employability.

Scholarship Benefits: 70 beneficiaries reported reduced financial burdens, 57 experiencing improved academic performance and 15 seeing enhanced career prospects, among other benefits.

Rating of the scholarship programme: Beneficiaries rated the programme, with 59 calling it "Very Good", 12 as "Good," and 0 as "Fair" & "Poor" reflecting the overall positive impact on beneficiaries.

Convergence

(To what extent does the intervention support national legislation and initiatives that aim to improve equality and human rights? What lessons can be learned?)

Alignment with CSR Policy: Promoting education, including special education and employment enhancing vocation skills especially among children, women, elderly, and the differently abled and livelihood enhancement projects; *Schedule VII of the Companies Act, 2013*

Alignment with SDGs: The programme supports *SDG 4: Quality Education*, *SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth*, and *SDG 1: No Poverty*, by providing scholarships, skills training, and career readiness to economically disadvantaged students, enhancing their employability and reducing poverty.

Alignment with ESG Principles: *Principle 4:* Businesses should respect the interests of and be responsive to all their stakeholders ; *Principle 8:* Businesses should promote inclusive growth and equitable development.

Alignment with National Policies: The programme aligns with key national policies like *the National Education Policy (NEP), 2020*; *National Policy on Skill Development and Entrepreneurship*; and the *Central Sector Scheme of Scholarship*; focusing on equitable access to quality education and skill development for underrepresented groups.

Service Delivery

(The degree to which cost- and time-efficient methods and processes were employed to achieve results, along with the likelihood that the net benefits of the intervention will continue)

Conducting of Interview: **69** beneficiaries confirmed that an **interview for selection** was conducted, with 66 of them stating it was done online.

Interview Procedure: **41** beneficiaries reported a **smooth interview process**, while 28 felt it was scheduled on short notice, and 3 faced language barriers.

Assignment of Mentor: **All the beneficiaries (58)** enrolled in the mentorship programme were **assigned a mentor** or industry expert to support their professional growth.

Renewal of Scholarship: **67** scholars successfully **renewed their scholarships**, promoting academic excellence, although reasons for non-renewal were unclear.

Facilitator Support: **69** beneficiaries **expressed satisfaction with facilitator support**, demonstrating the critical role facilitators play in ensuring a positive experience.

Circle of Giving Initiative: **66** beneficiaries were aware of the '**Circle of Giving**', with 62 of them willing to support junior scholars, ensuring the programme's **sustainability**.

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.

Sr. No.	Project Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Impact
1	Identification of Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 155 no. of beneficiaries identified and eligible for scholarships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beneficiaries from diverse backgrounds gained access to the scholarship programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased access to quality education for underserved communities, creating a pathway for upward social mobility
2	Student verification and final selection for provision of Scholarship.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100 no. of beneficiaries (scholars) selected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accelerated academic performance and motivation to perform better 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced motivation and academic confidence, creating future-ready individuals with improved educational outcomes
3	Skill training Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Average of over 300 hours of training per beneficiary in 4 years (English Training Programme, Aptitude Development Programme, Aspirational training or IT reskilling, Mock Interviews, advanced English training) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved academic performance (GPA >7) Scholars developed soft skills and experienced job readiness and professional development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased employability: Graduates with better career prospects due to enhanced soft and technical skills Long-term career progression: Participants more likely to secure jobs in relevant fields and experience upward mobility

4	Mentorship programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Average of over 12 hours of training per beneficiary in 3rd year (Communications, Interpersonal Skills, Time & Stress Management, Etiquette, Problem Solving & Decision making by experienced industry experts.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scholars gained professional and personal development, including better decision-making, communication, and leadership skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced confidence and leadership potential: Scholars are empowered to take on leadership roles and make impactful decisions in their careers Improved self-efficacy and resilience: Participants better equipped to handle workplace challenges and personal development
5	Placement Support and Career Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 75 No. of placements ; 17 opted for higher education ; 8 not placed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Empowered students with professional skills for economic & social mobility through better career prospects and higher education opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved socio-economic conditions for students and their families through employment or higher education; long-term community upliftment.
6	Promoting 'Giving' and Social Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100 Students were asked to pledge to support Future scholars 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scholars engage in mentorship roles or philanthropic activities, fostering a sense of responsibility. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultivates a culture of giving and social responsibility, ensuring the sustainability of the organisation while empowering future students and contributing to the success of aspiring scholars.

In conclusion, the **RBL-FFE Scholarship** has successfully achieved its target by awarding scholarships to **100 academically gifted and financially deserving students** pursuing B.E./B.Tech degrees. The programme has provided **financial assistance, mentorship, and skill development opportunities**, enabling scholars to pursue higher education without financial strain.

The programme has ensured equitable access by selecting beneficiaries based on merit and financial need, supporting students from underrepresented communities across diverse socio-economic, demographic, and geographic backgrounds. Its structured processes, transparent selection criteria, and sustainability initiatives like the 'Circle of Giving' have strengthened its long-term impact. The scholarship's effectiveness is reflected in high employability, competitive incomes, and reduced financial stress among beneficiaries. While it has successfully met its targets and enhanced career prospects, there remains scope to promote gender inclusivity and expand outreach for greater accessibility and representation.

Recommendations

Below are the Recommendations for the RBL-FFE Scholarship project.

Sr. No.	Impact Finding	Recommendation for Implementation Agency
1	Beneficiaries faced a few challenges during the application process, citing it as a bit lengthy and complex.	Streamlining the application process by providing clearer instructions, additional support resources, a feedback mechanism, online status updates, and a more user-friendly website.
2	Beneficiaries noted the need for more frequent mentor meetings, better access to academic resources, workshops, and peer mentoring or group study sessions to enhance skill development and mentoring.	To strengthen the mentoring and skill development programme , increase the frequency of mentor meetings, provide access to additional academic resources, organise skill-enhancing workshops, and establish peer mentoring or group study initiatives to foster a collaborative learning environment.
3	Beneficiaries highlighted the need for enhanced support in job placement.	Develop a comprehensive job-placement support programme featuring resume-building workshops, career counselling sessions, organised job fairs, targeted guidance for job applications, and resources for exploring career and higher education opportunities.



CSRBOX & NGOBOX
A 404-405, SWATI TRINITY,
APPLEWOODS TOWNSHIP, SP RING
ROAD, NEAR SHANTIPURA,
AHMEDABAD, GUJARAT 380058