

Summary of independent Impact Assessment studies conducted Year 2025-26

Program – Reliance Foundation Scholarships

1. Reliance Foundation Scholarship Programme



Impact Study Agency – Athena Infonomics India Private Limited

Background

The Reliance Foundation Scholarships, launched in 2020–21, build on the Dhirubhai Ambani Scholarships (DAS) legacy to expand access to higher education in India. RF has been supporting 5,100 students annually, including 5,000 meritorious undergraduate students from underprivileged sections of society.

Objectives

- Assess the effectiveness and inclusivity in supporting high-potential scholars; and
- Identify ways to improve program design, implementation, and engagement.

Key Findings

For every ₹1 invested in RF scholarships, ₹4.4 of social value is created - demonstrating strong returns in education, employability, and long-term societal impact.

With 93% of scholars from EWS backgrounds and 24% being first-generation learners, the programme is enabling high-value career outcomes- as reflected in strong alumni placement in engineering and IT sectors with an average CTC of ₹25 lakh p.a.

Reach & Financial Impact

- 92% of scholars perceived the selection process as fair, merit-based, and nationally competitive, reinforcing RF Scholarship's credibility within India's scholarship ecosystem.
- 82% of scholars received funds on time, with the scholarship amount covering an average of 49% of total academic expenses.

Academic & Professional Outcomes

92% reported increased confidence and motivation upon selection; 87% reported enhanced self-esteem and a stronger sense of responsibility. Graduated scholars are working in top companies such as Samsung, Google, Infosys, Microsoft, etc.

Engagement & Mentoring

- 87% of scholars actively engaged with RF Scholarships' engagement platform, participating in expert-led sessions on career guidance, soft skills, and technical domains, etc.
- More than 80% of scholars reported improved academic focus, leadership, communication, and time management skills — reflecting the tangible impact of RF Scholarships' structured engagement opportunities, including industry expert interactions, webinars, and sessions on CV building and professional development.
- 43% of mentees reported improved academic performance and career clarity; 36% noted enhanced communication skills.
- 78% of scholars shared learnings with peers or siblings, and 49% engaged in volunteering — reflecting strong social spillover effects.

Brand & Ecosystem Value

- The "Reliance Scholar" identity carries strong merit signalling value in interviews, placements, and higher education applications — functioning as an external validation.
- RF Scholarships are perceived favourably over other scholarships due to its combination of meaningful financial support, student engagement and networking opportunities, merit-based recognition, and a rigorous, transparent selection process under strong institutional oversight - enhancing its credibility, value, and confidence-building impact among scholars.

Program – Rural Transformation

2. Strengthening and Diversifying Income Sources for Resilience



Impact Study Agency – 4P Research and Consultancy

Background

This Program is a flagship initiative that empowers marginalised rural communities across India through innovative, sustainable, and community-driven approaches. The program strengthens resilience to climate change and economic vulnerability of rural communities by promoting climate-resilient agriculture, improved water resource management, and inclusive value chain development. It has reached millions of people across multiple states and union territories, supporting the creation of self-reliant communities that can thrive economically. Under this program, the Diversifying Rural Incomes and Women Entrepreneurship initiative focuses on strengthening and diversifying livelihoods in agriculture, livestock, fisheries and non-farm sectors. It enhances income stability and resilience to economic shocks while placing strong emphasis on women's empowerment through cluster-based enterprise development, skill building, entrepreneurship promotion, and improved market access, enabling rural families to achieve sustainable and inclusive growth.

Objectives

- Assess how the program initiatives have strengthened income stability, enhanced productivity, reduced costs, improved market access, and increased overall profitability;
- Analyse how communities have adopted improved practices, diversified income sources, and reinvested their earnings to promote long-term growth and resilience; and
- Recommend practical strategies to improve program effectiveness, sustainability and impact.

Key findings

1. Improvement in Income Stability, Productivity, Cost Savings, Market Access, and Profitability

Before the intervention, 94% of households were dependent on agriculture as their primary source of income. Following the intervention, clear diversification of livelihoods was observed across multiple sectors. Participation in goatery increased from 36% to 46%, dairy from 28% to 34%, fisheries from 3% to 9%, and poultry from 8% to 10%. Engagement in vegetables, fruit, and flower cultivation rose from 17% to 19%, while small businesses and handicrafts increased from 9% to 13%. This shift toward allied and non-farm activities reduced reliance on agriculture alone and strengthened income resilience. As a result, overall annual household income increased by approximately 56%, accompanied by improved savings and reinvestment.

Sectoral income and productivity gains:

- **Dairy:** Milk production increased from 6.14 litres to 10.37 litres per day. Average annual dairy income rose from ₹79,242 to ₹1,30,395. Adoption rates included stall feeding (75%), artificial insemination (81%), green fodder cultivation (98%), and veterinary care (91%).
- **Goatery:** Vaccination coverage improved from 47% to 89%, and deworming reached 90%. Average annual income increased from ₹21,620 to ₹33,614.
- **Poultry:** Average income rose from ₹19,147 to ₹28,629.
- **Fisheries:** Average annual income increased from ₹6,959 to ₹7,371. Production increased from 34.1 kg to 45.5 kg per household annually. Sales improved with better price realisation (₹156 to ₹188 per kg).
- **Non-Farm Activities:** Imitation jewellery enterprises recorded a significant rise in annual income from ₹1,08,267 to ₹1,76,000. Similarly, sal-leaf plate making nearly doubled annual income from ₹10,884 to ₹21,244
- **Vegetables, Fruits, and Flowers:** Annual income increased from ₹37,008 to ₹80,029. Average monthly vegetable production rose from 140 kg to 203 kg, with prices improving from ₹20.59 to ₹31.97 per kg.

2. Adoption of New Practices and Income Diversification

Communities demonstrated strong adoption of improved practices:

- Use of drip or sprinkler irrigation from 25% to 39%.
- Bio-input use increased from 66% to 79%.
- Crop rotation increased from 51% to 60%.
- Direct-to-consumer sales in fisheries increased from 8% to 49%.
- Local market sales in fisheries increased from 14% to 59%.

Households diversified income sources by integrating allied and non-farm activities.

3. Women's Economic Participation

Women emerged as key drivers of livelihood growth - 91% of dairy beneficiaries, 97% of goatery beneficiaries, 88% of poultry participants planned expansion of operations

Women reported improved decision-making in livestock management, increased financial independence, and higher participation in training, market fairs, and digital finance platforms.

4. Evidence of Resilience, Empowerment, and Program Alignment

The findings demonstrate that the interventions significantly strengthened household and community resilience by diversifying income sources, improving productivity and enhancing market access. Increased adoption of scientific practices, higher reinvestment in productive activities and stronger institutional and market linkages contributed to income stability and reduced vulnerability to climate and market shocks. Improved savings, access to financial services, and collective platforms further reinforced risk preparedness and social empowerment, aligning closely with the program's theory of change and its objective of building resilient, self-reliant rural communities.

3. Outcome Assessment - Enhancing Financial Independence and Decision-Making for Women



Impact Study Agency – 4P Research and Consultancy

Background

This Program advances women's empowerment through a focused intervention on digital literacy and financial inclusion. Recognising that limited access to digital tools, formal banking systems, and financial knowledge constrains women's economic participation and decision-making, the initiative seeks to bridge these gaps. The intervention equips women with digital skills, promotes access to mobile-based financial services, strengthens linkages with banks and self-help groups, and facilitates awareness and uptake of government schemes and entitlements. By enhancing financial literacy, encouraging savings and responsible borrowing, and enabling independent use of digital platforms for transactions and information, the program aims to strengthen women's financial autonomy and decision-making power at both household and community levels, thereby contributing to more inclusive and resilient rural development.

Objectives

- To assess changes in women's digital and financial knowledge, skills, and practices, including their ability to contribute to household finances independently;
- To examine women's participation and influence in household and community decision-making, particularly in financial planning, education and health;
- To identify key enablers and barriers affecting women's financial and digital empowerment; and
- To inform future programming through evidence-based recommendations to strengthen and scale women's empowerment outcomes.

Key findings

1. Changes in Women's Digital and Financial Knowledge, Skills and Practices

The assessment indicates notable improvements in women's financial confidence and capabilities. Nearly

half of the respondents reported feeling confident or very confident in managing bank accounts, savings, and credit. Over 75% reported improved financial confidence, while around 40% expressed high confidence in taking on work or business roles. More than 50% were very or extremely confident in women's financial management abilities. Additionally, 60% accessed skill-building programs, contributing to improved financial practices and greater independence in managing household finances.

2. Women's Participation and Influence in Decision-Making

Progress was observed in women's role in household financial decisions, with 50% reporting improved participation. Two-thirds noted reduced gender disparities in decision-making within households, and 70% felt that women's financial roles were reshaping gender norms to a moderate or significant extent. These findings suggest growing recognition of women as key contributors to household financial planning and broader community processes.

3. Enablers and Barriers to Financial and Digital Empowerment

While progress is evident, significant constraints remain. Only 1 in 4 women reported good access to financial resources and many continue to face limited or no access. Financial constraints affected most women at least occasionally in the past year. Nearly 50% cited societal expectations and gender norms as barriers to financial independence, while over 50% were moderately or highly affected by systemic barriers such as bureaucracy and mobility restrictions. Key limiting factors included lack of financial resources (52%), inadequate training (47%) and family or social restrictions (44%). Although 70% rated institutional support positively, delays, lack of information, and procedural barriers persist.

4. Implications for Strengthening and Scaling Women's Empowerment

The findings highlight the importance of strengthening banking and institutional linkages, expanding access to larger financial resources, and providing advanced and refresher training to translate confidence into sustainable economic outcomes. Addressing structural and gender-based barriers through family and community engagement will be critical to deepening

women's leadership, visibility, and long-term empowerment outcomes.

4. Outcome Assessment – Adoption and Impact of Improved Agricultural Technologies among Digital Farm School (DFS) Farmers under Rural Transformation Program



Impact Study Agency – 4P Research and Consultancy

Background

DFS, is a farmer-centric and phygital agricultural extension model designed to address key gaps in traditional extension systems such as limited outreach, delayed advisories, and lack of contextualised information. The model integrates digital communication tools including Voice Message Services (VMS), IVR, and mobile-based platforms with on-ground support through field staff, demonstrations, and group-based learning. By aligning advisories with crop cycles and enabling continuous engagement, DFS supports farmers in making timely and informed decisions. The program emphasises participatory learning and peer-to-peer knowledge exchange, positioning farmers not only as recipients but also as contributors to knowledge dissemination.

Objectives

- Assess how continuous group learning through DFS has strengthened farmers' knowledge, skills, and farming practices;
- Measure change in adoption rates of improved, climate-smart practices;
- Measure change in crop productivity, expense optimisation, and farmer incomes; and
- Assess the extent of knowledge sharing within peer / other farmers.

Key findings

Knowledge and Skill Enhancement

The program has led to significant improvements in farmers' knowledge across all stages of the crop cycle. Improvements are observed in pre-sowing practices (up to 62%), crop management (48%), pest and disease management (54%) and post-harvest practices (49%). Notably, 94% of farmers reported improved decision-making capacity, indicating enhanced

understanding and application of agricultural knowledge.

These gains have enabled farmers to take more confident and timely decisions related to input use, pest control and crop management.

Adoption and Practice Change

DFS has effectively translated knowledge into practice, with high levels of adoption across recommended agricultural practices. Adoption rates are strong, with 88% of farmers adopting improved sowing techniques and 86% adopting integrated pest management practices. Furthermore, 72% of farmers have expanded these practices across their entire landholding, indicating sustained behavioral change. Farmers are also demonstrating improved planning and decision-making behavior, with 83% planning agricultural activities in advance and 66% directly following DFS advisories. Peer learning has emerged as a key strength of the program, with 97% of farmers sharing information with others and 76% reporting adoption by fellow farmers. These findings highlight that DFS is fostering a proactive, informed, and collaborative farming ecosystem.

Changes in Crop Productivity, Cost Optimisation, and Farmer Incomes

DFS farmers demonstrate significantly better economic outcomes compared to Non-DFS farmers. They achieve approximately 34% higher production value per acre and report higher average incomes. On average, DFS farmers earn ₹30,777 per acre, which is more than twice the net income of Non-DFS farmers (₹14,073 per acre). At the same time, input costs are lower among DFS farmers (₹18,251 compared to ₹21,592 per acre among Non-DFS farmers), indicating improved cost efficiency. A large proportion of farmers (94%) reported reduced crop losses, while 77% reported reduced input costs, 68% improved fertiliser efficiency, and 61% reduced pesticide use.

These outcomes reflect a shift toward more efficient and knowledge-driven farming practices. The combination of higher productivity and reduced costs has resulted in improved profitability and enhanced financial resilience among farmers, enabling them to better manage risks and reinvest in their agricultural activities.

Reaction: Satisfaction, Trust, and Engagement

DFS demonstrates high levels of farmer satisfaction and trust, indicating strong acceptance of the program. Farmers perceive the advisories as clear, relevant, and timely, which has contributed to sustained engagement. A large majority of farmers (92%) reported overall satisfaction with DFS services, while 89% found the information easy to understand, and 74% highlighted its locally contextualised availability, reinforcing accessibility. Trust in DFS advisories and field teams is strong, with 72% of farmers expressing confidence in the program. Additionally, 88% of farmers are willing to continue their participation, and 83% would recommend DFS to others.

5. RT Voice Advisory Services



Impact Study Agency – Global Tenet Events and Research

Background

This program delivers large-scale, livelihood-enhancing advisories to rural communities through a phygital model that combines voice-based mobile technology with digital and on-ground engagement. The program aims to bridge critical information gaps faced by farmers, fisherfolk, and other rural households by providing timely, relevant, and actionable guidance across agriculture, fisheries, livestock, weather, and government schemes.

Objectives

- Assess awareness and engagement levels among beneficiaries;
- Identify adoption patterns and factors influencing adoption;
- Capture perceived benefits on livelihoods and skills; and
- Gather user feedback to strengthen and improve RFRT services

Key findings

Awareness and engagement

Awareness levels remained consistently high across all quarters, ranging between 86% and 95%. Similarly, advisory receipt ranged from 84% to 93%, reflecting effective dissemination of information. Engagement levels are also strong, with nearly 90% of users reporting either frequent or occasional

use of advisories. Notably, fisherfolk show higher engagement, with 65% reporting frequent use compared to 36% among farmers.

Adoption patterns and factors influencing adoption

Adoption of advisories is consistently high, with 44% of users reporting frequent use and 46% reporting occasional use. Adoption is primarily driven by the relevance (59%), timeliness (57%), and usefulness (52%) of advisories. Among the small proportion of low-use users (around 10%), the key barriers include perceived lack of usefulness (36%), timing issues (23%), and gaps in relevance (20%).

Perceived benefits on livelihoods and skills

User-reported impacts indicate meaningful benefits on livelihoods and skills. Around 53% of users reported improved knowledge, 32% avoided losses, 24% experienced increased productivity, and 22% reported increased income. Fisherfolk particularly benefited in terms of risk reduction, with 44% reporting improved safety and protection of fishing assets. Farmers, on the other hand, reported stronger gains in knowledge (64%) and productivity (31%).

Feedback from Beneficiaries

User satisfaction remains high, with 95% of users willing to recommend the program. About 61% rated the service 4 or 5 stars, while only 12% reported low satisfaction. Preferences for advisory timing vary, with farmers showing a higher preference for evening delivery (37%), while fisherfolk prefer morning and afternoon timings.

6. Role of Rainwater Harvesting (RWH) in Enhancing Climate Resilience



Impact Study Agency – Inicio Insights and Consulting Private Limited

Background

RWH interventions aim to strengthen water security and climate resilience in rural India. The program addresses increasing water stress caused by erratic rainfall, declining groundwater levels, and climate variability by promoting decentralised water storage and groundwater recharge, enabling more

reliable irrigation and reduce dependence on unpredictable monsoon patterns.

Targeting small and marginal farming communities, the program supports the development and restoration of community-scale water harvesting structures such as check dams, percolation tanks, farm ponds, and reservoirs, designed as community-managed resources for long-term sustainability. It also integrates capacity building, participatory planning, and awareness generation to strengthen local ownership and institutional management, aligning with broader priorities of climate-resilient agriculture, natural resource management, and livelihood enhancement.

Objectives

- Assess changes in water access, agricultural practices, and livelihood outcomes associated with the interventions;
- Evaluate the financial viability of rainwater harvesting structures through structure-level economic analysis; and
- Assess the extent to which improved water availability contributes to climate resilience, institutional strengthening, and inclusive benefits, including women participation

Key findings

1. **Improved Water Availability:** Rainwater harvesting interventions have led to substantial improvements in water availability and groundwater recharge across program areas, with stronger gains among direct beneficiaries. Around 58% more households report improved water availability (74% beneficiaries vs 16% non-beneficiaries), reflecting strong recharge effects and some spillover benefits. Water availability has extended beyond the monsoon for most households, enabling multi-season farming, increasing irrigation cycles and cropping intensity.
2. **Livelihood Diversification and Income Strengthening:** Improved water availability has enabled households to diversify into allied livelihood activities. Participation in livestock, fodder cultivation, and kitchen gardening has increased substantially. These improvements have translated into strong agricultural and livelihood gains. Agricultural income among direct

beneficiaries increased by 38%, while allied income rose by 48%, driven by improved water access among direct beneficiaries.

86% of households reported gains attributing to improved water access, indicating that rainwater harvesting interventions are unlocking broader livelihood opportunities beyond agriculture and contributing to income stability.

3. **Improved Climate Resilience & Adaptive Capacity:** Rainwater harvesting interventions have strengthened household resilience to climate variability, with 81% of households reporting improved ability to manage drought and irregular rainfall. Soil moisture has improved for 88% of households, and crop performance during dry spells has strengthened for 89%, reflecting increased stability in agricultural production.

4. **Financial Viability & Resilience:** Financial analysis reveal strong viability of RWH structures. With relatively low capital investment—averaging around INR 7.7 lakh—and minimal operation and maintenance costs, most structures achieve full cost recovery within two years.

5. The Internal Rate of Return (IRR) was calculated by first defining the timeline of each structure, including its functional year and any upgrades. Costs were compiled by accounting for capital investment, operation and maintenance (O&M), and major repairs. Benefits were estimated based on crop output, irrigation savings, avoided losses, and income from allied activities. A baseline was established using recall and triangulation methods, following which incremental benefits were calculated with attribution based on community perception. Finally, annual cash flows were developed to compute the IRR for each structure.

The IRR varies from 40% to 555%. The variation in IRR across sites is largely influenced by differences in capital investment, O&M costs, and benefits, along with their attribution as reported by the community.

6. **Strengthened Women's Participation and Household Well-being:** Improved water access has contributed to

meaningful gender outcomes. 58% of women report lower workload and stress, while 57% have increased influence in decision-making. Overall, 61% of households feel their future more secure.

Women's influence in household decisions has strengthened, contributing to greater agency and participation, and supporting improved household well-being and more inclusive development outcomes.

7. Assessment of Climate Resilience



Impact Study Agency – Global Tenet Events and Research

Background

This Program focuses on strengthening climate resilience in rural communities through integrated interventions in climate-smart agriculture, water resource management, livelihood diversification, and women's empowerment. These interventions are designed to enhance the adaptive capacity of households and promote sustainable, community-led development.

To systematically measure program outcomes, the Village Climate Resilience Index (VCRI) was developed as a comprehensive framework to assess resilience across key socio-economic and environmental dimensions. The tool was later validated by an external academic institution (Dr. Rajendra Prasad Central Agricultural University) to ensure its robustness and reliability.

Objectives

- To assess the level of climate resilience among program villages using the VCRI framework;
- To track changes in resilience from baseline to midline and measure program progress; and
- To generate insights for strengthening interventions and improving program effectiveness.

Key findings

The study findings indicate that the current distribution of villages across VCRI score categories is largely concentrated in the moderate resilience range (40–60), accounting for 80% of villages at midline. A smaller proportion

of villages fall under the high-resilience category (above 60) at 18%, while only 2% remain in the low-resilience category (below 40). This distribution reflects an overall improvement in resilience levels across program villages.

A comparison with the baseline reveals a significant decline in low-resilience villages, which reduced sharply from 26% to 2%, with the very low category (below 30) dropping to zero. This indicates a substantial reduction in vulnerability and highlights the effectiveness of program interventions in strengthening resilience at the community level.

Further, there has been a major shift towards moderate resilience, with the proportion of villages in the 40–60 range increasing from 57% at baseline to 80% at midline, demonstrating broad-based improvement. The high-resilience category has shown a marginal increase from 17% to 18%, indicating steady but gradual progress. While the overall movement is positive, the relatively limited growth in the high-resilience segment suggests the need for focused efforts to accelerate the transition of villages towards higher resilience levels.

Analysis across the seven components of the VCRI reveals that water resource management and producer networks/market linkages have shown the strongest improvements. These gains can be attributed to targeted interventions such as improved irrigation practices, water conservation structures, and enhanced access to markets and institutional support systems.

Other components such as climate awareness, agricultural practices, and women's empowerment have also shown positive progress, though at varying levels. Increased access to advisories, adoption of climate-smart agricultural practices, and participation of women in decision-making processes have contributed to overall resilience improvements.

Overall, the findings suggest that the program is directionally robust and strategically aligned with the goal of building climate-resilient villages. The observed improvements across multiple dimensions demonstrate the effectiveness of integrated interventions and highlight the importance of a holistic approach to resilience building.

Program: Women Empowerment

8. Swayamshree



Impact Assessment Agency – Sambodhi Research and Communications Private Limited

Background

This program aims to empower 1.1 million women entrepreneurs across Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, and Gujarat helping them achieve an annual household income of up to ₹1 lakh. The program is structured around three core developmental axes: increasing income, improving quality of life and enhancing decision-making abilities for participating women. A mixed-methods approach (quantitative and qualitative data) and a cross-sectional design was adopted to assess progress and identify emerging implementation learnings.

Objective

To assess changes in household income livelihood patterns, and women's agency, and to generate operational insights on what is driving (or constraining) outcome progress across program geographies.

Key findings

1. **Increase in income:** The program is delivering measurable income gains. Average annual household income increased by 9%, with the strongest growth in Madhya Pradesh (18%). Farm income grew by 22% and enterprise income by 11%, driven by improved practices and diversification. Sixty percent of households now earn above ₹1 lakh annually, with 12% newly crossing this threshold. Income gains are highest among households with diversified livelihoods (Farm + Enterprise). However, 30% remain below ₹1 lakh, indicating the need for focused support to sustain progress.
2. **Farm Productivity:** Farm participation remains high (91%), with growing adoption of improved and climate-resilient practices. Income gains are largely driven by enhanced productivity and self-consumption, strengthening food security.

3. **Off-farm income:** Off-farm income shows marginal improvement and remains largely subsistence-oriented. Early investments in livestock care are visible, though structured market linkages and veterinary access remain limited.
4. **Enterprise:** Enterprise income increased by 9%, primarily from small, home-based activities. These provide supplementary income during lean agricultural periods but remain constrained by limited capital and local market dependence.
5. **Women's Agency:** Women's mobility and participation in economic activities have improved modestly. However, sole decision-making on income use and livelihood choices remains limited, and gender norms continue to influence market-facing roles.

9. Impact Assessment of SWADESH



Impact Assessment Agency – Athena Infonomics India Private Limited

Background

The Artisan Craft Pavilions, developed with Reliance Foundation (RF), aim to preserve India's diverse craft heritage while strengthening artisan livelihoods. The initiative brings together skilled artisans from across regions and craft traditions, including textiles, metal, wood, pottery, and tribal arts. RF supports participation through logistics, fair compensation, and curated product display. It also provides capacity building support in product development, quality enhancement, pricing, branding, and digital skills to enable long term socio economic sustainability.

Objective

To assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, equity, and sustainability of RF-supported developmental grants, and to understand the extent to which these interventions have contributed to improved well-being, service delivery, and institutional strengthening.

Key findings

Relevance & Equity

- Strong alignment with livelihood enhancement and cultural preservation, with inclusive support

for women and home-based artisans; and

- Enabled equitable access to markets by reducing reliance on intermediaries and engaging marginalised artisan groups directly.

Effectiveness & Efficiency

- Effective in creating sustained market linkages, increasing orders, and improving product positioning through direct customer engagement; and
- Efficient model combining exhibition, live demonstrations, and post-event sourcing, though constrained by scalability and need for continued handholding.

Impact

- Engaging 65+ artisans across 30+ craft forms from 16+ states, the Nita Mukesh Ambani Cultural Centre pavilions hosted 5 exhibition cycles, reached over 1 lakh visitors, along with significant digital and media coverage.
- Enhanced incomes, generated additional livelihood opportunities, and strengthened artisan confidence and recognition.
- Contributed to cultural continuity by repositioning traditional crafts in contemporary markets and increasing appreciation of craft processes.

Program: Reliance Foundation Sports

10. Reliance Foundation Sports (RFS) Program



Impact Assessment Agency – Hansa Research Group Private Limited

Background

This program leveraged sports as a powerful medium to promote lifelong learning, character building and leadership among India's youth, while creating pathways for future champions.

Impact assessment was conducted to assess the overall effectiveness and impact of RF sports program, by evaluating performance against objectives, understanding reach and inclusivity and identifying key strengths, gaps and opportunities to strengthen long-term athlete development.

Objectives

- To determine program effectiveness by measuring achievements against objectives and assessing quality, inclusivity and accessibility of training, competitions and infrastructure;
- To analyse geographic and demographic reach by mapping coverage and participation trends across age, gender and sport;
- To evaluate outcomes by tracking athlete progression, improvements in coaching, sports science integration, athlete well-being and public engagement;
- To identify best practices and gaps in program design, delivery, and monitoring; and
- To recommend strategic enhancements for scalable, sustainable approaches and long-term ecosystem strengthening.

Key findings

1. Program Effectiveness (Quality, Inclusivity, Accessibility)

The assessment found that RFS were highly effective in delivering planned objectives, offering structured training, regular competition, and access to quality infrastructure across stages of athlete development. Participants reported strong improvements in technical performance, game understanding, and confidence, alongside high levels of perceived safety, professionalism, and medical support, which strengthened trust among athletes and parents. Overall program quality and accessibility were consistently rated positively across geographies and sport formats.

2. Geographic and Demographic Reach

The initiative demonstrated broad geographic coverage and demographic reach, spanning urban, semi urban, and remote regions, and engaging athletes across age groups, genders, and sports. Grassroots programs enabled early access and inclusion, while feeder and elite programs supported progression through structured pathways. Participation trends indicated strong youth engagement, increasing female participation in specific programs, and sustained involvement across competitive age categories.

3. Athlete Outcomes and Ecosystem Outcomes

Findings indicated strong athlete level outcomes, with improvements in performance, discipline, teamwork, and confidence across programs. Holistic development was particularly evident, with 88% of participants reporting gains in communication, discipline, and teamwork. High performance and endurance programs demonstrated measurable performance outcomes, including personal bests, medals, and international exposure, supported by improvements in coaching quality, sports science integration, and athlete well being. Public engagement and visibility—especially through leagues and competitions—further supported athlete motivation and progression

4. Program Design and Delivery Strengths

The assessment highlighted several strong practices in program design and delivery, particularly the use of mentor driven coaching models, integrated sports science support, athlete centred training plans, and robust infrastructure and safety protocols. These elements contributed to consistent program delivery, high levels of athlete engagement, and strong trust among stakeholders. The findings also indicate clear opportunities to further enhance existing strengths by deepening grassroots engagement, strengthening progression pathways, and formalising long term career planning frameworks—building on the solid operational and developmental foundations already in place.

5. Implications for Scale, Sustainability, and Long Term Ecosystem Strengthening

Overall findings suggest that the RFS initiative has established a strong foundation for scalable and sustainable athlete development. To amplify long term impact, the study points to opportunities to strengthen pipeline integration, improve inter league and academic calendar alignment, deepen grassroots outreach, and formalise career transition pathways. Addressing these areas would enable the initiative to further enhance ecosystem resilience while sustaining high performance outcomes.