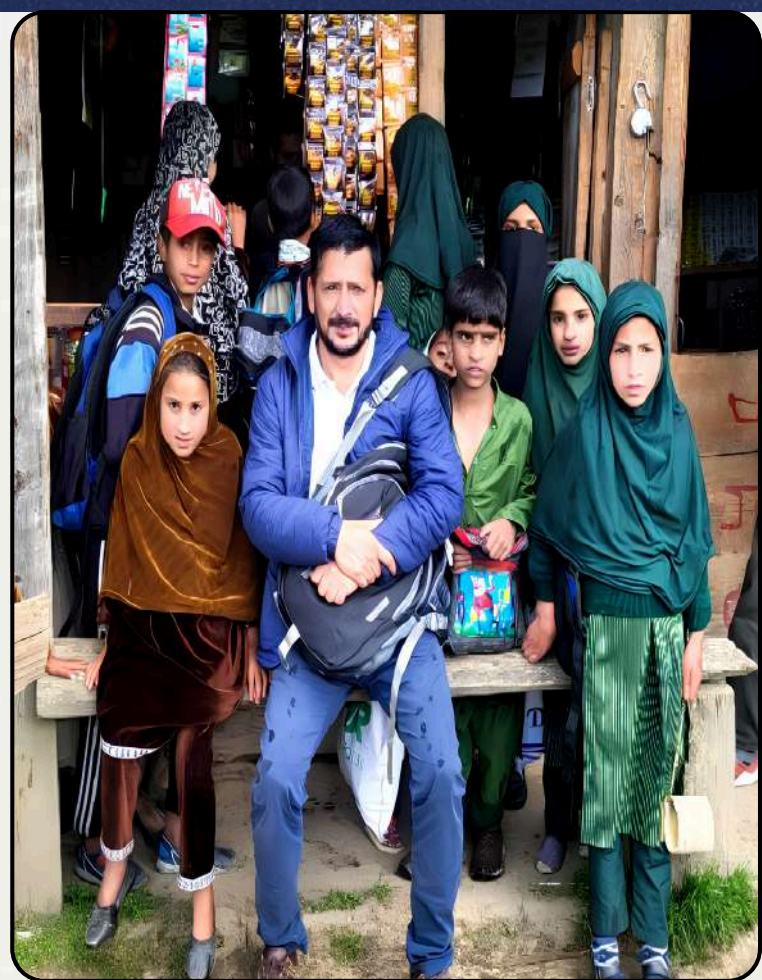


INTERACT

THE INITIATIVE TO EDUCATE, REHABILITATE AND ASSIST CHILD VICTIMS OF TERROR



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PROJECT INTERACT


From Loss to Learning, and from Learning to Leadership
Three Decades of Educational Continuity, Healing and Opportunity

1993 Programme launched	2,400+ Scholars supported	284 Current scholars	11 States covered
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A Life Interrupted, A Journey Continued

Saima Nisar lost her father while still an infant. Her mother remarried soon afterward, leaving Saima and her sister in their uncle's care. Childhood therefore began with loss, uncertainty, and emotional strain. Education could easily have become another casualty of that disruption.





Saima Nisar *Jammu & Kashmir*
From supported scholar to rehabilitation psychologist and alumni mentor

“ Timely support from RGF and my current position have fueled my desire to pay it forward and support others. As an alumna, I am using my skills for the betterment of both the RGF INTERACT community and society by conducting ‘Mind Your Mind’ monthly online Zoom sessions in J&K, helping students navigate difficult times.

Presently, I am working as a Rehabilitation Psychologist at DPS Srinagar. I am content with what I have.

To be content does not mean you do not deserve more; it means being thankful for what you have and patient for what is to come. ‘Be happy for this moment; this moment is your life.’ ”

 Rehabilitation Psychologist, DPS Srinagar

 INTERACT Alumna & Mentor

Project INTERACT helped keep that possibility from becoming reality. Scholarship support enabled Saima to complete school and continue learning.

Workshops also offered emotional support during difficult years. The programme gave her both continuity and a sense of belonging.

Saima later studied biosciences, education, and clinical psychology. She now works as a rehabilitation psychologist in Srinagar.

More importantly, she has returned to support younger scholars. Through monthly ‘Mind Your Mind’ sessions, she helps students manage stress and difficult emotions.

Her journey captures the deeper purpose of INTERACT. The programme does more than finance schooling after bereavement.

It protects educational continuity, strengthens emotional recovery, and builds future pathways. In some cases, supported children eventually become mentors themselves.

What is INTERACT

Project INTERACT began by the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation in 1993 with 97 children. It was created for children whose education was threatened after losing parents through violence.

Over time, the programme responded to communal violence, insurgency, conflict, tsunami-related loss, mob attacks, and COVID-related bereavement. Its geographic reach changed as patterns of vulnerability changed.

By 2026, more than 2,400 scholars had received educational support. The programme currently supports 284 scholars across eleven states. Among them, 151 are girls and 133 are boys. Jammu and Kashmir, Manipur, and Assam contain most current scholars.

The model combines scholarships with family contact, counselling, mentoring, workshops, career guidance, skills training, and higher-education linkages.

Field teams remain closely connected with scholars and guardians. Their role becomes especially important during crises, displacement, shutdowns, and emotional distress.

INTERACT also supports progression beyond school. A total of 134 alumni received direct higher-education support. Around 39 alumni accessed free higher education through partner universities and IGNOU.

Alumni now work across technology, psychology, media, education, hospitality, business, and social development.

The programme's strongest lesson is clear. Financial assistance protects access, but sustained human engagement protects continuity.

Children affected by trauma need educational, emotional, and practical support together. INTERACT's long-term value lies in maintaining that complete pathway.

INTERACT AT A GLANCE



1. The Crisis Behind the Programme

The death of a parent can disrupt every part of childhood. Income falls suddenly, family roles change, and schooling becomes uncertain. Children may face grief while also carrying new responsibilities. In conflict-affected regions, instability can deepen these pressures.

The programme document identifies risks such as school dropout, child labour, and early marriage. Border tensions, curfews, internet shutdowns, and displacement can interrupt learning. Remote terrain and weak communication make regular follow-up difficult. Surviving guardians often manage households with very limited income.

The attached case studies show these pressures clearly. Anjali Gupta lost her father in a terrorist attack when she was seven. Gracy Salam and Devla Phuritsabam were also very young when violence took their fathers. Their mothers rebuilt family life through work, sacrifice, and persistence.

INTERACT was designed to protect education during such disruption. It lightens the financial burden on families. It also provides a stable relationship beyond the scholarship. This continuity helps children remain connected with school and future aspirations.

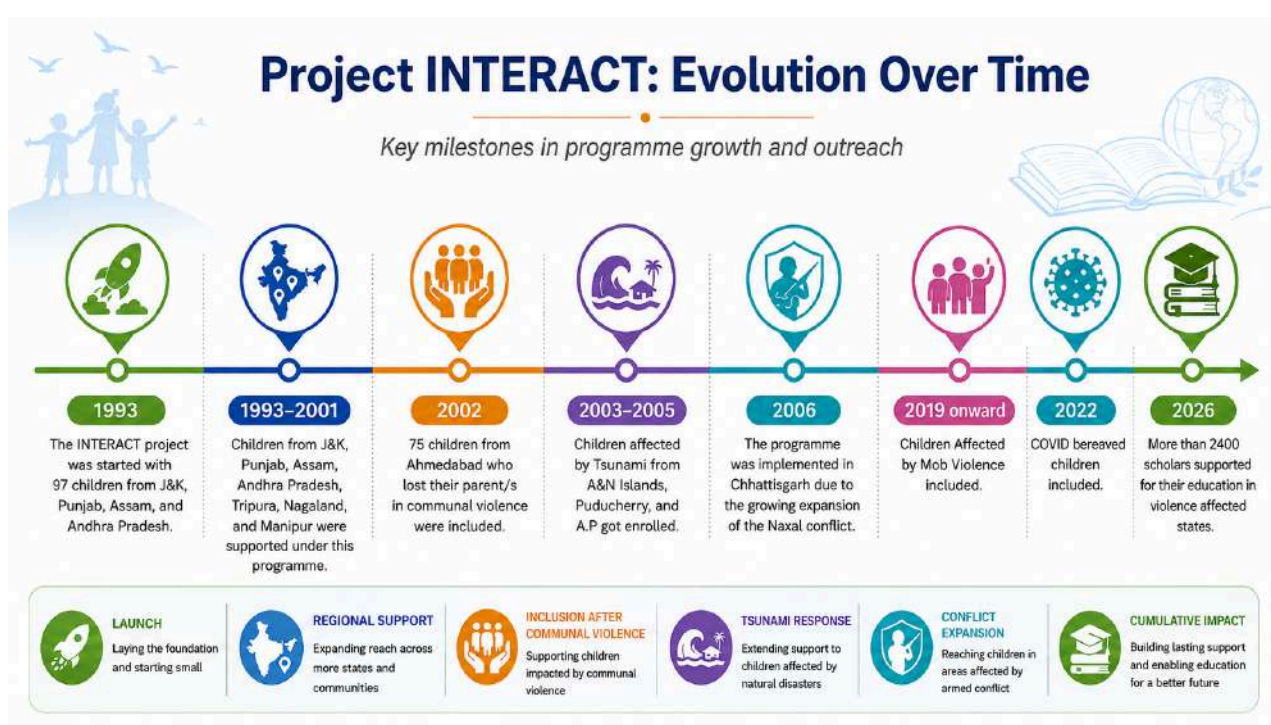


2. Genesis and Evolution

Project INTERACT began in 1993 with 97 children. The first scholars came from Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Assam, and Andhra Pradesh. During its early phase, implementation relied on government departments, administrators, and trusted individuals. The programme later expanded into other conflict-affected regions.

Between 1993 and 2001, scholars from Tripura, Nagaland, and Manipur were included. In 2002, support extended to 75 children affected by communal violence in Ahmedabad. Children affected by the tsunami joined between 2003 and 2005. Chhattisgarh was added in 2006 as Naxal-related conflict expanded.

From 2019, the programme also considered children affected by mob violence. COVID-related parental loss was included from 2022. This evolution shows a flexible response to changing forms of vulnerability. By 2026, cumulative educational support had crossed 2,400 scholars.



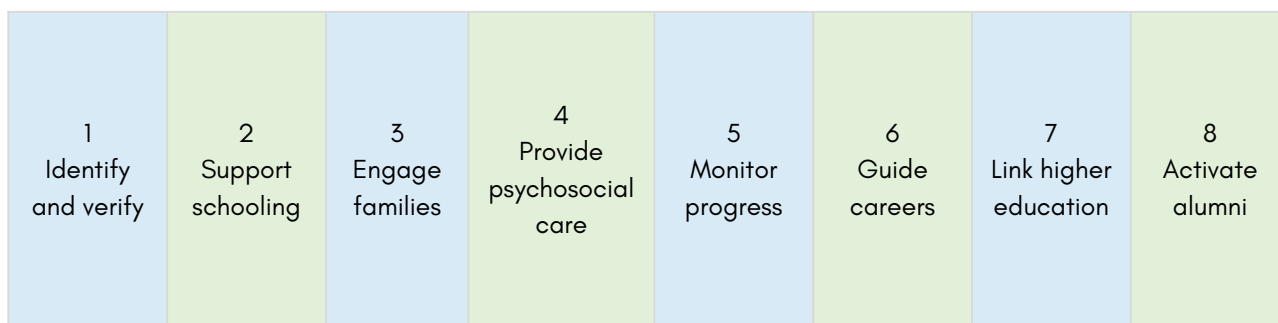
3. Purpose and Objectives

INTERACT is more than a school scholarship programme. It seeks to protect educational continuity after traumatic loss. It also supports emotional recovery and social reintegration. Higher-education pathways extend support beyond Class 12.

- Provide educational support to children affected by armed conflict.
- Reduce financial pressure on vulnerable civilian families.
- Support psychosocial recovery and social reintegration.
- Maintain regular engagement with scholars and guardians.
- Guide senior scholars towards higher education and careers.
- Connect meritorious alumni with universities and skill opportunities.

4. The INTERACT Support Model

The programme follows a long-term support pathway. It begins with identification, verification, and annual selection. Scholarship assistance protects school continuity. Regular contact then addresses academic, emotional, and practical concerns.



Programme Associates conduct home visits when required. They also maintain calls with scholars and guardians.

Regional workshops, counselling, and school visits provide additional support. Field teams in Jammu and Kashmir, Manipur, and Assam remain especially important.

The programme also supports computer skills, vocational learning, and career planning. University linkages create opportunities for meritorious alumni.

Monthly online sessions allow alumni to guide younger scholars. This strengthens continuity across generations of participants.

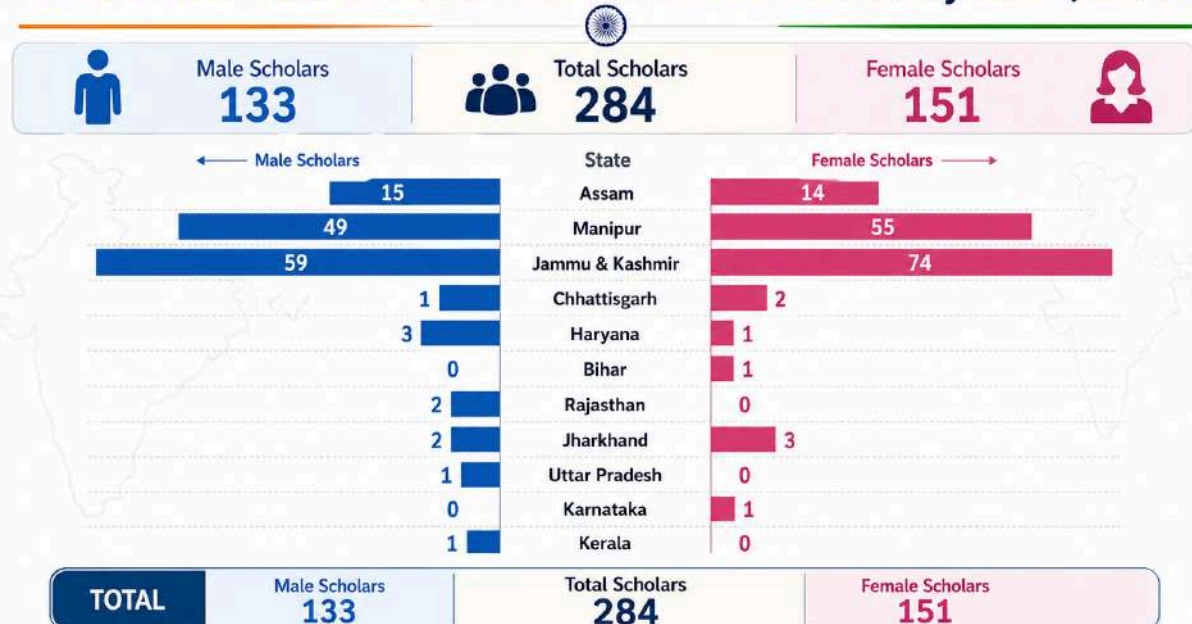
5. Current Programme Reach, 2026-27

INTERACT currently supports 284 scholars across eleven states. Jammu and Kashmir has 133 current scholars. Manipur has 104, while Assam has 29. The remaining eighteen scholars are spread across eight states.

Current INTERACT Scholars by State, 2026-27



Current INTERACT Scholars: Male-Female Distribution by State (2026-27)

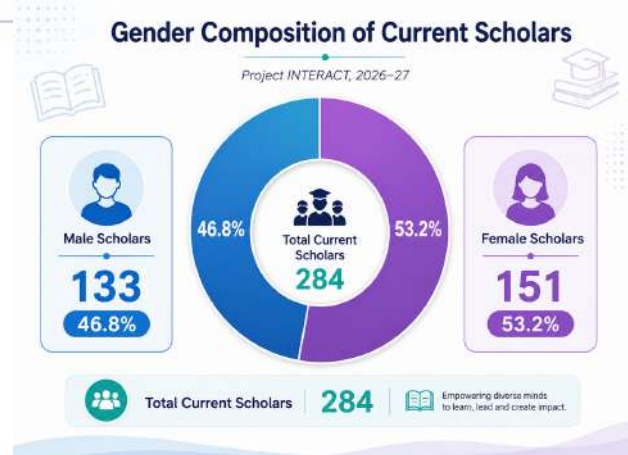
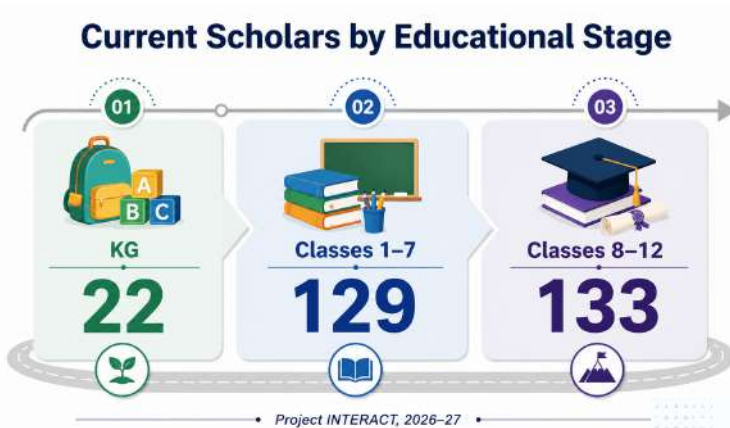


6. Gender and Educational Stage

Girls form a slight majority among current scholars. The programme supports 151 female scholars and 133 male scholars. This balance is important in settings where girls may face early marriage or interrupted education. Continued support can therefore protect both learning and agency.



Current scholars also span different educational stages. Twenty-two children study in KG classes. Another 129 are in Classes 1–7. The largest group, 133 scholars, is in Classes 8–12.



7. Beyond Scholarships: Healing and Stability

Conflict-related loss often leaves emotional effects that remain invisible. INTERACT therefore combines educational assistance with psychosocial care. Workshops, referrals, counselling, and regular interaction help scholars process difficult experiences. Guardian engagement also strengthens the child's support environment.



Mental-health support has received greater attention in recent years. A residential workshop was held in Pahalgam during 2024. Monthly online counselling began in Jammu and Kashmir during 2025-26. Similar professional counselling is planned for Manipur.



Saima's alumni role demonstrates the model's potential. She now conducts stress-management sessions for younger scholars. Her presence makes counselling relatable and credible. It also shows how alumni can strengthen programme delivery.

8. INTERACT Plus and Higher Education

INTERACT Plus began in 2019 with expanded support. It introduced counselling, career guidance, and higher-education arrangements.

Free seats were facilitated in private universities at Jaipur and Indore. These opportunities reduced financial pressure on guardians.

Higher education has become a major impact pathway. The Foundation directly supported 134 alumni across medicine, engineering, nursing, law, teaching, and technical fields.

Around 39 alumni entered private universities and IGNOU through free education arrangements. This support encouraged scholars to study beyond their home states.



Anjali Gupta

"I'm a proud alumna of Suresh Gyan Vihar University, where I learned my B.Tech in Computer Science and Engineering with a strong 8.73 CGPA. In April 2025, I joined Dream Game Studios as an Associate Game Designer. I'll always be thankful to RGF and SGVU for shaping my career and providing the foundation for my success."



Gracy Salam

"With your backing and financial support, I successfully completed my BBA and MBA from Suresh Gyan Vihar University with commendable academic performance and was honoured with a Gold Medal. In the future, I envision myself making a meaningful impact and mentoring students from similar backgrounds."



R. Tejashree Reddy

"At that critical stage, Rajiv Gandhi Foundation came forward to support us. It truly felt like 'a hope in the darkness.' Today, becoming financially independent and supporting my mother is not just a responsibility but a dream fulfilled."



Phuritsabam Devla

"Your support has significantly helped on my financial burden, allowing me to focus wholeheartedly on my studies. I sincerely appreciate your kindness and support."



R. Tejashree Reddy

B.Tech graduate; Associate Developer, Hyderabad



Phuritsabam Devla

B.Sc. Hospitality and Hotel Administration, MBA (IGNOU)



Gracy Salam

BBA and MBA - Working at AGS Health Insurance in Jaipur



9. Skills, Digital Learning and Employability

Digital learning became essential during the pandemic. More than 100 scholars, alumni, and guardians joined basic technology sessions. Topics included smartphones, Zoom, Skype, Gmail, Drive, educational applications, podcasts, and digital commerce. These sessions helped families use technology more confidently.



In 2022, RGF collaborated with Just Rojgar Solutions Pvt. Ltd for providing digital online training to INTERACT alumni. Around 157 alumni from Jammu and Kashmir, Manipur, and Assam joined three-month online courses.

Training covered computer skills, Tally, BPO work, tourism, nursing skills, waste management, grooming, and interview preparation. The programme document notes that many participants secured jobs afterward.

10. Alumni as Agents of Change

INTERACT's impact increasingly appears through alumni contributions. Nishanta Barman became an educator, environmentalist, author, and social organisation founder. His work promotes critical thinking, environmental action, and community learning. He is also preparing for civil services.

Mrinmoy Barman completed mechanical engineering and civil-services coaching. He has also participated in environmental action and tree plantation. Together with Nishanta and volunteers, he helped plant approximately 1,000 trees across Assam. Both illustrate the programme's wider multiplier effect.

Saboor Ahmed pursued journalism and mass communication. His university experience included practical media work. He is now completing postgraduate studies and working on a documentary project. His journey shows how mentorship and institutional exposure can build professional confidence.



11. Guardians and Family Resilience

The case studies show that programme outcomes depend on families. Anjali's mother resumed education and later joined the Railways. Gracy's mother supported her children through weaving and a small shop. Devla's mother combined weaving with small livestock activities.

Tejashree's mother raised two daughters after losing the family's only earner. These women carried emotional and financial responsibilities together. INTERACT reduced educational pressure, but family determination remained central. Their stories deserve recognition within the programme narrative.

12. Field Realities and Challenges

Implementation in Assam and Manipur has required exceptional persistence. Scholars often live across distant and scattered locations. Security checks, insurgency, difficult travel, curfews, and internet shutdowns interrupt monitoring. Families may also relocate without updated contact details.

Jammu and Kashmir presents additional geographic and security barriers. Mountainous terrain and snow-bound areas increase travel costs.

Border tensions and cross-border shelling can displace families temporarily. Internet interruptions affect counselling, communication, and digital learning.

The programme also responds to household-level risks. The loss of an earning parent creates severe financial pressure. Scholars may face dropout, labour, or early marriage. Limited exposure to competitive environments can further restrict aspirations.



13. Programme Learnings

Three decades of INTERACT's experience shows that sustained human engagement matters deeply. Patience, compassion, and dedication gradually create emotional trust. They help transform suspicion into acceptance and mutual respect. This healing process remains central in conflict-affected communities. Trust can also grow across divided community lines. INTERACT witnessed Naga and Kuki families sharing one space. Such moments demonstrated the value of neutral engagement. They showed that education can support dialogue and reconciliation.

Adaptability has remained essential throughout programme implementation. Communication moved from landlines to mobile phones. It later expanded through internet-based counselling and online sessions. This flexibility helped the programme remain connected with families. Maintaining multiple family contacts also improved programme continuity. Phone numbers of relatives and neighbours proved valuable. They helped locate families during migration or communication breakdowns. This reduced the risk of scholars becoming unreachable.

The programme's strongest foundation is its unwavering commitment. Support was extended without judging conflict or circumstances. The focus remained on children and affected families. This helped shattered households rebuild dignity and hope. Sustained educational support produced stability beyond financial assistance. It helped children regain confidence after traumatic experiences. It also enabled them to continue schooling despite hardship. Educational continuity became an important pathway towards recovery.

Residential workshops strengthened relationships with scholars and guardians. They created space for dialogue, trust, and emotional connection. Families developed stronger bonds with the INTERACT team. These interactions also helped identify concerns requiring further support.

A major learning is that scholarships alone remain insufficient. Conflict-affected children also require counselling and mentorship. Psychosocial care supports their emotional and social development. It helps them manage trauma while continuing education.

Linkages with social-security schemes improved family opportunities. Such support reduced financial pressures on vulnerable households. INTERACT scholars from Jammu and Kashmir secured MBBS opportunities through the RMV scheme. This demonstrates the value of connecting education with public support systems.

Coordination with NGOs and local administration strengthened family support. Several families received livelihood assistance through these linkages. Sustainable income opportunities reduced dependence and economic vulnerability. This also created better conditions for children's education.

Higher-education opportunities created a wider motivational effect. Scholars studying in Jaipur and Indore inspired others. Their journeys encouraged students to explore education beyond home states. Visible alumni success expanded aspirations across the INTERACT community.

14. Major Outcomes and Impact

INTERACT has supported more than 2,400 scholars since inception. Its current cohort includes 284 children across eleven states. Girls form a slight majority within the current group. The programme therefore continues to serve a diverse and geographically dispersed population.

Higher-education support has widened long-term opportunity. Alumni have entered engineering, psychology, media, business, hospitality, education, and other fields. Several are now employed, while others pursue postgraduate study or civil services. Their progress shows the value of sustained support.

The case studies also reveal deeper outcomes. Scholars describe improved confidence, emotional stability, and renewed aspiration. Some now support younger participants or contribute to their communities. This creates an impact that extends beyond scholarship recipients.

15. Current Priorities and Way Forward

The next phase should preserve INTERACT's human-centred model. Current scholars still require consistent educational and emotional support. Senior students need clearer transition pathways after school. Alumni can play a larger role in mentoring and outreach.

INTERACT will continue supporting 284 scholars across eleven states. New eligible students will be identified and enrolled annually. Students completing school will receive higher-education guidance. This will help them make informed academic choices.

The programme will also strengthen its mental-health support. Physical, emotional, and psychological well-being will remain priorities.

The *Mind Your Mind* Zoom sessions will continue in Jammu and Kashmir during 2026-27. Online and offline workshops will also reach different areas.

Counselling support will be expanded in Manipur. A professional counsellor from the state will lead services. This will improve cultural understanding and local accessibility. The aim is to provide timely and sustained support.

Future efforts will link education with long-term development. Scholars will receive continued mentoring during key transitions.

Families will remain engaged throughout the educational journey. The programme will focus on continuity, confidence, and opportunity.

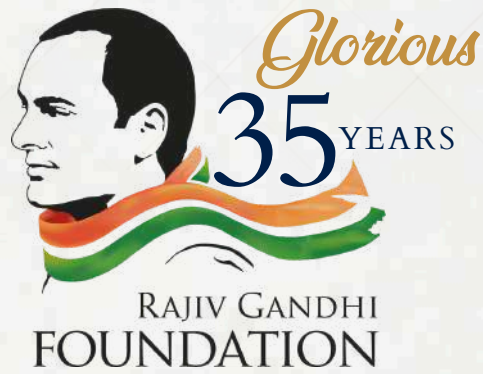
INTERACTing the Way Forward: Education as Continuity After Loss

Project INTERACT began with a simple but urgent purpose. Children should not lose education because violence took a parent. Over three decades, that purpose expanded into a long-term support model. Scholarships became a foundation for healing, progression, and opportunity.

The programme's stories give the numbers their meaning. Saima became a psychologist and now supports younger scholars. Gracy earned a gold medal, while Anjali and Tejashree entered technology careers. Nishanta, Mrinmoy, and Saboor are building pathways in education, public service, environment, and media.

Their journeys were shaped by personal determination and family sacrifice. They were also strengthened by sustained institutional support. INTERACT's enduring contribution lies in preserving continuity after sudden loss. It helps children move from grief towards learning, work, service, and leadership.






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