

SUMMARY REPORT

Sample Check Study' of Institutions/Beneficiaries under the Pre-matric and Post-matric Scholarship Schemes for OBC and others being implemented mainly by the States/UTs



Submitted to:

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SUMMARY REPORT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- Pre-Matric and Post Matric Scholarship scheme for OBC, EBC and DNT students is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme and is implemented through State Governments and UT Administrations.
- The Pre-Matric Scholarship Scheme is for students of Government school studying in class 9th and 10th.
- Post matric Scholarship scheme is for students studying in post matric classes in India.
- Development & Research services (DRS) was responsible for conducting a sample check study of Institutions/Beneficiaries under the Pre-matric and Post-matric Scholarship Schemes for OBC and others.

2.0 STUDY OBJECTIVE

- The main objective of the study is to identify the leakages in the scheme implementation so that the government implementation agencies can undertake corrective measures so that the benefits of the scheme reach the right people.
- Reference period of the study is 2022-23

3.0 STUDY METHODOLOGY

- The study involved a 'mixed method approach' with data collection through both secondary and primary research techniques.
- Both quantitative and qualitative tools were used to gather information from beneficiaries and institutes

4.0 SAMPLING

- A multi-stage sampling procedure was used in order to select beneficiary respondents.
- All states having more than 300 beneficiaries were selected for the study.
- From each state, 10% districts with minimum 2 districts were selected using Probability Proportion to Size – Systematic Random Sampling (PPS-SRS) procedure.

- From each state, 1% beneficiaries were selected by fixing average 50 (minimum 30 and maximum 60) beneficiaries from any institution. Based on this, number of institutions to be covered from each district was fixed.
- A total of 689 institutions were selected and covered under the study.
- The institutions for each district were selected using Probability Proportion to Size – Systematic Random Sampling (PPS-SRS) procedure.
- From each selected institution, beneficiaries were selected using Systematic Random Sampling (SRS) from the list of beneficiaries provided by the states.

5.0 SURVEY FINDINGS

5.1 PRE -MATRIC SCHOLARSHIPS (BENEFICIARY PERSPECTIVE)

- A total of 8820 beneficiaries were interviewed in this study spread across 7 states in which 54% were rural and remaining 46% were urban.
- Apart from this, 14 FGDs (2 in each state) were conducted with parents of eligible candidates.
- Nearly half of the surveyed beneficiaries were aged 15 years. 36% were older while 14% were younger.
- Around 51.5% of the total surveyed beneficiaries were female and rest male.
- Overall, little more than half of the beneficiaries were students of class 10 and remaining were students of class 9.
- Of total surveyed beneficiaries, the majority (98.1%) belonged to OBC category. Only around 1.9% of surveyed beneficiaries were from EBC category.
- Parents of beneficiary students were all aware about the scheme but awareness level among the non-beneficiary parents was very low.
- Survey revealed that all the interviewed respondents as per the list provided by the respective states got the scholarship during the reference period. Overall, around 94.2% of respondents got the scholarship in the previous year (2021-22) too.
- The average amount received by respondents was Rs. 4000/- under this scholarship scheme.
- Overall, around 97.3% of students reported getting scholarships on time.

- Overall, around 48% of the students reported that they got their scholarship in the month of May, followed by September (35.7%).
- Overall, around 99% respondents have the Aadhar seeded bank account.
- The survey data shows that overall, as high as 98.8% respondents received the scholarship amount through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) into their Aadhar seeded Bank Account.
- Overall, 65% had applied through hard copy and remaining 35% submitted their application online.
- Around 66% of the respondents applied for the scholarship after getting admission. Only, around 34% did this at the time of admission.
- Majority of the respondents submitted all the relevant documents that are required for availing the scholarship under the scheme.
- Prior knowledge about the application process was not available with the majority of the parents.
- Some of the parents informed that somebody from block office had visited them for inspection. But majority informed that verification was done by the school only.
- Major problem faced in availing pre-matric scholarship is requirement of too much documentation (70%), non availability of computer (26.3%) and late information about the scheme.
- Suggestion – (i) Increasing the scholarship amount (ii) timely release of funds (iii) reduction in the required documentation

5.2 PRE -MATRIC SCHOLARSHIPS (SCHOOL PERSPECTIVE)

- A total of 177 government schools have been covered under the Pre-Matric Scholarship scheme in which 52% were urban and remaining 48% were rural.
- In around 64% schools, the scheme is being implemented since inception, followed by 31% schools reporting that the scheme started being implemented in their schools in the year 2022-23 onwards.
- Of the surveyed Institutions, the majority, i.e. 69.1% do not practice the Aadhar linked attendance system.

- As high as 96% of institutions have a designated government approved INO/facilitation centre for their students to facilitate the process of scholarship application.
- Around 77.7% INOs mentioned that the students can apply for the scholarship scheme 'after admission' and only remaining 22.3% mentioned that it is done 'At the time of Admission', clearly marking a deviation from the scheme guidelines.
- Around 71.3% INOs mentioned that their schools verified the documents submitted by beneficiaries within 30 days of application. Around 26% INOs mentioned that the time of document verification is not fixed in their institution. Only 3.2% INOs mentioned that the document is verified on the same day of application.
- Around 80% INOs mentioned that the mode of application for scholarship is 'Online'
- According to the INOs, the problems encountered by them in selection of beneficiaries for the scheme are that proper documents as needed under the scheme are not available with the eligible students and difficulty in record keeping when students migrate to other districts.
- Suggestions for improvement – (i) Number of documents required for applying for the scheme should be reduced (ii) Process of scholarship application should be made much easier (iii) Beneficiary selection process should be easier (iv) Scholarship Portal must work properly round the year (v) Disabled students should be given more importance, and the scheme should be modified to help the disabled children more (vi) The scholarship amount needs to be increased (vii) The scholarship amount should be disbursed to schools on time (viii) Verification procedure should be such that it can be completed quickly (ix) Record maintenance by officials should be proper so that it does not become a major problem when students migrate elsewhere (x) There needs to be a reduction in paperwork (xi) Apart from Online mode, offline mode of application too should be allowed

5.3 POST MATRIC SCHOLARSHIP (BENEFICIARY PERSPECTIVE)

- The survey was conducted in 10 pre-sampled states covering 25584 beneficiary students.
- Around 59% of the beneficiaries were residents of urban areas whereas around 41% of them were residents of rural areas.
- Overall, the average age of beneficiary students was 20-21 years with minimum age of 15 years and maximum 34 years.
- Coverage of male and female respondents was almost equal i.e 50.8% male and 49.2% female.
- Social category wise sample coverage of respondents is highly tilted towards OBC (96.9%)
- More than half of the students were enrolled in graduation courses of arts, social science, science and commerce stream.
- Around one fifth of the students were pursuing bachelor's in engineering, while 8.3% pursuing a master's degree/diploma or a bachelor's degree in professional courses like BCA/BBA/LLB etc. (5.4%).
- Around 86% of respondents were enrolled in full time courses and remaining 14% in correspondence courses.
- Of those who were pursuing full time courses, around 13.4% of them were staying in hostels. The rest of them are day scholars.
- Little less than three-fourths of the respondents got their admission in the institute based on merit. Around one fifth got spot admission, followed by first come first serve basis admission (7%).
- Only 12% confirmed having a Free-ship card.
- Little more than half of the respondents having Free-ship cards had applied for it through hard copy submission of documents.
- 71.6% of respondents applied for freeship card/scholarship after admission and around one fourth at the time of admission.
- Almost all the application documents were submitted by more than 99% of the beneficiaries except for last passing course certificate (93.3%), domicile certificate (32.5%) and undertaking to the institution (29.4%).

- Prior knowledge about the application process was not available with majority of the parents, except for those who had got the information about the scheme from past beneficiaries.
- The verification of application and other documents were done by institute authorities itself.
- Parents were not aware about any monitoring visits by government authorities.
- 25584 beneficiary students were contacted for the verification study from the list provided by the state social welfare department. All of them confirmed that they had received the scholarship during reference period and continued to be getting it till date.
- Parents group reported that there were many eligible students not getting benefits because they are not able to submit the requisite documents on time.
- The median amount received during the reference period under this scholarship scheme was overall Rs. 8600/-.
- Around 88% of the respondents revealed that they are getting their scholarship on time.
- Little more than one third of the beneficiary respondents received money in the month of May followed by March (20%), April (11.6%) and January (9.5%).
- Around 95% of the beneficiary respondents confirmed that they have Aadhar seeded bank account. But only 91.2% were getting scholarship through DBT in their account.
- In little less than half of the cases, institutes demanded pre-payment of fees - either tuition or hostel fees, or both.
- Around seven percent beneficiaries of the scheme were also receiving benefits of other scholarships. Those schemes were PM Yashasvi, Pudhumai penn scheme (TN) and AICTE Parakh. All had informed to their respective authorities about the additional scholarship other than this.
- The major problems faced by the beneficiary respondents in availing the scholarship was too much documentation (53%) followed by late information (29.4%) and non-availability of computers (25.6%).
- Suggestions provided by the parents group for improvement in the scheme were (i) increase the scholarship amount, (ii) allow to get the benefits of other scholarship schemes too as the amount provided under the scheme is too less, especially for the students enrolled in private institutions, (iii) provide buffer time

for submitting documents, (iv) institute should facilitate in opening the bank accounts and (v) awareness creation among bank staff for opening a bank account for the students.

5.4 POST MATRIC SCHOLARSHIP (INSTITUTION PERSPECTIVE)

- A total of 512 institutions were covered in the study across 10 pre-defined study states in which around 57% were in rural areas and remaining 42.6% in urban areas.
- Little more than two thirds were private institutes and rest were either government (23.3%) or government aided institutes (8.4%).
- In all the surveyed institutes, only 32.1% were reported to be having NAAC / NBA Accreditation.
- Around 83.1% of institutes have designated Institute Nodal Officers.
- Of those institutes having INOs, 53.3% were Government approved.
- Around 95.6% informed that application should be made at the time of admission. Only 4.1% reported that it should be done before admission into the institute.
- Around 17% INOs responded that institutes are charging prepayment from freeship card holder students too.
- Only around one-fifth of the institutes confirmed having Aadhar linked attendance system and only 18.2% maintains it on daily basis and upload on the portal.
- Institutes are supposed to prepare and submit scheme related reports to the concerned state governments regularly. Around 83% institutes are doing so.
- In around one third of the institutes, it is the students who pay at the time of admission. In around 45% of cases students pay after getting their scholarship money and in around one-fifth cases institutes get direct reimbursement from the government.
- Almost 73% of institutes had informed that fees for different courses are approved for their institute by the fee fixation / fee rationalization committee.
- Problems faced and suggestion for efficiency enhancement:
 - Documentation Requirements: Households often lack required documents, causing delays.

- Aadhar-Bank Account Linkage: Many students' Aadhar numbers are not linked to a bank account.
- Server Overload: Application processes are delayed due to server downtime during peak periods.
- Mobile Number and Aadhar Issues: Students often use parents' mobile numbers or frequently change numbers (SIM churn), complicating the process.
- KYC Issues: Many students with bank accounts have not updated or completed their KYC.
- Computer Literacy: Students struggle to fill out forms independently due to low computer skills.
- Delayed Document Submission: Late submission of required documents delays induction and scholarship disbursement.
- Immaturity of Students: Younger students (16-17 years) are often rebellious and lack patience to comply with application requirements.
- Portal Problems: The ministry's portal is frequently non-functional or lacks proper course codes, requiring updates.
- Disbursement Intimation: Scholarship disbursements are not communicated to colleges.
- Suggestions for improvement:
 - Direct tuition fee payment to institutions or notify institutions when fees are disbursed to students.
 - Mandate Aadhaar biometric attendance in all institutions.
 - Ensure quarterly and regular scholarship disbursement.
 - Address non-cooperative banks by sending alerts to students when scholarship is received.
 - Increase scholarship amounts, especially for those without multiple scholarships.
 - Provide alternatives for students facing Aadhaar seeding issues.
 - Fix frequent portal outages to improve application processing.
 - Provide timely notifications of DBT failures due to Aadhaar issues.
 - Reduce documentation and paperwork requirements.
 - Extend application timelines to allow more eligible candidates to apply.
 - Increase maintenance allowances.
 - Raise scholarship amounts for disabled students.
 - Address delays caused by late publication of university results during renewal of applications.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EVALUATOR

- **Lack of Awareness:** Students are often unaware of scholarships until they enter an educational institution, relying mainly on word-of-mouth. Mass media campaigns are needed to improve awareness.
- **Documentation Challenges:** Awareness must be raised about necessary documents (e.g., caste and domicile certificates), and extra time should be given to parents to submit them. Corruption in obtaining these documents needs to be addressed.
- **Direct Fund Transfer to Schools:** Schools should receive the first scholarship tranche directly for fees, reducing financial burdens on students.
- **Application Process Issues:** Schools must ensure competent staff handles the application process, addressing computer shortages during peak times.
- **Verification Delays:** Institutions often take up to 30 days to verify student documents, contrary to guidelines requiring same-day verification. Standardization of the process is needed.
- **Support for Differently Abled Students:** The scholarship scheme should provide increased financial support and smoother application processes for differently abled students.
- **Intimation of Disbursement:** Institutions should be notified when scholarships are disbursed to students to avoid delays in tuition fee payments.