

**EVALUATION STUDY REPORT OF NATIONAL OVERSEAS
SCHOLARSHIP FOR SCHEDULED CASTES (SC)
CANDIDATES**

(File No. 15-23/2019-Stat. Division)



सत्यमेव जयते

Government Of India



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Submitted to
Statistics Division
Department of Social Justice & Empowerment
Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment,
Government of India**



**Submitted by
Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The National Overseas Scholarship is meant to assist selected Scheduled Castes, De-notified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes, Landless Agricultural Labourers and Traditional Artisans' students for pursuing higher studies of Master level courses and Ph. D programme abroad in the area of engineering and management, pure science and applied science, agricultural science and medicine, international commerce, accounting & finance and humanities and social sciences.
2. The terms and conditions laid down under the Scheme are (1) Minimum Qualification of the student for a PhD degree must be 55% marks or an equivalent grade in a relevant Master's Degree. Experienced candidates who are in line with their existing post and employer will be given preference over inexperienced candidates, (2) For a student pursuing Master's degree, 55% marks or equivalent grade in a relevant bachelor's degree is the minimum qualification. In this case, experienced candidates who are in line with their existing post and employer are given preference, (3) The combined income of the family of the candidate, from all sources should not exceed Rs. 6, 00,000 per annum in the previous financial year, (4) The maximum age of the candidate must be below 35 years as on 1st April of the ensuing selection year. In case a family has more than two children (belonging to the same parents/guardians); only two of them will be eligible. To this effect, a self-certification needs to be provided. The award can be given only once and the awardee may not be considered for the award during subsequent years. The second child of the parents will be considered only if the slots for that year are still available. For students availing the financial award, the prescribed assistance shall be provided upto the completion of the course/research or 4 years for PhD and 3 years for Master's Degree, whichever is earlier. Except the air passage to India, the financial burden of the remainder period shall not be borne by the government, with the due recommendation from the competent authority.
3. A provision for passage grants (five grants.) is also awarded to Scheduled Castes (four grants) and De-notified Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes (one grant) throughout the year. To avail the passage grant, a student must possess a Master's or equivalent degree in the Science, Tech or Engineering disciplines and should be awarded a scholarship which does not take care of travel expenditures in a foreign university.
4. The overarching objectives of the scheme as per the scheme document are (1) To facilitate the low-income students belonging to the Scheduled Castes, Denotified Nomadic and

Semi-Nomadic Tribes, Landless Agricultural Labourers and Traditional Artisans category to obtain higher education viz., Master degree or Ph. D by studying abroad thereby improving their Economic and Social status, (2) To provide financial assistance to the finally selected candidates for pursuing Master and Ph.D level course abroad in the accredited Institutions/Universities by an authorised body of that country in the field of (a) Engineering and Management, (b) Pure Sciences & Applied Sciences, (c) Agricultural Sciences and Medicine, (d) International Commerce, Accounting & Finance; and (e) Humanities and Social Science. To provide one hundred awards, subject to availability of funds, in (i) Engineering and Management-32 seats, (ii) Pure Sciences & Applied Sciences-17 seats, (iii) Agricultural Sciences and Medicine-17 seats, (iv) International Commerce, Accounting & Finance-17 seats; and (v) Humanities and Social Science-17 seats.

5. Annual Maintenance award is granted under two brackets, i.e. (1) United States of America and other countries except United Kingdom, and (2) Only for the United Kingdom. For the first category, i.e. the United States of America and other countries except for the United Kingdom, annual maintenance of USD 15400 is awarded for all levels under the scheme. The same fund for the United Kingdom, i.e. Category 2, has been capped at 9900 GBP.
6. The awardees are allowed to complement their prescribed allowance by undertaking assistantships and fellowships, such as research and teaching assistantships from the university. There is also a provision for annual contingency allowance which adheres to the two categories mentioned above. For the USA and others, the contingency allowance or funds allocated for books, essential apparatus, study tours, travel costs for conferences, workshops, etc. has been prescribed at USD 1500. For the UK, a contingency amount of GBP 1100 has been prescribed per year. Other allowances such as incidental journey and equipment allowance (each for USD 20), actual value of poll tax wherever applicable, visa fees (in INR), actual tuition fees, medical insurance premium, air passage (upto 5 candidates per year), local travel fares are also included in the offered financial package. The duration of the financial award is either the period prescribed in the scheme, i.e. 04 years for PhD or 03 years for Master's Degree, or the actual duration of the course whichever is earlier.
7. The scheme limits itself to the financial burden of the education of the beneficiary during his/her admission in an overseas organization only. It does not stretch itself to cover aspects of employment or assistance required while seeking employment after the availed

period of the Scheme. However, the scheme is comprehensive in its anticipation of student requirements during the process of obtaining an overseas education and provides, to the fullest possible extent, all kinds of financial support that may be necessary for the completion of the degree.

8. The SDG goal number four vouches for the inclusive and equitable quality of education and the promotion of lifelong learning. The National Overseas Scholarship for Scheduled Caste (SC) Students for studies abroad is commensurate with SDG 4.3, which targets equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university. By providing scholarships for foreign education to economically or ethnically backward classes, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is not only bringing equity in education and employability to the socially backward classes but also transferring internationally standardized skills to the backward social groups. Therefore, SDG goal number 4.3, which talks about the increase in the number of youth and adults with relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment and decent job creation is also being upheld through the scheme. The presence of 30% reservation for women candidates helps to eliminate disparities through accessing the opportunity between men and women, upholding the crux of SDG 4.

Methodological Details

1. The approach for the study took cognizance of the objectives, processes and outcomes of the scheme. Parameters were designed to quantitatively and qualitatively assess the achievements of the objectives of the scheme.
2. The objective-based approach examined whether the predetermined set of goals were duly achieved. The strengths and weaknesses of the scheme were viewed in light of the ease of the ancillary processes in facilitating the rightful beneficiaries of the scheme. The scheme outcomes were evaluated to understand the impact of the scheme within and beyond the SC student community. The strategy involved made use of both primary and secondary data for assessment of the scheme's goals, processes and outcomes. Secondary information in the form of Scheme Budget (particularly in terms of revised and actual expenditure, at the National and State levels) were obtained from the various minutes and reports of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. Apart from that, the database of the Nodal Ministry has equipped the study with information about beneficiary details, the design and implementation of the scheme.
3. The research instrument for collecting primary data was questionnaire. The questionnaire was made available to the sampled beneficiaries of the scheme to

understand the different stages in which the scheme impacted their lives. The questionnaire is divided into 4 parts, each dealing with the assessment of goals, procedures and outcomes of the scheme. It aimed to obtain the status and profiles of targeted beneficiaries before and after the scheme to quantitatively and qualitatively assess the changes brought about. The questionnaire was extended to understand the perception of the beneficiaries with respect to the processes involved in the scheme. This helped underpin the key bottlenecks and obstacles associated with the scheme. Information pertaining to the impact of the scheme on upward social mobility of SCs, their capacity for employment and the positive and negative externalities of the scheme were obtained through the questionnaire.

4. Observations were made while interacting with the beneficiaries of the scheme. As per the requirement under the scheme, content-specific discussions were held with officials of the Ministry. The preliminary round of discussion played an indispensable role in the strategy for evaluation by laying a strong foundation for the analysis of the evaluation criteria. Representative samples have been collected from six states for the study. The six states are 1) West Bengal, 2) Bihar, 3) Uttar Pradesh, 4) Delhi 5) Maharashtra and 6) Karnataka. Though the number of beneficiaries selected for study was less than 20% of the total seats allotted in a year, their selection in the study from different streams and states made the study representative.

Objectives of the Evaluation Study

The objectives of the evaluations were as under:

- i. To assess the socio-economic background of the beneficiaries,
- ii. To evaluate the effectiveness of the scheme towards obtaining higher education abroad by the selected candidates,
- iii. To assess the impact of the scheme in obtaining gainful employment after completion of the course by the scholarship awardee,
- iv. To ascertain the role of the scheme in changing social status of the family after completion of the course by the scholarship awardee,
- v. To assess the difficulties faced by the Applicants in obtaining scholarship,
- vi. To make a comparison of the scheme with the similar schemes implemented by the State Governments/other Central Government Departments,
- vii. Key findings based on the data collected from the field on the objectives of the study;
- viii. Shortcomings identified in the design of the existing scheme if any, and

- ix. Recommendations/suggestions for necessary restructuring to be carried out in the Scheme to achieve desired results and need for its continuation.

General Findings

1. The expenditure incurred is more than the revised estimate in selected years. In all six years, the expenditure incurred is inconsistent with the revised estimate. This shows that revised estimate for two years namely 2014-15 and 2015-16 are less whereas for the year 2016-17, 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20 are relatively more. Under the NOS scheme, admissible/due scholarship funds in the form of tuition fees/Maintenance allowances, contingency allowances etc. are directly paid to the university/ NOS awardees concerned respectively by the Indian Mission abroad on the endorsement of the Ministry of Social justice and Empowerment, Government of India. From the financial year 2017-18, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) started using Public Finance Management System (PFMS). The Indian Mission in various countries has different software for monitoring the execution of expenditure.
2. Under the Scheme Rs. 8.78 crore was utilised out of Rs. 6 crore in 2014-15, Rs. 13.45 crore out of 6 crore in 2015-16, Rs. 14.02 crore out of 15 crore in 2016-17, Rs. 3.13 crore out of 15 crore in 2017-18, Rs. 5.97 core out of 15 crore in 2018-19 and Rs. 13.01 crore out of 20 crore in 2019-20. Considering the disbursal span of 3 years for Masters and 4 years for Ph.D, the revised expenditure of NOS is growing. But the utilization amount has fluctuations. This shows ineffective coverage of the scheme for the potential beneficiaries.
3. The reduced level of outreach of the scheme in rural areas on the basis of sampled beneficiaries has been identified. Through the digital India campaign has enabled many to use internet in rural India, the interrupted network connectivity is one of the identified concerns in the countryside. The online processing of the applications for the Scheme from rural India may not give effective results. The online processing should be integrated with a well-designed MobileApp. However, the hardcopy from rural pockets may also be accepted.
4. After the implementation of Scheme, the percentage of bachelor degree holders have gone down and the number got clubbed-in with the Master degree holders to the tune of 88.2%. There were no Ph.D holders before the coverage of the Scheme which has gone up by 5.9% of the total sampled beneficiaries. Before availing the Scheme no beneficiary was married. 29.4% of beneficiaries have got married after availing the Scheme. A total of 35.3% addition is visible in case of getting employment opportunities. The beneficiaries reported that they were not satisfied with the employment opportunities that they received

- before the Scheme. As a result of the Scheme, 35.3% beneficiaries were found satisfied by the employment opportunities that they received. Those who have completed their studies and not received any employment were found continuing their studies.
5. Most of the parents were under the income slab of more than Rs. 20000 as their monthly income. 47.1% of parents were in the income slab of more than Rs. 20000, 29.4% in more than Rs. 10000 upto Rs. 15000, 17.6% under less than Rs. 10000 and 5.9% in more than Rs. 15000 upto Rs. 20000 income slabs.
 6. Majority of the respondents' parents were doing private jobs (47.1%), followed by self-employed (23.5%), casual workers (17.6%) and agricultural workers (11.8%). The present employment of beneficiaries' father was considered.
 7. Out of the total beneficiaries studied, 70.6% beneficiaries spent on domestic, education, health and overall maintenance of their houses. Only 17.6% of beneficiaries spent on domestic items, followed equally by health and overall maintenance of their houses (5.9%).
 8. Under the evaluation of the socio-economic conditions of the parents, the question related to parents receiving support from married children was asked. After marriage, the couple becomes more inclined towards their growth and development. However, they also take care of their parents. In this backdrop, the question was raised. It was found that 82.4% of the respondents said no to such support being received by parents whereas only 17.6% expressed that it was received.
 9. Effective changes in the participation of families in social events after the beneficiaries inducted in the scheme was covered. The frequency base of 'never' has come down with the impact of the Scheme. 'Occasional' alternative has come down with the impact of the scheme. 'Always' bar shows almost equal responses for both before and after the implementation of the Scheme. Overall, the participation of beneficiaries' families in the social event has increased, particularly responses documented on the 'never' component. Considering the participation of families as an important indicator of social status, the fruits of the scheme have brought about desirable changes.
 10. Beneficiaries have informed that no child from their households was pursuing higher education. 70.6% of beneficiaries informed that no child pursued higher education, followed by 'one-child' pursuing higher education (23.5%) and 'two children' (5.9%). In the State of Maharashtra and Delhi, the members of the households were reported pursuing higher education. The fact that SC population of both Maharashtra and Delhi are bestowed more information and therefore they knew the ways to harvest the fruits of

higher education. Therefore, their inclination towards academic potential is relatively better.

11. 76.5% of beneficiaries are satisfied with the award of Scholarship. 23.5% of beneficiaries have expressed that they were not happy with the amount of the award, particularly maintenance allowance. Two beneficiaries from Maharashtra and one each from Delhi and Karnataka have expressed their dissatisfaction on the award value. However, beneficiaries from West Bengal, Bihar, Delhi, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh are satisfied with the value of the award.
12. To apply for the Scholarship, required documents are submitted and solvency bonds, executed. The employed candidates are required to provide a 'No-Objection Certificate' from the employer to the Ministry. The candidates have to give an undertaking that she/he is not in receipt of any scholarship from any government/other organization including university/college for the course one is applying under the scheme. Out of the total different difficulties expressed by beneficiaries, 35.3% of them informed problem-related to solvency bond, 5.9% related to the air ticket and 52.9% did not face any hurdle. Certificate related difficulties have been expressed by the beneficiary of Delhi whereas problem-related to solvency bond was informed by beneficiaries from Karnataka and Maharashtra. Document related problem has been identified by one beneficiary whereas air ticket related problems identified by another beneficiary. The problem related to solvency bond was expressed by 6 beneficiaries which are 35.3% of the total sample studied.
13. 94.1% of the total beneficiaries responded that the scheme was beneficial and effective to them. Only one beneficiary has declined to respond positively on the indicator. Of the total positively responded beneficiaries, 50% beneficiaries from Maharashtra and 25% from Delhi have recognized the effectiveness of the Scheme. 6.25% each of the positively answered beneficiaries are from Bihar, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, and Karnataka.
14. The beneficiaries were asked to furnish their knowledge of other similar schemes for which they are eligible and whether the benefits of the scheme can be duplicated due to the possibility of overlap. No response was documented on the indicator. The beneficiaries were not aware of any scheme of this kind. As such, the scheme does not overlap with other State/centre sponsored scheme meant for SC population.

Gap in Achievement

1. The actual number of beneficiaries impacted was less than assigned target of 100 beneficiaries. Beyond the financial year 2015, when the achievement of targets was only

50%, the scheme began achieving way beyond its target of 100 beneficiaries. The achievement of the scheme escalated beyond the set target during the years 2016-17 and 2017-18, creating a surplus of 83% during FY18. However, looking closely at the distribution of scholarships across different Indian states, we notice a disparity in the number of selected beneficiaries. Consistently, Maharashtra ranks 1, when it comes to the number of selected beneficiaries, whereas states such as Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka, Odisha, Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan with substantial SC population of 15% (>10 lakh SC population) suffers from the absence of beneficiaries. This can be attributed to the fact that these states fail to generate adequate demand from SC students for their overseas scholarship schemes. Some of the aforementioned states like Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka and Rajasthan have SC populations of more than 1 Crore.

2. The sufficient number of beneficiaries from many states were not covered under the scheme. Though the surplus from preceding year is superimposed on coming years, it denies the allocation of seats to the hundred beneficiaries for every year.
3. The selection committee should take into account the academic and socio-economic details of beneficiaries. It has been found during the study that highly improved scholars like Santosh Gade from Pune have availed the scheme. There are more scholars from vulnerable socio-economic pockets who do not necessarily get covered under the Scheme.
4. After the completion of the course, the beneficiaries come back to the country and also leave the country. This is a major challenge. They are being given the scholarship from the collection of taxpayers' money. It should be made mandatory that after the completion of the course, they should come back and serve the country at least for five years. However, it is also prescribed in the schemes but it requires effective adherence.
5. The beneficiaries after the completion off the course should return back and work in the country, so that, there is no loss to the resources spent on them. Those who do not like to come back should be discouraged..There should be no loss due to opportunity cost incurred. The loss is two-fold. First, the amount allotted to the beneficiary was not judiciously used and second, it let the human resource go unharnessed.

Input Use Efficiency

The ratio of actual expenditure incurred and the number of candidates gone abroad can give us an indication of input use efficiency. The efficiency of input use can be computed by taking a simple ratio of output to input. The average input use efficiency has been calculated as 6.6. Keeping the average as standard, we find that in the year 2017-18, the efficiency level

is higher than the average. In the year 2015-16, the efficiency level is less. In the year 2016-17 and 2018-19, the efficiency level is fluctuating between 3.3 and 3.4 which is less. However, the difference in efficiency level between 2017-18 and 2015-19 is more.

Observations

1. The beneficiaries underwent professional courses foresee better employability in sharp contrast to those who returned. Even if after the completion of the courses, some of them are not employed, but the degree of satisfaction and confidence that they developed is phenomenal and many of them after completing their degrees found pursuing studies.
2. Financial disbursement includes tuition fees charged by the foreign university, fixed maintenance allowance along with to and fro airfare through Air India. On the aforesaid items, selected beneficiaries expressed that maintenance allowance needs to be increased. However, it is observed that the amount they receive is sufficient and marginal shortage may motivate them to work, improve their knowledge and skill-set for better employability.
3. The Scheme has 100 slots for each year and 30% of the awards have been earmarked for women. It is observed that with the reservation, more and more women have been covered under the Scheme over the years. This is observed based on sampled women found among the beneficiaries for the study.
4. The income ceiling prescribed for the scheme is 6 lakhs. It observed that most of the beneficiaries' income would have been more than the ceiling. However, the income ceiling may be revised keeping in view the Market Price Index (MPI).
5. Those who availed the scheme and did not complete their courses considered their family reasons being instrumental. However, those who returned were least happy with the selection of the Institute where they studied.
6. The seats allotted per year is 100. Looking into the potential of the scheme to cover the qualifying candidates, additional seats are not required. The seats of the scheme can be increased provided more seats are demanded by more qualified persons.
7. To ensure employability of the beneficiary students, it is observed that beneficiary getting admission to the overseas institutions need to be considered in terms of institutional performance, though accreditation based selection of institution is inscribed. A hierarchy of overseas institution needs to be devised and priority in admission should be considered thereupon. This would help shortlist the candidates based on their enrolment with the institutions. It is also observed that in the sampled beneficiaries, a complete absence of beneficiaries from Denotified, Nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes, landless agricultural

labourers and traditional artisans is observed. It indicates that the representation of the aforementioned social categories has not taken place. The scheme is meant to assist selected Scheduled Caste, De-notified Tribes, landless agricultural labourers and traditional artisan students for pursuing higher studies of master level courses and Ph. D programme abroad. In the study sample, only SC candidates were found.

Recommendations

The Scheme of National Overseas Scholarship for SC Students, tribal communities, traditional artisans and agricultural labourers is a meaningful scheme but it has served selective purpose as it has facilitated only the SCs. Therefore, its coverage and the effectiveness need to be improvised. As such, **the Scheme of National Overseas Scholarship for Scheduled Caste (SC) Students is recommended to be continued**, subject to the following compliances:

1. The Scheme of the National Overseas Scholarship for the SC Students should be continued because it provides the opportunity to the deserving scholars to receive global exposure and the knowledge-based skill-set for the improved employability.
2. The implementation of the Scheme is restricted to few states with a limited number of scholars, creating a deficit in the estimated number of allotment vis-a-vis the actual number of selected candidates. This requires to be cemented through the selection of appropriate media for its quarterly publicity, attracting a sufficient number of applicants for selection. Apart from continuing with exiting publicity platforms, the regional print media should also be used to disseminate the wider coverage. However, by continuous persuasions of the Department with the Indian Mission abroad, booking of the expenditure under the scheme has been raised significantly to the tune of Rs. 28.39 crores in the year 2019-20 which is moving sign.
3. As candidates after the completion of their courses become intellectually empowered, and exercise the power of distinction from other members of communities, they are required to stay back in India for at least five years, so that, their foreign experiences can be utilised by the society as a whole.
4. It has been found that income certificates produced by beneficiaries are not necessarily correct. It is recommended that a copy of the tax return filed by all members of the household should be submitted to the Ministry along with income certificate and PAN Numbers. A system may also be in place to conduct physical re-verification of income certificates of the selected candidates. An undertaking should also be taken from the selected candidate that after the selection to overseas

scholarship, any discrepancy detected at any stage with regard to income certificate or otherwise, the award would be cancelled thereto and the entire amount with penal interest would be refunded to the Ministry.

5. To do away with the inability to complete academic courses, priority should be given to those candidates who have cleared GRE/GMAT/TOFEL, so that the selected candidates have required acumen to complete their courses. In addition to this, the system should be in place to examine the research aptitude of the candidates. To ensure that the selected candidates complete their courses, the Indian Missions/Embassies abroad may be requested to send a quarterly status report of beneficiaries to the Ministry. Based on the report, the Ministry may take appropriate decision/s. In case the candidate does not complete the course successfully and drops the studies midway without proper justification, the candidate may be required to refund the entire amount with penal interest.
6. An online format for the host institution/university may be designed by the Ministry to receive any non-serious behaviour of scholar. In case a candidate's gravity of non-serious behaviour is detected, the award may be cancelled and the candidate may be asked to refund the full amount with applicable interest
7. The extension of stay beyond prescribed period may be considered without financial assistance of any kind except the air passage to return to India, if and only if recommendation of the competent concerned authority in the educational institution/university, as well as Indian Mission abroad, is received certifying that such an overstay for the specified period, is necessary for facilitating the candidate to complete the course.
8. The scrutiny of bi-annual progress reports of awardees pursuing their studies abroad should be converted into quarterly progress report. It quarterly progress report should consist of academic score, participation in extra-curricular activity/es, distinction/award/honour received and publication brought out. In line with four identified indicators, a format of quarterly progress report may be designed and sent to the Indian Mission abroad to help provide status report to the Ministry.
9. After completion of the course, the scholars should be engaged with any industry/institution for not less than five years. Those who are not willing to stay for five years may be required to pay the entire amount disbursed on him/her including induced cost spent on administering the scheme with existing bank interest rate.

10. The proportional representation of other social groups, namely de-notified, nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes, and landless agricultural labourers to the tune of six and four (already prescribed under the scheme), respectively should be ensured.

11. The three-term goals need to be considered mentioned in the vision for the future in the evaluation report.

Thematic Assessment: Specific Findings (As per the Objectives of the Evaluation Study)

1. Socio-economic status (SES) is a measure of an individual's or family's social status (mainly educational and occupational/professional) and economic status (mainly income). Most of the parents of the beneficiaries are illiterate and barely literate. Males are relatively better literate than women. More than 80 % women look after the domestic work. Out of the total literate fathers, 35.2% were upto 12th passed outs whereas 52.9% bachelor and above degree holders. Out of the total literate mothers, 35.2% were upto 12th passed outs whereas 52.9% bachelor and above degree holders. Out of the total mothers, 47% were illiterate, 35.3% 10th passed outs and 17.6% 12th passed outs. Out of the total households, 47.1% monthly family income was reported as more than Rs. 20000. 29.4% was found between Rs. 10000 and Rs. 15000. 17.6% of household income was computed as less than Rs. 10000. Between the income range of Rs. 15000 and Rs. 20000, 5.9% of households were reported. 41.2% of the respondents' fathers were doing private jobs, 23.5% each in the self-employed and daily wager, 5.9% each in agricultural worker and retired personnel from the govt. The approximately 94% of mothers of the beneficiaries were homemakers while 6% of mothers, daily wagers.
2. The effectiveness of the Scheme towards obtaining higher education abroad by the selected candidates for the sampled beneficiaries was also assessed. 82.35% sampled respondents from selected candidates completed their course abroad whereas 17.64% returned uncompleted. Out of the total sampled beneficiaries selected for Master programme, 13 completed the course while one left the course uncompleted and returned. Out of total sampled beneficiaries from the selected candidates for the Ph.D programme, one completed the course and other two left and returned. For the master degree, the candidate who left and returned was female whereas for Ph.D programme, and other two, males. Overall, higher education was obtained by the majority of the beneficiaries. But in the case of Ph.D programme, the performance of the sampled beneficiaries among the selected candidates is deplorable. Though the reasons behind leaving the programme are

attributed to domestic, it requires to be investigated further that why there is drop out cases for Ph.D programme.

3. The impact of Scheme in obtaining gainful employment after the completion of the course by the scholarship awardees was also evaluated in the study. The scholars who went abroad and completed their course, 42.86% of them got employment while 57.14% remained unemployed. Of the unemployed candidates, approximately most of them are pursuing higher studies. It was also found that the candidates pursuing advance studies gave more weightage to education than employment. Those who returned with an uncompleted degree, 100% of them were found jobless or unemployed. If we compare between those who completed the course and those who opted out, the instrumental finding of the study informs that the candidates who successfully availed the scheme performed better.
4. The difficulties faced by applicants in obtaining the scholarship were very less. Out of the 17 sampled beneficiaries, 23.5% faced problem in executing solvency bond. 11.7% of them have faced a problem related to the procurement of documentary certificates. Some of them have also reported that while coming back, air tickets were not timely made available.
5. The role of the scheme in changing social status of the family after completion of the course by scholarship awardee was documented. Out of the total sample selected, 82.4% of the beneficiaries reported that they experienced subsequent changes in their social status while 17.6% did not find any change. The 17.6% negative responses are from the three beneficiaries who left the course and returned.
6. Overall, there are several schemes implemented by different ministries to provide concessional benefits to the marginalised community of our society. One of them is the Pre and Post-Matric Scholarship scheme implemented by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs. Both the National Overseas Scholarship for SC students and Post Matric Scholarship are given to scholars considering the income ceiling. Both schemes are implemented for beneficiary students. The said scheme implemented by the Ministry by taking into the confidence district and State level implementing officials. The Scheme follows DBT disbursement through Aadhar enabled bank account. The Scheme of National Overseas Scholarship for SC Students has a wider canopy at the macro level. However, the number of beneficiaries covered under the scheme is very less. The best practice of Pre and Post

Matric Scholarship identified by the study team is instituting Adhar Enable Bank Account and publicity may be considered by the Ministry to ensure accountability and wider outreach, respectively.

Externalities

- a. The major externality identified in the scheme was its outreach and beneficiary selection. The scheme has provision for 100 seats for every year. There is also provision for special allotment of seats for women candidates. However, the required number of seats have not been fulfilled. The coverage of the scheme by the state is unevenly distributed. It is important to note that within the SC castes, there are classes. The benefit should reach to those SCs whose class location is deplorable. However, the income ceiling of 6 lakh is given in the scheme to bar those SCs whose income level is more. It was observed during the study that beneficiaries availing the scheme did not disclose their precise income. The Ministry informed that they executed cross verifications of their income-related documents. Nevertheless, the document related certifications are required to be made more effective.
- b. The prerequisite to the implementation of the Scheme should be ensured with proper publicity. The website based advertisement is not enough. The inapt publicity of the scheme is one of its externalities. The absence of publicity on social sites, print media, particularly regional media and other government platforms was reported.
- c. The sampled beneficiaries were exclusive of De-notified, nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes, landless agricultural labourers and traditional artisans. The Scheme seems to have augmented SC students only whereas the scheme is obliged to consider beneficiaries from these sections as well.
- d. Majority of the beneficiaries availing the scheme are from Maharashtra and Delhi. The selection of beneficiaries for the Scheme should be aligned to the aspirational districts of our country. If required, the eligibility criteria may be relaxed. The representation from other communities listed in the scheme should also be given due considerations.
- e. The beneficiaries availing the scheme after completion of the programme do not share their cultural capital with other SC members. The scheme of this kind should be embedded with the trickle-down effect. The beneficiaries after completion of their courses should voluntarily serve for five years to an institution with a stipend.
- f. Last but not the least, the actual expenditure of the Scheme is very less than anticipated. The reasons expressed are mostly an insufficient number of beneficiaries. Except for the

year 2016-17, in other consecutive years, the expenditure is almost receding. In the year 2019-20, the projected expenditure is 3.27 cr. which very less.

- g. The beneficiaries who got selected and returned to India is a major externality to the scheme. During the three years, namely 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-18, a total of 4, 7 and 4 candidates returned, respectively. This shows a lugubrious performance of the scheme.

Issues and Challenges

1. **Insufficient number of Scholars** covered under the scheme is one of the important issues. The beneficiaries covered under the scheme are not necessarily from the lower class of Scheduled Castes. The number in the sampled beneficiaries from the denotified, nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes, landless agricultural labourers and traditional artisans are almost absent. The candidates from these communities should also get represented in the scheme.
2. The annual **Revised estimate** of the scheme is mostly 15 crore which has never been fully spent. The expenditure is mostly around 40% or less of the revised estimate.
3. The scholars selected to **complete Ph.D programme** have been found returning. In the sampled beneficiaries, out of three, two beneficiaries selected for Ph.D programme returned. It shows that either non-serious candidates or incompetent candidates were selected for the Ph.D programme.
4. It has been observed that the candidates availing the scholarship consider the **benefits as their right**. They neither responded favorably nor cooperated well with the team of investigators, nor did they show serious concern.
5. The **outreach** of the programme is not gone beyond some of the states. The sampled beneficiaries were mostly from Delhi and Maharashtra, as compared to other states. The coverage of the scheme in the rural area is also not equally represented.

Challenges

(i) Internal

- 1 The beneficiaries of the Scheme should be in touch with a dedicated team of the Ministry who can appraise their performances. This would help the beneficiaries utilize the fund judiciously. That would also help the beneficiaries in addressing exigencies.

- 2 The third-party assessment of the scheme should have been conducted. That would have helped to identify the bottlenecks and corresponding remedial measures. As assessment is based on a limited number of samples, the findings may not necessarily be generalized.
- 3 Since the scheme runs on 'first come- first serve' basis, the role of selection committee becomes largely limited. It needs liberation from the old styled art of working. The systematic strategy should be developed to select potential beneficiaries.
- 4 The entire database of NOS beneficiaries for the last five years should be updated. It should include their contact address, phone number, present activity etc.

ii. External

1. Selecting and sending scholars to study abroad is a good idea. It is important to know the standard of institutions where beneficiaries are getting enrolled.
2. Through the Indian Mission abroad, it is necessary to obtain bi-annual progress reports of the awardees from the University/Institution where the awardees are pursuing his/her studies. This would help, not only in monitoring the progress report and get the feedback from the awardees.
3. When the beneficiaries go abroad and return they seem to have started employing the power of distinction from the others. This is a major challenge before the SC community to harvest the benefits from scholars gone abroad.
4. The income certificates produced by the beneficiaries need to be verified by their neighbours who could be a better source to comment on their real income.

Vision for the Future

1. **Short-Term Goal (1-2 Years):** Preparing a robust database of the scheme with working contact details of the beneficiaries. To include those who are remotely located on priority, particularly induction of candidates from far-flung rural areas. Publicity of the Scheme should be given quarterly through audio-visual, print, State govt. platforms, and the Ministry website. Publicity through regional media (in regional language should be a must) in regional languages should specifically be encouraged.
2. **Medium-Term Goal (1-5 Years)** procurement of database of candidates from universities, colleges and institutions. Aligned with the SECC survey report, the

selection of probable regions may be done from where potential beneficiaries are to be selected. A dedicated team may be constituted at the level of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment which would converse with the State Social Welfare Department to know the more vulnerable groups where the implementation of the scheme can be a change agent.

- 3. Long-Term Goal: (1-10 years)** to ensure **that** all bonafide beneficiaries are covered from all vulnerable sections of society irrespective of their case based backwardness. The beneficiaries who have availed the scheme may be brought together, and in consultation with MHRD, similar institute of excellence can be instituted. Side by side, the best foreign talent can be invited to teach in our country so that improvements pertaining to employability can take place at a faster pace.

Recommendations for Scheme with reasons

1. The Scheme of the National Overseas Scholarship for the SC Students should be continued because it provides the opportunity to the deserving scholars to receive global exposure and the knowledge-based skill-set for the improved employability.
2. The implementation of the Scheme is restricted to few states with a limited number of scholars, creating a deficit in the estimated number of allotment vis-a-vis the actual number of selected candidates. This requires to be cemented through the selection of appropriate media for its quarterly publicity, attracting a sufficient number of applicants for selection. Apart from continuing with exiting publicity platforms, the regional print media should also be used to disseminate the wider coverage. However, by continuous persuasions of the Department with the Indian Mission abroad, booking of the expenditure under the scheme has been raised significantly to the tune of Rs. 28.39 crores in the year 2019-20.
3. As candidates after the completion of their courses become intellectually empowered, and exercise the power of distinction from other members of communities, they are required to stay back in India for at least five years, so that, their foreign experiences can be utilised by the society as a whole.
4. It has been found that income certificates produced by beneficiaries are not necessarily correct. It is recommended that a copy of the tax return filed by all members of the household should be submitted to the Ministry along with income certificate and PAN Numbers. A system may also be in place to conduct physical re-

verification of income certificates of the selected candidates. An undertaking should also be taken from the selected candidate that after the selection to overseas scholarship, any discrepancy detected at any stage with regard to income certificate or otherwise, the award would be cancelled thereto and the entire amount with penal interest would be refunded to the Ministry.

5. To do away with the inability to complete academic courses, priority should be given to those candidates who have cleared GRE/GMAT/TOFEL, so that the selected candidates have required acumen to complete their courses. In addition to this, the system should be in place to examine the research aptitude of the candidates. To ensure that the selected candidates complete their courses, the Indian Missions/Embassies abroad may be requested to send a quarterly status report of beneficiaries to the Ministry. Based on the report, the Ministry may take appropriate decision/s. In case the candidate does not complete the course successfully and drops the studies midway without proper justification, the candidate may be required to refund the entire amount with penal interest.
6. An online format for the host institution/university may be designed by the Ministry to receive any non-serious behaviour of scholar. In case a candidate's gravity of non-serious behaviour is detected, the award may be cancelled and the candidate may be asked to refund the full amount with applicable interest
7. The extension of stay beyond prescribed period may be considered without financial assistance of any kind except the air passage to return to India, if and only if recommendation of the competent concerned authority in the educational institution/university, as well as Indian Mission abroad, is received certifying that such an overstay for the specified period, is necessary for facilitating the candidate to complete the course.
8. The scrutiny of bi-annual progress reports of awardees pursuing their studies abroad should be converted into quarterly progress report. It quarterly progress report should consist of academic score, participation in extra-curricular activity/es, distinction/award/honour received and publication brought out. In line with four identified indicators, a format of quarterly progress report may be designed and sent to the Indian Mission abroad to help provide details to the Ministry.
9. After completion of the course, the scholars should be engaged with any industry/institution for not less than five years. Those who are not willing to stay for five years

may be required to pay the entire amount disbursed on him/her including induced cost spent on administering the scheme with existing bank interest rate.

10. The proportional representation of other social groups, namely de-notified, nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes, and landless agricultural labourers to the tune of six and four (already prescribed under the scheme), respectively should be ensured.
11. The three-term goals need to be considered mentioned in the vision for the future in the evaluation report.