

# An Analysis on Economic Support and Scholarships Strategies for School and College Education in India

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## INTRODUCTION

A Scholarship in the real sense of the word is financial aid given to a student because of academic merit with the purpose of encouraging such students in their academic pursuits. A number of scholarship schemes are sponsored by the Government of India without losing sight of the main purpose i.e. giving financial aid on the basis of merit. The Government of India judiciously recognizes the financial burden entailed on parents/guardians belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe, who desire that their children/Wards continue and complete their education so as to ensure their future jobs and realization of their aspired careers. For this purpose Post-matric Scholarship Schemes for students belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are provided accordingly. Recognizing the fact that educational avenues are many and varied, scholarship schemes also cover such students who opt for full-time educational courses through Distant Education mode or through Correspondence Courses.

The benign Government of India desire that students from all strata of society be given opportunities to empower themselves through education. This will lead to an enhancement of the chance of their being employable and ideally to realize a pan socioeconomic parity.

Pre-matric is the Scholarship for students from Minorities Communities. The Scholarship at Pre-matric level will encourage parents from minority communities to send their school going children to school, lighten their financial burden on school education and sustain their efforts to support their children to complete school education. The scheme will form the foundation for their educational attainment and provide a level playing field in the competitive employment arena. Empowerment through education, which is one of the objectives of this scheme, has the potential to lead to upliftment of the socio economic conditions of the minority communities.

The Prime Minister's 15 Point Programme for the welfare

of minorities was announced in June, 2006. It provided that a Pre-matric scholarship scheme for meritorious students from minority communities would be implemented. The scholarship at Pre-matric level will encourage parents from minority communities to send their school going children to school, lighten their financial burden on school education and sustain their efforts to support their children to complete school education. The scheme will form the foundation for their educational attainment and provide a level playing field in the competitive employment arena. Empowerment through education, which is one of the objectives of this scheme, has the potential to lead to upliftment of their socio economic conditions. The scholarship will be awarded for studies in India in a government or private school from class I to class X, including such residential Government institutes and eligible private institutes selected and notified in a transparent manner by the State Government and Union Territory Administration concerned. Scholarship will be awarded to the students who have secured not less than 50 per cent marks in the final examination and annual income of their parents/guardian from all sources does not exceed Rs. 1 lakh. Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists and Zoroastrians (Parsis) have been notified as minority communities under Section 2 (c) of the National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992. The distribution of scholarship among the States/Union Territories will be made on the basis of population of minorities in the States/Union Territories of Census 2001. 30 per cent of scholarship will be earmarked for girl students.

In case sufficient number of eligible girl students is not available, then the balance earmarked scholarships may be awarded to eligible boy students. As the number of scholarships for minorities available in a year is fixed and limited it is necessary to lay down preference for selection.

## BACKGROUND

In August last year, one of the landmark legislations of independent India, 'The Right of Children to Free and

Compulsory Education Act, 2009' was passed by parliament. The bill makes education a fundamental right of every child in the 6 to 14 years age group. It is now compulsory for the State to provide free elementary education up till class 8 to all children.

However, despite the law's noble intentions, monumental challenges remain to be overcome. One-fourths (25.6%) of children who enrol in schools do not complete their primary (up to class 5) education. Drop out rates for girls are much higher than boys.

Even those completing primary studies, learn little. According to Pratham's *Annual Status of Education Report, 2009*, in rural areas, about 50% of children studying in class 5 are unable to read text of class 2, implying that they are at least three grade levels behind where they need to be. The Government remains the largest provider of elementary education in the country. Nearly 80% of all recognised schools are either run or supported by it. While school infrastructure and children's access to school has increased significantly in the past few years, high pupil-teacher ratio, poor quality of teacher training, archaic and rote learning practices have adversely affected the overall schooling experience of children.

Also, access, efficiency and quality issues in education affect marginalised communities (Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe, Muslim minorities, girls, those living in remote rural areas, slums, etc.) since they are totally dependant on the government education system.

## SCHEMES AT PRE-MATRIC LEVEL EXCLUSIVELY FUNDED BY THE STATE GOVERNMENT

1. Book Grant to SC/ST students : The purpose of this scheme is to provide financial assistance towards purchase of books to the students reading in classes V to X in Government /Govt. aided schools. Children whose family income is up to Rs.36,000/- per annum are entitled to this grant. The class wise rates of such grant are given below:

Class	Rate
V	Rs. 20/- per annum
VI	Rs. 150/- per annum
VII	Rs. 200/- per annum
VIII	Rs. 280/- per annum
IX	Rs. 300/- per annum
X	Rs. 275/- per annum + Exam. Fee (As charged by the Board)

Eligible students are to apply in the prescribed form through their Head of the Institution just after admission/promotion into new class. In the last 6 years achievement of this State in this respect is given below: -

Year	Scheduled Caste		Scheduled Tribe	
	Amount utilized (Rs.)	No. of Beneficiaries	Amount utilized (Rs.)	No. of Beneficiaries
2007-08	30,04,56,995	15,08,735	5,09,32,905	2,72,817
2008-09	21,44,02,040	10,91,616	6,06,04,850	3,05,098
2009-10	49,52,70,222	23,28,861	6,13,02,839	3,11,474
2010-11	43,37,11,363	20,60,712	7,23,30,824	3,65,844
2011-12	41,48,50,700	19,93,544	8,01,54,643	3,80,391
2012-13	23,25,55,459	13,79,474 (V to VIII)	90,770,840	4,90,515

2. Maintenance Grant for SC/ST students : Under this scheme, each eligible SC or ST day scholar is paid grant at the rate of Rs. 40/- per month or Rs. 480/- per annum. The aim of this scheme is to provide some impetus to the parents for sending their wards to schools. This grant helps the students usually to meet their conveyance and other sundry expenses. There is a ceiling of parents' income of Rs. 36,000/- per annum. Such quota for SC students is 2,00,000 but for ST students the quota is unlimited. Every eligible student is to collect scholarship form from the respective B.D.O./Gram Panchayat /Municipality office to get this benefit.

3. Other Compulsory Charges for Students Belonging to ST Communities : This scheme is meant exclusively for ST students. Under the scheme each ST student gets Rs. 35/- per annum to enable them to pay various compulsory charges to the School on account of development fee, library fee etc. etc. Family income limit has been fixed at Rs.36,000 per annum as a condition of eligibility. During the last 6 years achievement of this State is given below: -

Year	Scheduled Tribe	
	Amt. utilized (Rs.)	No. of Beneficiaries
2007-08	69,58,615	1,89,161
2008-09	77,09,378	2,20,519
2009-10	85,02,140	2,43,013
2010-11	89,73,935	2,56,271
2011-12	98,63,095	2,77,204
2012-13	88,43,005	2,53,168

4. Merit Scholarship Schemes for students reading in Classes IX to XII and V to X. The State Government runs two types of schemes (1) Merit scholarship scheme for SC/ST students reading in classes IX to XII and (2) Merit Scholarship Scheme for SC/ST girl students reading in classes V to X out of its own resources. All eligible students are advised to communicate with their respective Head of the Institution/our Dist. level offices to collect forms.

## ACCESS TO SCHOOLS AND AWARD OF PRE-MATRIC SCHOLARSHIP

On the basis of household survey, it was assessed that how many children out of total children that are in the age

group of 6 to 14 years were going to schools. It was found that at the aggregate level; around 65 per cent of them were attending the schools regularly. There was no major difference between the boys and girls in this regard. The percentage of school attending children was higher in urban areas (72.07) in comparison with the children in rural areas (63.81). These results appear to be realistic as it was found in various rounds of Monitoring and Evaluation of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) Programme in different districts of Uttar Pradesh that roughly 55 to 60 per cent of enrolled children attend their schools regularly. In this way, 35 to 40 per cent of school age enrolled children remain out of school. The Muslim children also showed similar pattern as far their accessibility to schooling is concerned. This goes to show that substantial number of school age children still does not have access to schools and Muslim children are equal participants in such type of out of school children.

It was also assessed that out of total children who applied for the Pre-matric scholarship in the past, how many of them succeeded in getting the scholarship. As evident in table-1 that out of those children who applied for the Pre-matric scholarship, around 40 per cent of them got it. The percentage of pre-matric scholarship getting children was higher in rural areas as against in urban areas. The percentage of girls both in rural and urban areas was higher in comparison with boys.

Item	Number of Students		
	Rural	Urban	Total
Children Going to School			
Boys	250(63.61)	57(71.25)	307(64.90)
Girls	242(64.02)	54(72.97)	296(65.48)
Total	492(63.81)	111(72.07)	603(65.19)
Students Getting Scholarships			
Boys	92(36.80)	16(28.07)	108(35.18)
Girls	108(44.62)	24(44.44)	132(44.59)
Total	200(40.65)	40(36.36)	240(39.80)

**Table-1: Accessibility of Muslim Children to Schools and Pre-matric Scholarship**

## SCHOLARSHIP FOR STUDENTS BELONGING TO THE MINORITY

The scholarship at pre-matric level will encourage parents from minority communities to send their school going children to school, lighten their financial burden on school education and sustain their efforts to support their children to complete school education. The scheme will form the foundation for their educational attainment and provide a level playing field in the competitive employment arena. Empowerment through education, which is one of the objectives of this scheme, has the potential to lead to upliftment of the socio economic conditions of the minority communities.

The scholarship will be awarded for studies in India in a government or private school from class I to class X, including such residential Government institutes and eligible private institutes selected and notified in a transparent manner by the State Government and Union Territory Administration concerned.

Scholarship will be awarded to the students who have secured not less than 50% marks in the previous final examination and annual income of their parents/guardian from all sources does not exceed Rs. 1 lakh.

Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists and Zoroastrians (Parsis) have been notified as minority communities under Section 2 (c) of the National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992. The distribution of scholarship among the States/Union Territories will be made on the basis of population of minorities in the States/Union Territories of Census 2001.

## CONDITIONS FOR SCHOLARSHIP:

(i) Scholarship will be available to the students of minority community studying in Classes I to X. The continuance of award will be subject to securing 50% marks in the previous examination. Maintenance allowance will be provided to hostellers and day scholars.

(ii) The award will be discontinued if a student fails to secure 50% marks in the annual examination except in case of unavoidable reasons to be certified by the Principal/competent authority of the school and recommended by the State Government/Union Territory Administration.

(iii) Income certificate should be on self-certification basis by way of affidavit on non-judicial stamp paper of self-employed parents/guardian and from employer for employed parents/guardian.

(iv) The school/institute will certify the claim of student of being an outstation student not residing in hostel of the school/institute concerned on the basis of permanent address and parents' address.

(v) Migration of student from one school/institute to another would not normally be during the course of academic year except under exceptional circumstances and in the interest of student's academic career.

(vi) If a student violates school discipline or any other terms and conditions of the scholarship, scholarship may be suspended or cancelled. The State Government/Union Territory Administration can also directly cancel the award if duly satisfied of the reasons of violation of these regulations governing the scheme.

(vii) If a student is found to have obtained a scholarship by

false statement, his/her scholarship will be cancelled forthwith and the amount of the scholarship paid will be recovered, at the discretion of the concerned State Government/Union Territory Administration.

(viii) The State Government/Union Territory Administration will lay down the detailed procedure for processing and sanctioning of scholarship to eligible students.

(ix) Course fee/Tuition fee will be credited to the school's/institute's bank account. Efforts will be made for transferring it electronically through the banks.

(x) The State Government/Union Territory Administration will maintain normal and records relating to the funds received from the Ministry and they will be subjected to inspection by the officers of the Ministry or any other agency designated by the Ministry.

(xi) The State Governments/Union Territory Administrations shall constitute a committee of the Departments implementing such scholarship schemes to ensure that the student from the minority community, who may also belong to children of those engaged in unclean occupation and OBC do not avail scholarship from other sources for the same purpose and avail only one source.

(xii) The scheme will be evaluated at regular intervals by the Ministry or any other agency designated by the Ministry and the cost of the evaluation will be borne by the Ministry of Minority Affairs under the provision of the scheme.

## **POST-MATRIC SCHOLARSHIP TO SC, ST AND OBC**

The objective of the scheme is to provide financial assistance to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe students studying at post matriculation or post secondary stages to enable them to complete their education. The Income ceiling of parents/guardian has recently been enhanced from Rs. 2,00,000/- p.a. to Rs. 2,50,000/- p.a.

The Government of India bears the entire expenditure beyond the committed liability which is to be borne by the State Government. The committed liability of the State government is equal to the sum total of expenditure incurred during the closing year of the last plan period. Thus the committed liability of the State Government for the year 2012-13 shall be equal to the total expenditure incurred under each of the schemes (Post-Matric Scholarship for SC and Post-Matric Scholarship for ST) during 2011-12, the last year of the 11th Five-Year Plan period. The rates of Post-Matric Scholarship have been revised with effect from 01-07-2010. However, the Govt. of India has decided that such committed liability shall be decided by calculating the expenditure in the pre-revised rates.

The State Government follows the rates fixed by the Government of India. However, in cases of Post-Matric Scholarship for hostellers in Group III & IV are less (Rs. 570/- & Rs.380/- per month respectively) than the rates fixed by the State Government, the State Govt. pays at higher rates fixed by the State Govt. (Rs.750/- per month) and the additional burden is borne by the State Government.

The scholarship is given for study of various recognized post-secondary courses pursued in recognized educational institutions. Since the maintenance allowance for different courses vary widely, the same have been grouped into 4 categories and shown below as I, II, III, IV. The amount of scholarship admissible for each group has also been indicated below. Tuition fees and compulsory non-refundable fees are also paid as per approved rate of the Govt. institution.

The objective of this Scheme is to provide financial assistance to O.B.C. students studying at Post-secondary stages of education to enable them to complete their education. This scheme has been implemented in this state from the financial year 2003-04.

The scholarship is given for study of various recognized Post-secondary courses pursued in recognized educational institutions. Same procedure for payment of Post-matric scholarship to SC/ST student is followed.

## **AWARENESS ABOUT PRE-MATRIC SCHOLARSHIP**

Awareness among the sample students about the Pre-matric scholarship was examined and the result has been shown in table-2. It is to be mentioned here that the awareness here means complete knowledge of details of Pre-matric scholarship scheme like the name of the scheme, source of availability of its application form, eligibility criteria, knowledge of filling of application form, submission of the form and the date on which the award of the scholarship is known. On the basis of wholesome knowledge of the Pre-matric scholarship scheme, number of beneficiary and non-beneficiary students was found to be not much. However, the fact is that the proportion of beneficiary students who are aware of the details of Pre-matric scheme was higher than the non-beneficiary students as evident from table-2. At the aggregate level of rural and urban areas and boys and girls, no major difference in the proportion of scheme knowing students among the beneficiary group and all students was evident. However, the percentage of urban beneficiary boys having awareness of the scheme was higher than the girls in the same group. Similarly, the percentages of non-beneficiary boys and total boys knowing the scheme were higher than of the girls in the respective groups. On the whole, detail awareness about the Pre-matric scholarship among the



students was found to be poor in general in Rampur district of Uttar Pradesh and among the girls of the district it was in particular worse than that of the boys. It is to be mentioned here that out of total students (240 students) who were getting Pre-matric scholarship, large number of them were not aware (138 students) that they were getting the Pre-matric scholarship.

Students	No. of Student		
	Rural	Urban	Total
Beneficiary			
Boys	40 (43.48)	7 (43.75)	47 (43.52)
Girls	46 (42.59)	9 (37.50)	55 (41.67)
Total	86 (43.00)	16 (40.00)	102 (42.50)
Non-Beneficiary			
Boys	17 (32.69)	8 (53.34)	25 (37.31)
Girls	19 (39.58)	1 (20.00)	20 (37.33)
Total	36 (36.00)	9 (45.00)	45 (37.50)
All			
Boys	57 (39.58)	15 (48.38)	72 (41.14)
Girls	65 (41.68)	10 (34.48)	75 (40.54)
Total	122 (40.00)	25 (41.67)	147 (40.84)

Table-2: Students who are completely aware of the Pre-matric Scholarship Scheme.

## SUGGESTIONS

- There is need of rigorous orientation training of state and district level officials who oversee the scheme.
- Simultaneously need is to generate awareness among the minority community about the scholarship scheme.
- The teachers of government schools should be made aware of the scheme and they should be made to encourage their students to apply for the Pre-matric scholarship. The state officials may also be asked to involve village panchayats in this matter.
- The income limit of parents should be raised to Rs. 1,50,000/-. The amount of Pre-matric Scholarship should reasonably be increased.
- The application form should be in Hindi and be simplified.
- The private data entry firms should not be engaged in processing of application. One computer literate staff may be appointed on contract basis at the office of District Minority Welfare Officer to see the entire process of Pre-matric Scholarship.
- The payment of scholarship in cash must be stopped and bulk payment to schools should be prohibited. All students should be asked to open an account in the bank and scholarship money should be electronically transferred to their account directly from the state level.
- In some way accountability clause should be

added in the scheme and District Magistrates should be held responsible if poor and inefficient implementation is found.

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