



From PhD Challenges to Semiconductor Research: How National Fellowship for Scheduled Caste Scheme Supported SANGEETA DAS's Academic Journey

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Pursuing higher education and advanced research can involve significant academic, technical and personal challenges. For scholars managing research responsibilities alongside financial and family obligations, timely fellowship support can play an important role in enabling them to continue their academic journey.

Demonstrating how fellowship assistance can support scholars pursuing higher education, **Ms. SANGEETA DAS, a 34-year-old Scheduled Caste scholar**, pursued her Ph.D. after completing her B.Tech and M.Tech. She is currently working as a **Project Associate II** under the Chips to Startup Programme, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), Government of India.

During her Ph.D. journey, Sangeeta faced several academic, technical and personal challenges, including research pressure, experimental and simulation failures, strict publication deadlines and difficulties in balancing personal responsibilities with research work. She also faced financial limitations and work-life balance issues while continuing her research.

Her family circumstances added to these challenges. Her father, a retired teacher, was suffering from dementia and required constant care and support. At the same time, Sangeeta was a mother to a newborn baby when she was selected for the NFSC scheme. Managing research responsibilities alongside childcare and family obligations was extremely demanding. Despite these circumstances, she remained dedicated, resilient and focused on successfully completing her Ph.D.

Her NFSC fellowship support began on 30 November 2020. The fellowship provided significant financial and academic support during a crucial phase of her Ph.D. journey. It helped her continue her research work without major financial stress while managing family responsibilities, including caring for her newborn baby and supporting her father during his illness.

