



Ministry Of Social Justice And Empowerment Strengthens Educational Empowerment Through Scholarships And Digital Reforms

Rs 4,893.03 Crore Released Under Pre-Matric Scholarships And Rs 46,581.54 Crore Under Post-Matric Scholarships For SC Students During FY 2014–15 To FY 2025–26

DBT, Aadhaar-Based Authentication, Digital Verification Strengthen Transparency And Scholarship Delivery

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The Department of Social Justice and Empowerment, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, has undertaken targeted interventions to strengthen equitable access to education for Scheduled Castes (SCs), Other Backward Classes (OBCs), Economically Backward Classes (EBCs) and Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes (DNTs).

Secretary, Ministry of Social Justice And Empowerment Shri Sudhansh Pant said that the Department is supporting educational continuity and reducing financial barriers for socially and educationally disadvantaged communities, through scholarships, residential infrastructure, overseas education assistance, fellowships, coaching initiatives and digital reforms.

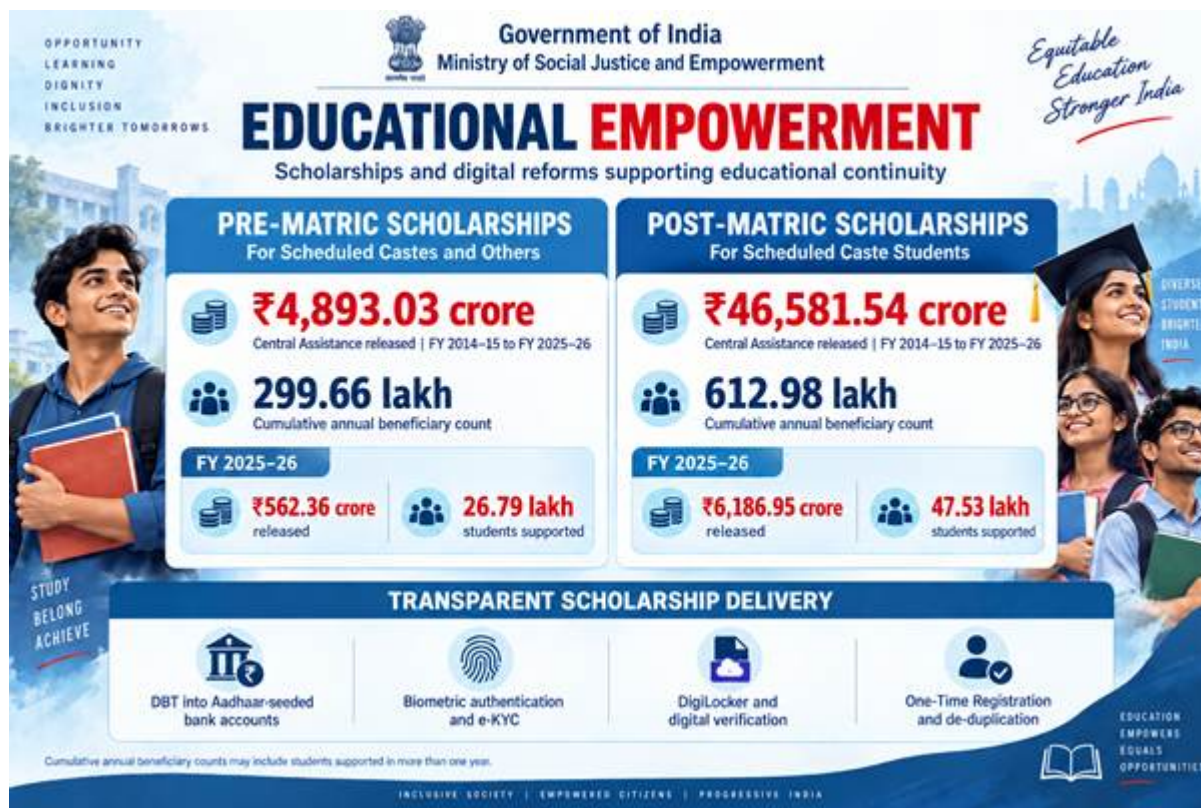
Shri Pant said these interventions seek to improve access to quality institutions and support students across different stages of education. He added that specific emphasis has been placed on transparent scholarship delivery, beneficiary authentication and Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT)-enabled systems.

The Secretary informed that the Pre-Matric Scholarships Scheme for Scheduled Castes and Others is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme aimed at promoting literacy, reducing dropout rates and ensuring continuity of education at the pre-matric level. It supports children belonging to Scheduled Castes and children of parents or guardians engaged in unclean and hazardous occupations. He said through targeted financial assistance, the scheme strengthens educational inclusion and helps students from disadvantaged backgrounds continue their school education.

Shri Pant informed that during FY 2014–15 to FY 2025–26, Central Assistance amounting to Rs 4,893.03 Crore was released under the scheme, with reported annual beneficiary figures totalling approximately 299.66 lakh over the period. During FY 2025–26 alone, Rs 562.36 Crore was released, benefiting 26.79 lakh students, he added.

Stating that the Post-Matric Scholarship Scheme for Scheduled Caste students is a flagship Centrally Sponsored intervention, the Secretary said that Scheme is designed to improve access to higher education among students from economically disadvantaged SC households. He added that the Scheme seeks to reduce financial barriers in post-secondary education, strengthen retention and enhance the Gross Enrolment Ratio of SC students in higher education institutions.

The Secretary further informed that during FY 2014–15 to FY 2025–26, Central Assistance amounting to Rs 46,581.54 Crore was released under the scheme, with reported annual beneficiary figures totalling 612.98 lakh over the period. During FY 2025–26, Central Assistance of Rs 6,186.95 crore was released, benefiting 47.53 lakh students.



Digital Reforms Strengthen Transparency and Beneficiary Authentication

Describing digital reforms to strengthen transparency and authentication, Shri Pant said that from FY 2021–22 onwards, the Department transitioned the Post-Matric Scholarship Scheme to a DBT-enabled framework, facilitating direct transfer of scholarship assistance into Aadhaar-seeded bank accounts of beneficiaries. He said this reform has strengthened accountability, reduced delays and leakages, and improved last-mile delivery.

The Secretary further stated that the Department has introduced de-duplication mechanisms to identify and eliminate fake and duplicate beneficiaries, alongside biometric authentication and e-KYC-based verification of beneficiaries and officials. Integration with DigiLocker and API SETU facilitates digital verification of certificates and documents, he added.

Shri Pant informed that One-Time Registration has been introduced to enable tracking of beneficiaries across schemes and academic years. He said integration with AISHE, UDISE, NCVT and SCVT databases supports validation of institutional and student records, while multi-layered checks help minimize discrepancies and duplication.

The Secretary said linkages with UIDAI, NPCI and PFMS further support seamless processing and direct disbursement of scholarship assistance which strengthen beneficiary authentication, improve fund-flow management and support a more transparent and accountable scholarship delivery system.

The Secretary expressed hope that through sustained financial assistance and technology-enabled reforms, the Department would continue to strengthen educational opportunities for disadvantaged communities, supporting students in continuing their education and accessing higher learning.

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