



SHREYAS Strengthens Higher Education Opportunities for SC and OBC Students

Scheme Supports Free Coaching, Education in Premier Institutions, Overseas Studies and Research Fellowships

Rs. 3,509.39 Crore Expenditure Recorded Under Four Components from 2014-15 to 2025-26, benefitting over 1.18 Lakh SC, OBC Students: Dr Virendra Kumar

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The Central Government is advancing the educational empowerment of students belonging to Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) through the Scholarships for Higher Education for Young Achievers Scheme (SHREYAS).

Union Minister of Social Justice And Empowerment, Dr Virendra Kumar said that from 2014-15 to 2025-26, a cumulative expenditure of approximately Rs. 3,509.39 crore has been recorded under the four major components of SHREYAS adding that during this period, the cumulative beneficiary count reported under these components was 1,18,248.

The Minister said the Scheme brings together targeted interventions aimed at reducing financial barriers and improving access to academic and professional opportunities. Its major components provide free coaching for competitive examinations, financial assistance for studying in premier institutions, support for higher education abroad and fellowships for advanced research, he added.

Stating that the Free Coaching component provides financial assistance for quality coaching to economically disadvantaged SC and OBC students appearing for competitive and professional examinations, Dr Kumar said the initiative seeks to enable eligible students to compete for admission to reputed educational institutions and secure opportunities in public and private employment.

Dr Kumar informed that between 2014-15 and 2025-26, expenditure of approximately Rs. 145.10 crore was reported under this component, with a cumulative beneficiary count of 23,208. He added that in 2024-25, the expenditure stood at Rs. 17.68 crore, benefitting 2,136 students. During 2025-26, an expenditure of Rs. 9.87 crore was reported, covering 854 beneficiaries, Dr Kumar added..

The Union Minister said the Ministry's Top Class Education component supports meritorious Scheduled Caste students pursuing studies in premier educational institutions across the country. He said the financial assistance helps eligible students meet the costs associated with quality higher education and pursue professional and academic programmes without being constrained by their economic circumstances.



Dr Kumar further informed that from 2014-15 to 2025-26, approximately Rs. 703.44 crore was spent under this component, with a cumulative beneficiary count of 35,237. He said the annual expenditure increased from Rs. 19.37 crore for 1,568 beneficiaries in 2014-15 to Rs. 117.19 crore for 4,742 beneficiaries in 2025-26 adding that the expenditure recorded during 2025-26 was the highest reported during the period covered.

Describing National Overseas Scholarship Scheme (NOS) as a game changer enabling eligible Scheduled Caste students to pursue higher studies at reputed institutions abroad, Dr Kumar said this Scheme expands access to international academic exposure and advanced educational opportunities for students from socially disadvantaged backgrounds.

The Minister informed that between the selection years 2014-15 and 2025-26, the expenditure of approximately Rs. 461.57 crore was reported under the scheme. He added that during this period, 764 beneficiaries went abroad for higher studies with the number increased from 20 in 2014-15 to a high of 114 in 2023-24. Subsequently, 80 beneficiaries went abroad in 2024-25, while 67 beneficiaries were reported in 2025-26. Expenditure under the component stood at Rs. 54.89 crore in 2025-26, the Minister further said.

The Union Minister said the National Fellowship for SC Students (NFSC) provides financial assistance to Scheduled Caste scholars pursuing higher education and research programmes. He said the fellowship promotes participation in advanced academic research and supports scholars in building careers in teaching, research and other knowledge-based fields.

The Minister stated that from 2014-15 to 2025-26, an expenditure of approximately Rs. 2,199.28 crore was reported under NFSC, with a cumulative beneficiary count of 59,039. He further stated that during 2025-26, the expenditure reached Rs. 213.45 crore, benefiting 4,218 scholars. This represented an increase over 2024-25, when expenditure of Rs. 209.50 crore was reported for 4,143 beneficiaries, he added.

Pertinently, through its four major components, SHREYAS provides a continuum of educational support - from preparation for competitive examinations and access to premier institutions to overseas education and advanced research. The scheme reflects the Government's commitment to promoting equitable access to quality education and enabling young achievers from socially disadvantaged communities to realise their academic and professional aspirations.

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