Government of India
Ministry of Tribal Affairs

Guidelines for the Central Sector Scholarship Scheme of National Fellowship and Scholarship for Higher Education of ST Students.

1.   Background:

1.1   At present two Central Sector Scholarship schemes of Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship (RGNF) for ST students and Top Class Education for ST Students are implemented by this Ministry to provide financial assistance for pursuing higher education of ST students.

1.2   The Rajiv Gandhi Fellowships are provided to ST students to take up higher studies after completing Post Graduation, such as M.Phil and Ph.D courses and awarded on the lines of UGC Fellowships for research students pursuing such courses on regular and full time basis.

1.3   The Top Class Education for ST Students is intended to encourage meritorious ST students to pursue courses at Graduate/Post Graduate level in identified Institutions of excellence, Government and Private, in professional fields such as Management, Medicine, Engineering, Information Technology, Law, Commercial Pilot License Training etc.

1.4   In order to remove layers resulting in time lag and to facilitate proper control over the implementation and monitoring of the two Central sector scholarship schemes for ST students viz; Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship and Top Class Education, the Ministry has merged these two schemes into a single Central Sector Scheme called "**National Fellowship and Scholarship for Higher Education of ST Students**".

1.5   Fellowship component of the proposed new scheme shall come into force from the year 2014-15. Scholarship component of the proposed new scheme shall come into force from the year 2015-16.

1.6   The scholars/students already in these schemes will continue to be in the existing scheme till they complete their fellowships /studies.

2. Objective:

2.1   The objective of the scheme is to encourage the ST students, a section of society with the lowest literacy levels in the country, to acquire the higher education in the form of (a) fellowships to pursue M. Phil and Ph. D. Courses, with a view to create a pool among them qualified to hold posts of teachers /professionals and other higher stages of employment and (b) pursue Graduate and Post Graduate studies with scholarship in Top Class Institutions of National repute.

2.2 Benefits of the merger:
   (a) Ease of administering both central sector schemes of RGNF and Top Class Education for ST students.
   (b) Simplifies application and award process.
   (c) Increase in number of slots under Fellowship and Scholarship.
   (d) Removes the State wise ceiling of slots under Fellowship and Institution wise ceiling in number of slots under Scholarship.
   (e) Expands scope of courses for Scholarships.
   (f) Provides seamless transition from Graduation to Post Graduation and M.Phil/Ph.D.
   (g) Facilitates faster online application, processing and disbursement.
   (h) Better Management and avoids duplication of efforts.
   (i) Provision for funds and for Management, Monitoring, and Evaluation.

3. Salient Features of the Scheme:
3.1   While "Fellowship" is intended to cover the scholarship provided under Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship (RGNF), the "Scholarship" is intended to cover the Top Class Education.

3.2   The Fellowship scheme covers all Universities /Institutions recognized by the University Grants Commission (UGC) under Section 2(f) of the UGC Act and the Scholarship covers the courses and Institutions notified by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs.

3.3   The Fellowship will be on the pattern of UGC/ICAR Fellowships awarded to research students and it will cater to the requirements of the Scheduled Tribe students pursuing research studies leading to regular and full time M.Phil, Ph.D. course only and equivalent research degree in Universities, Research Institutions and Scientific Institutions.

3.4   Scholarship covers courses at Graduate/Post Graduate Level in identified Institutions of excellence, Government and Private in professional fields such as Engineering, Information Technology, Architectural Engineering, MBA, Law, Medicine, Agriculture Engineering, Textile Engineering, Dairy Engineering, Veterinary & Animal Research, Master in Statistics, Fashion Designing,   Hotel Management, Tourism and Travel Management, Commercial Pilot License Training, Studies/Courses dealing with various disabilities, Fine Art, Direction, Cinematography, Sound Recording & Sound Design, Editing, Acting, Art Direction and Production Design, Journalism and Advertisement & PR, Tribal Music, Tribal Art & Craft, Tribal Tradition & Culture and Tribal Dance. The above courses are illustrative and not exhaustive and the Ministry of Tribal Affairs is authorized to include any other course considered necessary in the interest of ST students and the society.

3.5   ST students who secure admission in these Institutes are awarded scholarships. The scholarship, once awarded, will continue till the completion of the course, subject to satisfactory performance.

4.   Eligibility:

4.1   The Fellowship/ Scholarship will be available only to the ST candidates who fulfill the following conditions for the award:

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1. Fellowship:

(i) The candidate belonging to ST should have passed the Post-Graduation examination for being eligible for the Fellowship. The candidate should get admission and registration for regular and full time M.Phil/Ph.D Courses in University / Academic Institutions recognized by UGC under Section 2 (f) of the UGC Act / ICAR by fulfilling conditions of admission of that University/Instituion.

(iii) The ST students once considered eligible for the Fellowship shall not be entitled for any other scholarship of the Centre or State Government the same study.

(iv) The fellowship shall be payable once the student has secured admission and started the research work.

(v) In order to qualify for Senior Research Fellowship a candidate will have to fulfill the UGC/ICAR norms prescribed in this regard.

2. Scholarship:

(i) ST students who have secured admission in the notified Institutions according to the norms prescribed by the respective Institutions will be eligible for the scholarship under the scheme.

(ii) The total family income of the candidate to be eligible for this scholarship from all sources should not exceed Rs.4.50 lakh per annum.

(iii) The scholarship will become payable immediately after a student has secured admission and has started attending the classes.

(iv) The scholarship awarded, will continue till the completion of the course, subject to satisfactory performance of the student.

5. Procedure for selection of Institutes:

5.1 Fellowship:

The scheme covers all Universities/Institutions recognized by the University Grants Commission (UGC) under Section 2(f) of the UGC Act/ICAR.

5.2 Scholarship:

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs is authorized to select and notify the list of reputed premier Institutions**.**

6. No. of Fellowships/Scholarships:

6.1 Fellowships:

(i) The total number of fresh fellowships each year will be 750 from financial year 2014-15. In case of non-availability of adequate number of Scheduled Tribe candidates, the number of fellowships not availed during a year will be carried forward to the next academic session. There is no State wise ceiling on number of slots.

(ii) In case the number of candidates exceeds the number of available awards, the MoTA will select the candidates based on a 'first come first served' basis. However, priority will be given first to PVTGs, followed by female candidates, then BPL candidates and the remaining ones on inter-se merit.

(iii) The remaining left out candidates from ST category admitted in different Fellowships shall be eligible for the Post-Matric Scholarship (PMS) administered by this Ministry as a Centrally sponsored scheme, provided such students are otherwise eligible for the said scheme.

6.2   Scholarship:

(i) The total number of fresh Scholarship each year will be 1000 from financial year 2015-16. There is no ceiling in Institution wise and stream wise number of slots for the Top Class Institution.

(ii) In case the number of candidates exceeds the number of available awards, then the scholarship will be awarded on 'first come first served' basis. However, priority will be given first to PVTGs, followed by female candidates, then BPL candidates and the remaining ones on inter-se merit.

(iii) The remaining left out candidates from ST category admitted in the institute in different courses shall be eligible for the Post-Matric Scholarship (PMS) administered by this Ministry as a Centrally sponsored scheme, provided such students are otherwise eligible for the said scheme.

7. Details about the steps to be taken for selection of candidates:

7.1 Advertisement for inviting applications:

The Scheme of Fellowship/Scholarship will be advertised in the leading newspapers, Employment News, website of the Ministry and the Scholarship Portal every year in the beginning of the academic session. In addition, the websites of all Universities/Institutions will be optimally used for dissemination of information regarding the advertisement for inviting applications award of Fellowships/Scholarships. Candidates shall, after getting registration/admission in the notified Universities/Institutes and after assessing their eligibility and suitability as per the criteria prescribed for Fellowship/Scholarship apply online through the Scholarship Portal strictly within the cutoff date and time given in the advertisement. The applications submitted after the cutoff date and time shall not be considered.

7.2   Selection process:

(i) An end-to-end online portal www.scholarships.gov.in for application, processing, approval, disbursement and monitoring has been developed by this

Ministry. Candidates after taking admission for the various courses under Fellowships/Scholarships in the notified Universities/Institutes will submit the application online.

(ii) The particulars provided in the application form will be verified by the respective University / Institute.

(iii) The following credentials will be confirmed by the University/Institute in respect of the candidates:

(a) Scheduled Tribe, Certificate issued by the competent authority.

(b) PVTG, BPL certificate issued by the competent authority.

(c) Certificate to the effect that the total family income from all sources shall not exceed Rs 4.5 lakh per annum in the case of Scholarships.

(d) Amount of full Annual tuition fee and other nonrefundable dues payable by the candidate to the Institute in the case of Scholarships.

(iv) All applications submitted within the stipulated date and time shall be processed based on the "first come first served" basis. In case the number of candidates exceeds the number of available awards, the Ministry will accord priority to first PVTG followed by female candidates, then BPL candidates and the remaining ones on inter-se merit on "first come first served" basis. The inter-se merit will be based on the percentage of marks obtained in the last qualifying examination prescribed for the admission to the course under Fellowships/Scholarship.

(v) Merit list of the eligible candidates for the award of Fellowship/Scholarship based on the data available online will be auto generated and displayed on the portal.

(vi) Candidates who are included in the merit list but not selected for the award of Fellowship/Scholarship, shall be eligible for the Post-Matric Scholarship (PMS) administered by this Ministry as a centrally sponsored scheme, provided such students are otherwise eligible for the said scheme.

8.   **Duration**

Fellowship

The maximum duration for which the Fellowships are available is given below:

(a)	M.Phil	2 years --Junior Research Fellowship (JRF)
(b)	Ph.D	2 years (JRF) and 3 years Senior Research Fellowship (SRF)
(c)	M.Phil+Ph.D	2 years (JRF) and 3 years (SRF)

Scholarship:

The duration of the course vary as per the course selected by the candidates. The scholarship, once awarded, will continue till the completion of the course, subject to satisfactory performance.

9   Rates of Fellowships/Scholarships:

9.1   Fellowships:

(i) The rate of Fellowship for JRF and SRF will be at par with the UGC/ICAR Fellowships as the case may be as amended from time to time. In addition, HRA will be paid as per UGC norm and for physically/visually handicapped candidates, escorts/reader assistants will be given at the prescribed rate.

9.2   Scholarship:

Under the scheme, the ST students will be awarded a scholarship to meet the requirements for:

(i)   full tuition fee and other non-refundable dues in respect of Government/Government-funded institutions. However, there will be a ceiling of Rs.2.00 lakhs per annum per student for private sector institutions;

(ii)   living expenses will be provided as per actuals subject to maximum ceiling of Rs. 2200/- per month per student;

(iii) Books and stationery @ Rs.3000/- per annum per student;

(i) Cost of a latest computer along with its accessories limited to Rs.45, 000/- as one time assistance during the course.

10. Funding pattern:

10.1 It is a Central Sector Scheme and Ministry of Tribal Affairs will provide 100% funding for the scheme.

10.2 The funds will be released by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs on half yearly basis for Fellowship and in a single installment for Scholarship immediately after the registration/admission.

11 Implementation of the Scheme:

11.1 Fellowships/Scholarships:

The Scheme will be implemented through the Ministry of Tribal Affairs and the modalities of the implementation are as follows:

(i) MoTA will notify the scheme by inserting suitable advertisements in the Press/ Websites /Portal.

(ii) Verifying the genuineness of the requisite certificates furnished by the candidates in order to eliminate the possibility of students availing the Fellowship/Scholarship on fake certificates shall rest with concerned University/Institution. The University/Institute will not charge any fee whatsoever from the students.

(iii) Fellowship/Scholarship will become payable to successful ST students who are included in the merit list auto generated by the portal only upon securing registration/admission in any of the notified University/Institution and fulfilling the eligibility criteria prescribed for the Scheme.

(iv) The students, who are awarded the Fellowship/Scholarship under the scheme, shall have to pursue the study in the respective University/Institution on full time basis.

(v) The performance of the ST students covered under the scheme shall be monitored regularly by the Head of the Department of respective

University/Institute and the same shall be reported, through a report card, to the Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs at the end of each academic year.

(vi) Any Institution violating the provisions of the Scheme and/or instructions issued by the Government of India will be de-notified. In the event of de-notification/deletion of any Institution, the Fellowship/scholarship will continue to be available to the ST students already admitted under the scheme, if otherwise eligible, till completion of the course. However, no fresh seats will be allotted and no funds will be released to such de-notified Institution.

(vii) Decision of the MoTA in regard to awarding the Fellowship/Scholarship shall be final and no appeal would lie against any decision by MoTA in regard thereof.

12. Modalities for payment of Fellowship/Scholarship:

12.1 Fellowships/Scholarships:

(i) Payment of the Fellowship/Scholarship amount of the scheme for STs would be made through the system of Direct Benefit Transfer through the Aadhaar Payment Bridge into the Aadhaar seeded bank a/c of the beneficiaries from the Ministry of Tribal Affairs. The selected candidates should obtain the Aadhaar number on priority basis. Pending Aadhaar seeding of the beneficiary bank a/c, payment would be made into the bank account through NEFT.

(ii) Payment of Fellowship and scholarships to the selected students will be made on yearly basis, through the Direct Benefit Transfer system by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs through the accredited bank immediately after selection of the candidates. This will also help Ministry to monitor using the Public Financial Management System – PFSM (formerly CPSMS).

(iii)   The selected candidates would be required to have bank accounts in banks having Core Banking Solutions.

(iv)   In case the students are not having Aadhaar numbers, they are required to apply for Aadhaar Card, within a month of their registration/admission in the courses under the Fellowship/Scholarship.

13.   Administrative Cost:

The Project Management cost @ 2% of the estimated cost is provided in the scheme. This shall be optimally and judiciously utilized for the purpose of hiring the services of Consultants/MIS experts, office equipment & furniture, advertisement, awareness campaign, meetings, development and hosting charges, server charges, bank charges if any, office contingences (internet/telephone/stationery etc.), and for the purpose of Monitoring & Evaluation.

.14.   Review and Monitoring:

14,1   Expenditure on evaluation/monitoring and administration of the Fellowship/Scholarship programme shall be done by MoTA out of 2% of the administrative cost under the Scheme.

14.2   In the case of Fellowship, concerned Universities/Institutions shall assess the work on the completion of two years' tenure of the JRF and for the award of SRF. The research work being done by the candidates shall be monitored by this mechanism.

14.3   The progress of implementation of the scheme will be reviewed by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs through Committee consisting of the following:-

(a)	Secretary (M/o TA)	Chairman
(b)	Joint Secretary & Financial Adviser (M/o TA)	Member
(c)	Joint Secretary, M/o TA	Member

(d)	Joint Secretary, M/o SJ&E	Member
(e)	Joint Secretary, Deptt.of Higher Education, M/o HRD	Member
(f)	Joint Secretary, Deptt. of Medical Education, M/H&FW	Member
(g)	A representative of the UGC	Member
(h)	Director, Education Division, M/o TA	Convenor

14.4 The Committee may invite an expert as a special invitee, as and when it deems necessary.

14.5 The Committee may recommend to the Ministry of Tribal Affairs about addition or deletion of any institution based on their performance. For the purpose, the Committee may take into account the recommendations of the concerned bodies conducting entrance examination for admissions into such courses or having the administrative control over such Institutes.

14.6 The Committee may periodically review the performance of the select Institutes on the basis of the academic results.