

**Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship for OBC**

1347. SHRI DEVENDER GOUD T.: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has formulated Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship from 2014-15 exclusively for OBC students who pursue M.Phil and Ph.D, if so, the details of the scheme;

(b) how the Ministry can justify of giving just 300 fellowships when the OBC population is more than 50 per cent of the country's total population;

(c) whether it is not a fact that associations, MPs and others have been demanding to increase the number of fellowships; and

(d) if so, what the Ministry has done on this so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRI KRISHAN PAL): (a) The Government of India has formulated and is implementing National Fellowship for OBCs with effect from 2014-15 exclusively for OBC students to pursue M.Phil and Ph.D. The details of the Scheme are given in Statement (*See below*).

(b) to (d) The scheme was launched within the budget outlay, within which only 300 fellowships could be awarded. Later, even though the rates for Junior Research Fellowship and Senior Research Fellowship were enhanced from ₹ 18,000 per month to ₹ 25,000 per month and from ₹ 20,000 per month to ₹ 28,000 per month respectively, the number of fellowships were not reduced. There have been demands to increase the number of fellowships but due to limited budget outlay of the scheme, the number of fellowships could not be increased.

***Statement******National Fellowship for OBC Students*****Scheme Guidelines:****I. Background**

Government of India had launched a Central Sector Scheme namely, National Fellowship during the financial year 2014-15 to increase opportunities for the students of Other Backward Classes (OBCs) for pursuing higher education leading to their acquiring degrees such as M.Phil. and Ph.D.

The Scheme aims at providing financial assistance to the OBC students in obtaining quality higher education leading to degrees such as M.Phil and Ph.D in

universities, research institutions and scientific institutions. This will not only enable them to be eligible for employment to the posts of Lecturers lying vacant in various colleges and universities but will also equip them to effectively take advantage of the growing opportunities at the national and international level in the context of the new economic order.

## **II. Scope of the Scheme**

The Scheme is designed to provide a total number of 300 Junior Research Fellowships per year from the year 2014-15 onwards and 300 Senior Research Fellowships during 2016-17 to Other Backward Class (OBC) students. The Scheme covers all Universities/Institutions recognized by the University Grants Commission (UGC) and is implemented by the UGC itself on the pattern of the scheme of UGC Fellowships being awarded to research students pursuing M. Phil. and Ph.D.

## **III. Implementing Agency**

The UGC is the nodal agency for implementing the scheme and notifies the scheme by releasing advertisements in the Press at a suitable date.

## **IV. Eligibility**

- (i) Any student belonging to Other Backward Class (OBC) category who has been admitted to M.Phil./Ph.D. course in a University or academic institution after completing the required formalities of admission in that University or academic institution is eligible for the award of Fellowship subject to provisions of the scheme as per the advertisement of UGC.
- (ii) After two years, if the progress in the research work of the awardee is found satisfactory, his/her tenure will be extended for a further period of three years as Senior Research Fellow (SRF). The research work will be assessed as per the UGC norms. The total period of award of JRF and SRF shall not exceed a period of 5 years. The fellowship will be paid from the date of registration of the student in the M.Phil./Ph.D. course.
- (iii) Students belonging to Other Backward Class (OBC) category once considered eligible for the fellowship shall not be entitled to any other benefits from Central or State Government or any other body like UGC offering similar benefit to avoid duplication and increase coverage. Only those, doing regular and full time M.Phil./Ph.D. course of a University/Research Institution shall be eligible for the fellowship. Employees of any University/College/Educational Institution/Central/

State/UT Government shall be excluded from availing Fellowship, even if they are on Study Leave or EOL to pursue the M.Phil./Ph.D. course.

#### V. Number of Fellowships

- (i) The total number of fellowships to be awarded to the Other Backward Class (OBC) students under the scheme is 300 as per details given at para-II. In case of non-availability of adequate number of Other Backward Class (OBC) candidates, the number of fellowships not availed during a year will be carried forward to the next academic session.
- (ii) In case, the number of candidates exceeds the number of available awards, the UGC will select the candidates based on the percentage of marks obtained by the candidates in their Post Graduation Examination.

#### VI. Duration of Fellowship

Name of the Course	Maximum duration	Admissibility of JRF and SRF	
		JRF	SRF
M.Phil	2 years	2 Years	Nil
Ph.D	5 years	2 years	Remaining 3 years
M.Phil + Ph.D	5 years	2 years	Remaining 3 years

#### VII. Rate of fellowships

- (i) The rates of fellowship for JRF and SRF will be at par with the UGC Fellowships. Presently these rates are as follows :

Fellowship in Science, Humanities and Social Science	
	@ ₹ 25,000/- p.m. for initial two years (JRF)
Fellowship in Engineering and Technology	
	@ ₹ 28,000/- p.m. for remaining tenure (SRF)
Contingency for Humanities and Social Sciences	
	@ ₹ 10,000/- p.a. for initial two years
	@ ₹ 20,500/- p.a. for remaining tenure
Contingency for Sciences, Engineering and Technology	
	@ ₹ 12,000/- p.a. for initial two years
	@ ₹ 25,000/- p.a. for remaining tenure
Departmental Assistance (All subjects)	
	@ ₹ 3,000/- p.a. per student to the host institution for providing infrastructure
Escorts/Reader Assistance (All subjects)	
	@ ₹ 2,000/- p.m. in cases of physically and visually handicapped candidates

- (ii) The House Rent Allowance (HRA) will be on the UGC pattern and will be payable to those students who are not provided with hostel accommodation. In case hostel accommodation offered by the University/Institution is refused, the student will forfeit his claim of HRA. Other facilities such as medical facilities, leave including maternity leave will be governed as per the guidelines of the UGC in case of their fellowship programme.

#### **VIII. Procedure for applying for National Fellowship for OBCs**

- (i) UGC is the nodal agency for implementing the scheme.
- (ii) UGC will notify the scheme by inserting suitable advertisement in the press.
- (iii) UGC will implement the scheme once it is approved by the Government.
- (iv) It would be sufficient for an OBC candidate to have passed the Post Graduation Examination for being eligible for the National Fellowship.
- (v) There is no restriction to the effect that a OBC candidate should have cleared NET/SLET examination for being eligible for receiving the Fellowship.
- (vi) UGC will give one month's time to the candidate for applying for the Fellowship.
- (vii) UGC shall disburse the scholarship amount to the candidates through Bank Smart Cards.
- (viii) UGC will also issue a booklet containing all the details about the scheme, for the benefit of prospective candidates.
- (ix) UGC will evolve its own mechanism for verifying the genuineness of the OBC certificates furnished by the candidates in order to eliminate the possibility of students availing of the Fellowship on fake certificates.
- (x) The decision of the UGC in regard to awarding the Fellowship shall be final and no appeal could be filed against it.
- (xi) In case the numbers of Fellowships so allocated to a State/UT are not fully utilized, due to non-availability of eligible candidates, the UGC will allocate the slots amongst the other States/UTs where the number of eligible candidates is much more than the slots allocated to that State/UT. A Committee consisting of the representatives of UGC and Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment will take this decision.

**IX. Monitoring and Evaluation**

The expenditure on evaluation/monitoring of the fellowship programme shall be met out of the funds provided for this scheme. Award of SRF done after appropriate evaluation of performance in carrying out the research work by the candidate in the Junior Fellowship phase.

**National Commission for persons with disabilities**

1348. SHRIMATI SAROJINI HEMBRAM: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) Whether Government is going to formulate any new National Commission for the welfare of the persons with disabilities;

(b) whether at present any such Commission is functioning, if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the Government's planning/proposal, if any, in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRI KRISHAN PAL): (a) The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Bill, 2014 introduced in Rajya Sabha on 7.02.2014 envisages establishment of National Commission for Persons with Disabilities.

(b) and (c) No Sir. However, in terms of the provisions of the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995, the Government has appointed the Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities to monitor the implementation of the provisions of the said Act and to take steps to safeguards the rights and facilities made available to persons with disabilities.

**Misuse of scholarship amount**

1349. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the amount disbursed and spent for providing scholarships to SC/ST communities for their upliftment during the last five years, category-wise;

(b) whether it is a fact that many educational institutes have misused the scholarship amount, if so, number of complaints received by Government during the last five years, State-wise; and

(c) the details of action taken by Government against such erring educational institutes in the country so far?