

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION  
DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION  
**RAJYA SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.540**  
ANSWERED ON 04/02/2026

**National Fellowship for Scheduled Caste students**

540 **Prof. Manoj Kumar Jha:**

Will the Minister of **Education** be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government is aware that under the National Fellowship for Scheduled Caste (NFSC), the number of fellowships awarded has remained capped at 2,000 per year despite a steady rise in SC enrolment in PhD programmes;
- (b) whether it is a fact that the number of eligible applicants has consistently exceeded available slots during the last five years, leaving a large proportion of UGC-NET and CSIR-NET qualified candidates unsupported;
- (c) whether the Ministry has reviewed reports of delays in disbursement of fellowship amounts to JRF and SRF under the scheme; and
- (d) whether Government proposes to revise the number of NFSC fellowships and funding norms?

**ANSWER**

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION  
(Dr. SUKANTA MAJUMDAR)

(a) to (d): The National Fellowship for Scheduled Caste Students (NFSC), is a scheme formulated and funded by the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment (MoSJE).

As informed by the MoSJE, the fellowship intake under the NFSC has been approved in accordance with the Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC) approval for the financial cycle 2021-22 to 2025-26. As per the approved norms 2,000 fresh fellowships are awarded annually to Scheduled Caste (SC) students pursuing M.Phil. and Ph.D. programmes in Sciences, Humanities and Social Sciences in Indian Universities/Institutions/Colleges recognized by the University Grants Commission (UGC). These slots are over and above the slots finalised for the SC students selected under the normal reservation policy of the Government.

Fellowships under the scheme are awarded as per the approved intake and eligibility conditions, and eligible candidates are considered in accordance with the scheme guidelines.

Under the scheme, a fellow can raise the fellowship claim between 1<sup>st</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> of every month. The fellowship claims are generated by the Nodal Bank which is Canara Bank in this case and thereafter, the fellowship amount is disbursed after processing the cases.

The MoSJE has further informed that the scheme is under revision which also includes financial components and income criteria for the 16<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission cycle, on the basis of recommendation of evaluation report and laid down procedure in consultation with all stakeholders including concerned Ministries/Departments.

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