

Role of Scholarship Cells and Educational Institutions in the Awareness of Scholarship Schemes for marginalized sections of the Society

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Abstract

The study examines students' awareness of the scholarship cell and its functioning. Findings reveal that students are well informed about the scholarship cell, its contact details, regular updates, and the scholarship application and verification process at the institutional, university, and headquarters levels. Many students actively participate in workshops and conferences organized by the scholarship cell. However, certain issues were identified, including delays in online verification and occasional failure of the cell to update itself in line with changing government policies. Hypothesis testing across demographic variables shows no significant differences in awareness based on gender, rural–urban background, income levels, or parents' occupation. Data were collected through personal interviews using a Hindi-translated questionnaire from selected villages and urban areas of Hisar district, Haryana.

Key Words: Awareness, Scholarship Cell, Educational Institutions, Marginalized, Scholarship Schemes

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1. Introduction

Background

The Scholarship Cell serves as a crucial support system for students, aiming to ensure equal opportunities for all individuals to pursue higher education regardless of their financial background in tune with institutional vision and mission. Not only scholarship cell, but there are many other students support welfare policies, and scheme are working in educational institutions for the betterment of the students cause time to time. All are totally students concerns issues, and provide the healthier environment for study. All these cells and centre are students friendly and working with the constitutional way for all students' grievances time to time. All cells working online monitoring and online grievances with in stipulated time period. The establishment of a student cells, centre, policy, grievance redressal system is a step towards creating a more student-centric and accountable education system (Meshram et al., 2023). Grievance mechanism is the communication between the user and the provider. In educational institution, role of the students and institution are healthier through the communication channel and dialog delivery among students and administration (Kotangale et al., 2018).

Functions and role of scholarship cell:

1. **Identifying Scholarship Opportunities:** The Scholarship Cell researches and identifies various scholarship programs available from government agencies, private organizations, foundations, NGO's, Institutions, and other sources that align with the academic pursuits and needs of the students at educational institutions.
2. **Providing Information and Guidance:** The Scholarship Cell acts as a central resource hub for students, providing comprehensive information and guidance on available scholarship opportunities, eligibility criteria, application procedures, and deadlines. They conduct regular workshops, seminars, and information sessions to educate students about scholarship options and assist them in navigating the application process.
3. **Assisting with Application Process:** The Scholarship Cell offers personalized assistance to students throughout the scholarship application process. This includes helping students fill out application forms, gather required documents, draft compelling personal statements or essays, and secure recommendation letters.

4. **Reviewing and Evaluating Applications:** Once scholarship applications are submitted, the Scholarship Cell meticulously reviews and evaluates them based on the predefined criteria, which may include academic performance, extracurricular activities, leadership potential, and financial need.
5. **Awarding Scholarships:** After thorough evaluation, the Scholarship Cell collaborates with scholarship providers to award scholarships to deserving and eligible students at educational institute. They ensure that the disbursement process is smooth and that recipients are informed promptly.
6. **Maintaining Scholarship Records:** The Scholarship Cell maintains accurate records of scholarship applications, awards, recipients, and disbursements. They also monitor the academic progress of scholarship recipients and provide reports to scholarship providers as required.
7. **Promoting Equity and Inclusion:** The Scholarship Cell endeavors to promote equity and inclusion by ensuring that scholarship opportunities are accessible to all students, irrespective of their socio-economic background or demographic characteristics. They may implement outreach initiatives to reach marginalized or underrepresented groups and address any barriers to participation.
8. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** The Scholarship Cell continuously monitors the effectiveness of scholarship programs and evaluates their impact on student success, retention, and academic achievement at Safa College. They gather feedback from scholarship recipients and stakeholders to identify areas for improvement and enhance the overall scholarship process.

The University Grants Commission (UGC) and All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) agency that design, implement, and manage various scholarship schemes to promote education in India. Simultaneously plays a crucial role in establishing robust support systems for students that promote equity, diversity, and comprehensive academic growth in higher education. The UGC role in scholarship administration 1 scheme formulation and funding, 2 implementation and coordination, 3 application and selection process, 4 disbursement and monitoring.

In accordance with UGC guidelines, higher education institutions are setup along comprehensive framework of student support services, encompassing Scholarship Cells,

Student Facilitation Centres, Equal Opportunity Cells, EOC for Persons With Disabilities (PWD), Grievance Redressal Committees, Internal Complaints Committees, Career Guidance and Placement Cells, Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes (SC's/ST's) Cell, Other Backward Caste (OBC's) Cell, Minority Cell, Gender Sensitization Cell, Women Cell, Multi-Cultural Students Affairs Cell, Right to be Protected Against Discrimination and Exclusion, Centre for Studies Social Inclusion and Exclusion Policy, Anti-Discrimination Cell for Transgender Students, Anti Ragging Cell, Anti-Narcotics Cell, Holistic Development Cell, Complaints of Caste-Based Discrimination by SC/ST/OBC Students/Teachers/Non-Teaching Staff, Book Bank (Library) Facility for ST's and ST's students, free coaching schemes for central and state government competitive examination for different sections of the society students, National Scheduled Caste Finance and Development Corporation, Initiative for Caste Equity (ICE), Cultural Cells, Liaison Officer of SC/ST Cell, as well as Counselling and Wellness Units (Bennett et al., 2021; Joyce et al., 2011). Students' services are positive impact on student's career growth, help in employability, help social integration on the campus specially for social disadvantage groups (Chaney, 1998). There are diverse factors of student's performance are affecting, influencing, welfare and well-being. The study conducted found that student welfare services could be better if they were simpler to get to, had more resources, and were more focused on what students need. To assist people, get along, grow as people, and stay healthy and happy, student welfare events should be scheduled. The study found that activities that raised awareness of mental health, got people active in their communities, helped them realize their cultural identity, and helped them express themselves were all effective. Students can feel more connected when they do things with other people in their communities (Sumayang, 2025). These organizational structures collaborate effectively to address students' academic, financial, psychological, scholarship issues, institutional barriers like language, caste, and social requirements, thereby promoting an inclusive, supportive, and learner-centered educational environment. Scholarship scheme empowers the manpower capacity building programs Strengthening contribute positively in the development of nation (Mohammed, 2018).

Equal Opportunity Centre and SC/ST

Activities and part of SC/ST Cell

The SC/ST Cell and OPEM Cell (Cells) of the Institute are concerned with the implementation of policies and programmes of the Central and State Governments that are meant to protect and promote the rights, well-being and dignity of students and staff belonging to the SC, ST, OBC, Minorities and PWD categories. These Cells play a proactive role in facilitating the education of students from such backgrounds at the Institute. The activities of the Cells with respect to students include the following:

1. Representation in admission process
2. Document verification during admission process
3. Administrative support to students applying for scholarship
4. Representation in recruitment
5. Pre-admission orientation
6. Travelling allowance ‘
7. Post-admission orientation
8. Priority in hostel and dining hall facilities
9. Tuition fee waived
10. Financial support to needy students
11. Capacity building sessions
12. Financial support for thesis typing and printing
13. Concessional application form

Students' welfare programs are seen as a very important way to help them do well in school all over the world. The World Bank (2018) says that student welfare initiatives are very important for increasing grades and handling concerns about unfairness in school (Kisiang'ani et. al., 2024.) Policies like giving students food at school, health care, counseling, and a mental health support system. OECD countries spend a lot of money on things that help kids achieve well in school and in life in general. This money goes to projects that aid with emotional, physical, and financial health (OECD, 2021; Kisiang'ani et. al., 2024).

Institutional Role and Mechanism

Educational institutions have significance role of effective execution of scholarship schemes in institutional mechanisms. The establishment of Scholarship Cells in colleges and

universities promotes the information about eligibility criteria, application processes, and necessary documentation, and online process of the scholarship time to time as well as inclusive diversity of student's education (Barnes et al., 2024). This scholarship cells established in educational institutions serve as effective channels linking scholarship beneficiaries to government nodal agencies, enhancing access, transparency, facilitate students' performance, contribute to students' success, increase chances of degree completion, and efficiency of educational administration. Authority also coordinates between students and institutional support system (Johnson et al., 2022; Hernandez and Naccarato, 2010). Scholarship cells are primarily tasked with addressing student grievances and managing inquiries concerning delays, online application and document errors, physical and online verification issues, online form objections, disbursement irregularities, and online form technical glitches. The grievance cell mechanisms and ongoing coordination with concerned departments and within institution assist in reducing students' procedural barriers that frequently access of beneficiaries. These mechanisms foster trust, mitigate exclusion, and facilitate of student issues. Furthermore, institutions provide academic support and guidance, mentoring, and awareness programs that assist students, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, in effectively accessing scholarship opportunities (Maymon et al., 2019).

Scholarship Cell Support Mechanism

Scholarship cell systems help enhance retention, to ensure transparent, decrease dropout rates among under-privileged students, equitable access to scholarship facility, provide the all types of scholarship information and facilitate academic continuity of the students. The effectiveness of scholarship schemes is closely associated with the efficiency of institutional supporting cells, structures, which are essential for promoting equity among different sections of the society, accountability, non-academic support, and social inclusion in higher education (Barnes, 2024, Balzer and London, 2019).

Focusing and nurturing the students who are behind in their studies in order to keep them in their education. A welcoming and supportive environment, services that focus on helping students who are having trouble adjusting to college, a clear policy for enrolling minorities, a high level of commitment from the institution, a wide range of services, dedicated staff, systematic data collection, a high level of program institutionalization, monitoring, auditing,

and regular follow-up, strong faculty support, and no stigma attached to participants are all factors that make it more likely that students will continue their education at the establishment (Chaney et al., 1998).

Although recent studies have shown that financial aid can help students do better in school, most of the research done in this area has focused on how happy students are with the Tertiary Education Subsidy (TES). This doesn't give us enough information about other important factors of persistence. This study investigated the relationship between students' satisfaction with DOST scholarship services encompassing scholarship updates, organizational support, staff assistance, problem resolution, and benefit provision and critical determinants of college persistence, including academic integration, social integration, support service satisfaction, degree commitment, institutional commitment, and academic conscientiousness. The findings indicated that individuals were generally satisfied with the scholarship services, and that most aspects of their lives, with the exception of academic diligence, exhibited significant persistence. The relationships between scholarship upgrades, social integration, and satisfaction with supportive services showed the strongest link. Supporting student groups and what they do was also strongly linked to academic integration. Help from scholarship officials and help with problems with social integration that come up with scholarships are also important. Lastly, satisfaction with scholarship benefits demonstrated that, among the factors influencing persistence, it is most closely associated with academic integration (Agripina, 2023; Ross, 2010)

E-Governance and Administration

E-governance in educational activities specially scholarship schemes enhance administrative efficiency, transparency, and accountability. The purpose of the paper is examining digital frame-work of the Prime Minister's Special Scholarship Scheme (PMSSS) that would shift scholarship disbursement from paper-based to a paperless mode. Digitalization of the scholarship forms system for students is time consuming, transparently monitoring, timely disbursement Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT), of amounts, provide single window of online forms. The whole process is digitalized starting of the application to till disbursement of scholarship amounts. in this online process and coordination between students and administration of the institute. Its main highlights include Aadhaar-based authentications,

automated renewal, online verification, online objections, transparency, and students-friendly environment. this is also time consuming and smartly working for students' scholarship facility within given period. The results show that the e-governance of scholarship facility provides a solid foundation for administration to be strengthened and, by extension, other students' welfare programs administered by educational institute and government. There is some technical glitched online form but timely short out. Many countries offered the scholarship for students and disbursement of funding is totally online. Online authentication and biometric attendance are providing the scholarship to actual recipients. Digital scholarship scheme online portal access and increasing effectively working efficiency of administration (Merlin and Kumar, 2025; Bedi et al., 2020; Lifna and Pawar, 2017).

Research Methodology

The present study has used both descriptive and exploratory research designs with mixed techniques. Descriptive as it describes the characteristics of respondents and the exploratory in identifying various issues regarding the functioning of scholarship cell at institution level.

Design of survey questionnaire

The questionnaire statements are based on the literature. Further, in-depth interviews were also conducted for questionnaire development. Three SCs student of different ages and class were interviewed. The final questionnaire was designed based on in-depth interviews. A total of 09 statements were used in this study. Each of these statements was taken on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 – 'strongly disagree' to 5 – 'strongly agree'.

5.1.1 Pilot testing of the questionnaire

A pre-testing study was conducted with a sample of 10 SCs students to check the structure of the questionnaire. The statements, assembling of statements, and language were analysed and clarified by the respondent necessary changes were incorporated into the questionnaire.

5.2 Data collection and analysis

The data was collected personally by the researcher visiting the respondents at their place. The questionnaire was translated into Hindi, and the interview method was adopted to get the responses. Purposive and convenience sampling methods were used to collect the data from the student. Three villages (Hassangarh, Surewala and Bubua) of the Hisar District of Haryana State of India and Hisar district itself were selected for the study. The data were collected during October and November 2025. A total of 150 respondents were taken for the

study. Gorsuch (1983) and Kline (1994) suggested that the minimum sample size should be at least 100 for factor analysis. Kline further recommended that the ratio of the number of participants to the number of variables is also a better way to determine sample size. Cattell (1978) recommended a ratio of three to six times the number of variables, and Everitt (1975) suggested a ratio of at least 10 to 1. The present study includes 150 responses to 11 statements, showing the sample size robustness. SPSS version 22 and were used to analyse the data. Exploratory factor analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, and descriptive statistics such as percentage, average, t-test, and one-way ANOVA statistics have been used to study data. The reason behind applying such statistics and 155 sample sizes for the analysis was that the respondents contained the same characteristics like education, social class, income, and occupation.

There was negligible variation among such variables. However, care is required to generalise the results of this sample size.

Hypothesis

1. There is no statistical significant difference between age of the students and the awareness and functioning of the scholarship cell.
2. There is no statistical significant difference between age of the students and the awareness and functioning of the scholarship cell.
3. There is no statistical significant difference between income of parents of the students and the awareness and functioning of the scholarship cell.
4. There is no statistical significant difference between occupation of the parents of the students and the awareness and functioning of the scholarship cell.

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic characteristics of respondents

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of respondents. According to the result 51.6 percent were male and 48.4 percent were female. Nearly 54.4 percent students belong to rural background and 45.6 percent belongs to urban areas. In terms of category 58 percent were belong to OSC category and 41 percent from DSC category. In terms of age 28.2 percent respondents falls in below 18 years category, 43.5 percent were in 18-25 years and rest 18.6 were 25 years and above 25 years. According to educational status 64.5 percent were in

senior secondary, 19.35 were graduate and 9.6 were post graduate. In terms of occupation 71.6 percent were laborer, 23.22 were in self-employed or private job category. In income categories 30.32 percent were upto 40000, same number in 40000 to 80000, 19.35 percent were fall in 80000 to 150000 income categories.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of respondents

Variable	Variable Group	Number	Percentage
Gender	Male	80	51.6
	Female	75	48.4
Locality	Rural	85	54.4
	Urban	70	45.6
Category	OSC	90	58.
	DSC	65	41.
Age	Below 18 years	40	25.80
	18-25 years	55	35.48
	25 and above	60	38.71
Educational Qualification (parents)	Senior Secondary	90	58.06
	Graduate	30	19.35
	Post Graduate	15	9.68
	Others	20	12.90
Occupation (parents)	Contractual job	3	1.93
	Self Employed/Private Job	35	22.58
	Labour	111	71.61
	Agriculture	6	3.87
Annual Income (parents)	Up to 40000	47	30.32
	40000 to 80000	47	30.32
	80000 to 150000	30	19.35
	150000 to 250000	31	20.0

Source: author's own work

Exploratory Factor Analysis**Table 2: KMO and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity**

KMO and Bartlett's Test			
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.			.754
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square		254.416
	df		36
	Sig.		.000

Source: Author's own work

To do factor analysis, you need to make sure that the sample size is big enough. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity are two common methods for this. The KMO value for this study is 0.859, which is shown in Table 2. This is below the permitted range, which means that the sample size is good enough for factor analysis. A KMO score above 0.6 signifies appropriate measures (Kaiser and Rice, 1974). It has usually been between 0 and 1, with values closer to 1 meaning that it is more likely that a factor may be extracted from the dataset and vice versa.

Table 3: Principal component analysis with varimax rotation

Factors and statements		Factor loading	Communality	Eigen Values	Variance	Cumulative Variance	Cronbach Alpha
Scholarship Cell Awareness	I am aware of my scholarship cell. (S1)	.752	.623	2.125	23.614	23.614	.882
	I am aware of the functioning of the	.525	.614				

	scholarship cell. (S2)						
	I know the official address for communication regarding scholarship issues. (S3)	.555	.510				
Information Sources Awareness	I am aware of scholarship-related workshops/conferences organised by the scholarship cell. (S4)	.785	.640	1.825	20.284	43.897	.750
	I am aware that the scholarship cell is working for all types of scholarship-related issues. (S5)	.758	.607				
	The scholarship cell also updates all types of notices/notifications from time to time. (S6)	.752	.510				

	I am aware of the scholarship application process verification level (Institute/College), (Affiliating Body/University), and (Headquarters). (S7)	.745	.571				
Scholarship Cell Issues	Scholarship cell delays the immediate online verification process. (S8)	.815	.728	1.238	13.758	57.655	.792
	Sometimes the scholarship cell is not aware of the online process of forms and updates. (S9)	.656	.609				

Source: Author's own work

Table 3 results depict the factor analysis measures. A principal component analysis with varimax rotation was employed for factor extraction. The values of factor loadings and communalities above 0.5 were included in the analysis. Further, eigenvalues, factor variance, cumulative variance and Cronbach alpha values were extracted. The values of factor loadings range between .525 to .815 and lie into the acceptable criteria of $>.5$. Similarly, the values of communalities of all respective items fall under acceptable criteria of $>.5$. The values of communalities range between .510 to .728. The eigenvalues were considered greater than one, which calculated three factors: *Factor1: Scholarship Cell Awareness*, *Factor2: Information Sources Awareness* and *Factor3: Scholarship Cell Issues*. In total, these three factors explained 57.655 per cent total variance, out of which factor 1 explained 23.614 per

cent variance, factor 2 explained 20.284 per cent variance, and the rest of 13.758 variances were explained by factor 3.

Factor 1: *Scholarship Cell Awareness*: This factor constitutes three items. The FL and communality values of these four items are as follows: item S1 has .752 F.L. and .623 communality value; item S2 have .525 F.L. and .614 communality value; item S3 have .555 F.L. and .610 communality value. The Cronbach alpha value of this factor is .882.

Factor 2: *Information Source Awareness*: This factor contains four items. The FL and communality values of these four items are as follows: item S4 has a .785 F.L. and .640 communality value, item S5 has a .758 F.L. and .607 communality value, item S6 has a .752 F.L. and .510 communality value, and item S7 has a .745 F.L. and .571 communality value. The Cronbach alpha value of this factor is .750.

Factor 3: *Scholarship Cell Issues*: This factor consists of two items. The FL and communality values of these two items are as follows: item S8 has a .815 F.L. and a .728 communality value, item S9 has a .656 F.L. and a .609 communality value. The Cronbach alpha value of this factor is .792.

Statements	Levene's Test		t statistics	
	F	Sig.	t	Sig. (2tailed-)
S1	1.489	.224	.217	.814
S2	.614	.435	-.113	.907
S3	2.205	.140	-.455	.638
S4	.005	.944	.390	.696
S5	.656	.419	.355	.663
S6	1.516	.220	-.415	.618
S7	.155	.694	-.258	.795
S8	6.190	.014	3.169	.001*
S9	1.032	.311	1.324	.171

Table 4: Independent samples t test to the relationship with Gender

(Source: Author's own work) *significance at 0.05

Table 4 shows the relationship between awareness of scholarship cell's functioning and the gender of the respondents. The relationship was developed with independent sample t test. The combined results of all nine significance values show the p values were statistically insignificant (except S8; p value 0.001). So, the results failed to reject the hypothesis H_0 , which shows that both male and female have similar awareness regarding the functioning of the scholarship cell.

Table 5: Independent sample t test to check the relationship with Residential Status

Statements	Levene's test		t statistics	
	F	Sig.	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
S1	.178	.674	-1.112	.268
S2	6.590	.011	-2.342	.052
S3	.299	.585	-1.190	.218
S4	4.357	.039 [^]	-1.969	.030*
S5	.489	.485	-.573	.409
S6	1.101	.296	-.549	.466
S7	3.613	.059	-1.552	.091
S8	.803	.372	.237	.804
S9	1.892	.171	.452	.619

(Source: Authors' own work) *significance at 0.05

Table 5 shows the relationship between awareness of scholarship cell's functioning and the residential status of the respondents. Out of total only statement S4 shows the significant result ($P < 0.30$), others have statistically insignificant values on the basis of which we failed to reject the null hypothesis. So, the respondents residing in rural and urban areas have similar awareness regarding the functioning of scholarship cell.

Table 6: One way ANOVA results

Statements	Family Income		Parents' occupation	
	F	Sig.	F	Sig
S1	.522	.595	.492	.612
S2	1.546	.216	.474	.623
S3	2.267	.107	2.678	.072
S4	.990	.374	1.776	.173
S5	.257	.774	.033	.968
S6	.483	.618	.499	.608

S7	2.392	.095	.023	.978
S8	1.933	.148	.392	.678
S9	.032	.968	.491	.613

Source: Author's own work

Table 6 Shows the relationship of awareness of scholarship cell functioning and the family income of the respondents. The results shows that there is no statistically significant differences were found for this relationship, so we failed to reject the null hypothesis. Across various family income categories low to high group respondents have similar awareness regarding the awareness of the functioning of the scholarship cell.

Table 6 Shows the relationship of awareness of scholarship cell functioning and the parents' occupation of the respondents. The results shows that there is no statistically significant differences were found for this relationship, so we failed to reject the null hypothesis. Across various occupations respondents have similar awareness regarding the awareness of the functioning of the scholarship cell.

Discussion

The results shows that the students are aware about their scholarship cell and its functioning. They knew about the various addresses and attend the scholarship related workshops and conferences or workshops organized by scholarship cell. The students know all over working of the scholarship cell. They were aware about updates given by scholarship cell on regular basis. Further they were aware of the scholarship application process verification level Institute/College, Affiliating Body/University, and Headquarters. They also noticed some issues related with functioning like delaying and verifying the online process. Moreover, the scholarship cell sometimes not update themselves according to the changing policies and updates of government scholarship departments. Furthermore, the relationships developed and evaluated by the hypothesis across various demographics shows that whether students belong to the rural and urban background or male and female they were similarly aware about the functioning of the scholarship cell. They were equally aware across various income categories and the occupation of their parents.

Conclusions

Various awareness campaign for post matric scholarship were successful at institutional level and departmental level. It shows that the students were aware about the functioning of the scholarship cell. The government department can enrich their functioning at their own level to faster the work which make it more effective. Moreover, the scholarship cell working as a nodal agency of the smooth functioning of implementation of all scholarship's schemes in Haryana government colleges where directly connect the students. Because there is only one effective nodal agency provide the students grievances at the classes and departmental level. Where in these students directly approach the concerned teacher of the nodal agency for their scholarship problems. Nodal agency or scholarship cell both are working differently because in the government colleges scholarship scheme for scheduled caste students for consolidated stipend scheme for SC students. In this nodal agency short out the students' grievances at the college level.

Many educational institutions scholarship cell effective work for students' cause. Higher education authority timely update all relevant information, and issues guidelines, rules, policies, circular, notices for students concern and scholarship implementing authority.

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