

Pre-Matric Scholarship 2021-22 Rajasthan

Policy Brief
February 2021



Purpose

The brief tracks budget trends for the pre-matric scholarship (PMS) in the State of Rajasthan over the last 5 years and estimates the resource requirement for providing the benefit under the scheme to all eligible Scheduled Caste (SC), Scheduled Tribe (ST) and Other Backward Classes (OBC) students in the State for years 2020-21 and 2021-22. In the context of the upcoming **State Budget Session (2021-22)**, **there are recommendations for the State Government to increase the envelope of funds available for the scheme to meet the demand.**

About the Scheme

Pre-Matric Scholarship is a scholarship scheme for the **children of SCs, STs, OBCs, De-Notified Tribes, children of manual scavengers, and Minorities, studying in classes 6 to 8 (state scheme) and 9 to 10 (centrally sponsored scheme).** While the PMS for SCs, STs, and OBCs, is being implemented by the Directorate of Secondary Education, Bikaner, Department of Education, the PMS for minorities is being implemented by the Department of Minority Affairs.

Why focus on Pre-Matric Scholarships?

The **PMS is an important incentive for retaining students in school especially girls, reducing dropouts especially in transition from elementary to secondary education, thereby delaying the age of marriage and opening wider opportunities for girls.** The scholarship can help meet a part of the expenses on girls' education, especially in post-COVID times when vulnerable families are struggling economically. By focusing on girls from marginalised groups, the scholarships help create equity in access to education at secondary level. These scholarships contribute to girls' agency, making them empowered both economically and socially.

Access to the scheme

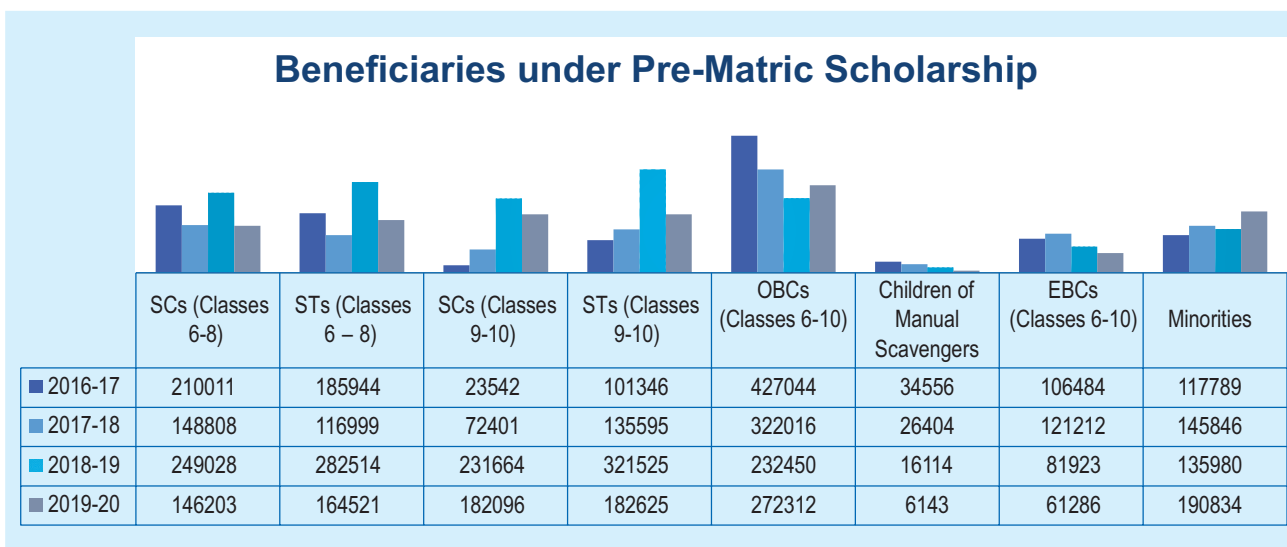


Table 1: Source: Annual Report of the Department of the Secondary Education, Govt. of Rajasthan

Note: The number of beneficiaries in 2019-20 is not complete, as the data for the entire year is not yet available in public domain.

Number of beneficiaries under the different Pre-Matric Scholarships show variations across the years between 2016-17 and 2019-20. The year 2018-19 stands out as a year where the number of SC and ST students benefiting from the scholarship are the highest for both classes 6-8 and classes 9-10. Data shows that the scheme has potential, and its uptake has improved in recent years, but there are issues such as delays in payments, limited awareness, cumbersome documentation requirements and procedural bottlenecks which constraint access.

This was highlighted by a recent study by Development Solutions and Institute of **Development Studies, Jaipur** who found that **only 60% girls and their parents were aware of the Pre-Matric scholarship and of all the eligible population of 13-16 years old girls, belonging to SC, ST, and OBC, communities, enrolled in schools, only an average 44% girls and parents, reported to have received the pre-matric scholarship.**

Budget Tracker

PMS for SCs and STs, levels of actual expenditure against the allocations made (Budget Estimates (BE)) were low (less than 50%) till 2017-18, which increased significantly in the year 2018-19, almost doubling from the previous levels.

Allocations for PMS for OBCs have fluctuated across the recent years. As with PMS for SCs and STs, the levels of actual expenditure were highest in year 2018-19, though lower than the allocations made (BE).

Allocations for PMS for children of manual scavengers are low and have declined in recent years. The levels of actual expenditure under the scheme have been consistently lower than the budgets allocated (BE) in all the years studied, implying challenges in scheme implementation.

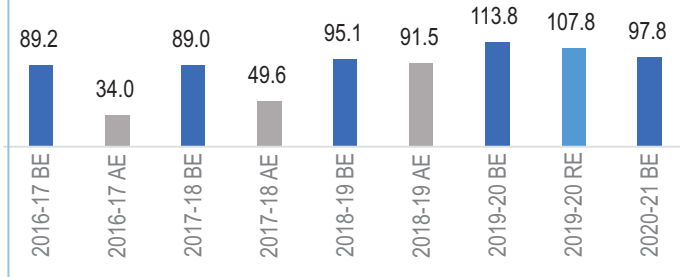
Why are we seeing these trends?

The **overall funding for the PMS has not been consistent, fluctuating across the years.** Trends seen in state budget are, in part, linked to the Union Government's allocations for the schemes which have been fluctuating in the recent years. This is also evident from the fluctuations seen in central share for these schemes.

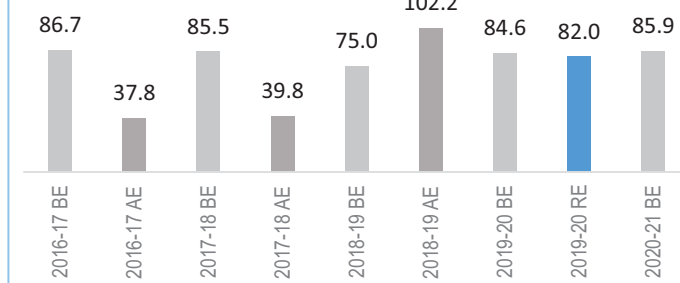
Year 2018-19 stands out as year with highest levels of fund utilization for PMS for SCs, STs and OBCs. According to the officials Directorate of Secondary Education, the improvements in schemes' budget utilization in 2018-19 could be attributed to the increased number of applications by students in recent years, as well payments of arrears accumulated from previous years. It could be due to streamlining of the processes to apply for these scholarships in the state of Rajasthan, which have led to improved fund utilization and scheme coverage post 2018-19.

The inconsistent funding for the schemes, when the overall enrolment numbers have been increasing, is a concern. More so, the increase in beneficiaries for PMS has not kept pace with the increase in overall enrolments, implying issues with scheme awareness, its implementation or lack of funding to provide scholarships for all eligible students.

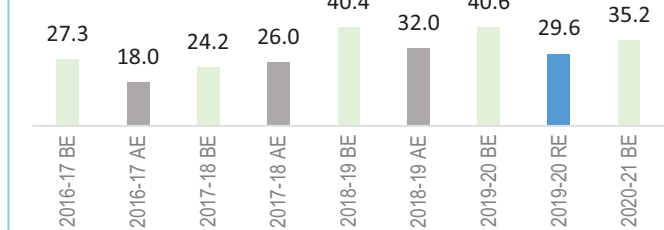
Budgets for PMS for SCs (in INR crore)



Budgets for PMS for STs (in INR crore)



Budgets for PMS for OBCs (in INR crore)



Budgets for PMS for Children of Manual Scavengers (in INR crore)

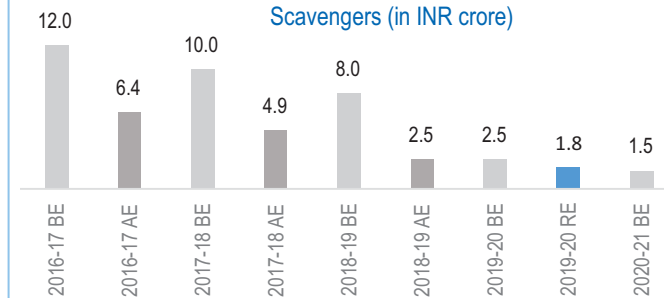


Table 2: Budgets for PMS in last five years

Resource Gap & Projected Estimation for the Scheme

FINDINGS

- In the present year 2020-21, we found a **total resource gap of INR 230 crore, of which gap for SCs is INR 70 crore, for STs, it is INR 51 crore and for OBCs it is INR 109 crore, when assessed against the allocations (i.e., against Budget Estimates).**

However, the gap increases when assessed against the actual expenditure made under the PMS, implying that the actual resource gap in the current year may be much higher if the department is not able to spend the allocated amounts in time.

- The analysis also highlights the **resource requirements for the upcoming year 2021-22 at INR 462 crore for SCs, STs and OBCs combined.** However, in case of arrears from year 2020-21, the amount that needs to be allocated in 2021-22 may increase further.

No. of eligible beneficiaries		ST			SC			OBC		
		Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
2020-21	Class 6-8	253833	133277	487109	291440	267838	559278	430053	395227	825280
	Class 9-10	149478	146664	296142	189255	185693	374949	310778	304928	615705
2021-22	Class 6-8	253833	233277	487109	291440	267838	559278	430053	395227	825280
	Class 9-10	156952	153998	310950	198718	194978	393696	326316	320174	646491
Unit Costs per annum class 6-8		750/-	1250/-		750/-	1250/-		1000/-		
Unit Costs per annum class 9-10		3000/-			3000/-			1000/-		

Table3: No. of Eligible Beneficiaries

Pre-Matric Scholarship (INR Crore)	2020-21 BE	2020-21 AE*	2020-21 Required Budget	Total Resource Gap in 2020-21		2020-21 Required Budget
				Against Budget Allocated	Against Actual Expenditure	
SC	98	29	168	-70	-138	173
ST	86	17	137	-51	-120	141
OBC	35	NA	144	-109		147
Total	220	...	449	-230		462

Table 4: The Resource Gap

Note: Actual Expenditure data is till December 2020, taken from the IFMS website

Recommendations

- The mechanism of applying and getting the benefit of the **scholarship schemes should be simplified and made easier for the marginalised children, so that more children can apply in time.**
- The budget allocations for the scheme should be increased substantially if all/majority of the children are to be covered under the schemes. **The budget for SC and ST children should be doubled from the present level and for OBC should be increased almost 5 times** if all the children of the government schools are to be covered under the scheme.
- In case of shortage of funds or delays in disbursement of funds by the Union Ministries, **the Government of Rajasthan should put in the funds from its own resource pool and get the same reimbursed from the Union Government.** This will ensure smooth implementation and timely disbursement of scholarships to all students.

Methodology of Analysis

Estimating the number of eligible beneficiaries:

Number of SC, ST and OBC students enrolled for 2020-21 was taken from Shaladarpan website of the Government of Rajasthan. The overall gender ratio in enrolment for the state was applied to each caste-group to arrive at number of boys and girls beneficiaries. For 2021-22, the current numbers were projected to increase by 5% for classes 9-10 and kept same as 2020-21 for classes 6-8, based on the trends observed in the U-DISE data on enrolment during the last 5 years.

Obtaining the unit costs:

The per student scholarship amounts per year were obtained from the scheme guidelines of the three scholarship schemes. The scholarship amounts given to day scholars were considered for costing.

Estimating resource requirement:

No. of beneficiaries in each caste group multiplied by respective unit costs = Total resources required during the year.

Estimating Resource Gap:

Budgets allocated (or spent) minus Budget needed.