

NATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP



Get Yourself Registered
on NSP



Online Application
Verification



Scholarship Amount credited
directly in student Account



PORTAL 2.0

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Introduction

Under the key initiative by Hon'ble Prime Minister on 1st July 2015 under Digital India Programme, a single unified National Scholarship Portal (NSP) for online application submission, verification and final disbursement of scholarships directly into students' bank accounts through DBT was developed by NIC and was launched.

NSP Version 2.0 (<http://scholarships.gov.in/>) is one-stop solution through which various services starting from submission of student application, generation of application receipt, data processing, sanction and disbursal of various scholarships to students are enabled.

National Scholarship Portal is taken as Mission Mode Project (MMP) under National e-Governance Plan (NeGP). This initiative aims at providing a Simplified, Mission-oriented, Accountable, Responsive and Transparent 'SMART' System for faster and effective disposal of scholarship applications and delivery of funds directly into beneficiaries' accounts without any leakages.

The objective of the NSP Version 2.0 is to create a unique, simplified and user-friendly platform for students to help them avail benefits of educational scholarships in an efficient and transparent manner. In addition, National Scholarship Portal also facilitates Automation, Streamlining and Effective Management of processes related to Application receipt, Processing, Sanction and Disbursal of Centrally Sponsored Scholarship Schemes to students.

Context and Background

Broadly speaking, National Scholarship Portal is one-stop solution for students covering pan India through which students of various groups and ages can avail the benefits of various scholarship schemes. This initiative aims at providing a Simplified, Mission-oriented, Accountable, Responsive & Transparent 'SMART' System for faster & effective disposal of Scholarships applications and delivery of funds directly into beneficiaries' accounts eliminating scope of intermediaries. The Mission Mode Project (MMP) of National Scholarship Portal aims to cover various Scholarships schemes launched by Union Government, State Government and Union Territories across the country.

Goals of the NSP Project

- Ensure timely disbursement of Scholarships to the needy students.
- Provide a common portal for various Scholarship schemes of Central and State Governments
- Create a transparent database of scholars
- Avoid duplication in processing, harmonization of different Scholarships schemes & norms
- Application of Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) in efficient and effective manner.

This Case Study details a real-life story wherein a Nodal officer of a leading college under the Delhi University, with help of the National Scholarship Portal, overcomes various roadblocks to streamline the process of scholarship application and facilitation, benefitting the incoming students of the upcoming academic year 2019-20. In this case study, some names and identifying details have been changed to protect the privacy of individuals.

Problem at Hand

Mrs. Reena Agarwal, a Nodal officer at Joseph's College under the Delhi University is known for her dedication and commitment towards work. She leaves no stone unturned in providing a seamless admission process to students applying to the college. One of her key values at work is to ensure that deserving students do not miss out on their chance of getting good education because of lack of funds. Hence, she makes great efforts in promoting the various scholarships available for students across categories, and has even made a lot of petitions in simplifying the procedure of applying for and disbursement of scholarship money.

However, the manual system of processing crores of scholarship applications prevalent under various categories including scholarships given by Central Government, State Governments, UGC and dispersedly located Schools/ Colleges/ Institutions were having the same problems/ issues which are commonly seen in any manual process of handling huge papers. The problems faced are error-free processing of applications, corrections, safe storage, disbursement of scholarships, analyzing the big data, accounting records of the same, etc. Further, dependency on human resources in routine and structured formal processes was leading her team and staff to fatigue and monotony.

She is constantly perturbed by some recurring overall situations in her office:

- **Lack of visibility and control:** Pertaining to each scheme with regard to Centrally Sponsored Schemes, UGC Schemes, State Sponsored Schemes, there were number of paper-based applications which applicants are to duly fill in. This resulted in inconsistency in overall key parameters, thereby affecting the decision making process. Crores of Paper-based applications were occupying huge space and locating an application was very difficult and often leads to mistakes and errors as well. Dependency on huge manpower for processing these error-prone applications was difficult to control.
- **Errors:** Applications moving from each table and hand, causing damages to paper-based applications are liable to further errors. Also, applications moving from place to place, person to person get torn, damaged or stained.
- **Low quality results:** Damaged documents are particularly hard to read, making processing more difficult and time-consuming.
- **Delays in Processing:** Processing paper documents was causing many processing delays. Manual data entry is a time-consuming, outdated process that leads to inefficiency across the entire office.
- **Low Productivity:** As stated above, manual document processing is an arduous, time-consuming process that hinders office productivity and efficiency. Manual system was also acting as hindrance to growth and efficiency of human resources.
- **Affected Queries and Decisions:** In the manual process, it was difficult to meet any simple query. Decisions were not based on real time facts and figures.
- **Complexities in processing manual applications:** Besides all above, students were not able to see the glimpse of all schemes for which they are eligible. They were not able to take the informed decisions on the scholarship schemes which are more suitable and beneficial. For every scheme, they need to fill the form separately causing wastage of time and energy. On the other hand, processing of multiple applications for a single student makes the authorities overburdened which results in errors, duplication, more human intervention etc.

Broad Overview of NSP Ver. 2.0

Tormented day and night by these issues, Mrs. Reena Agarwal approached many senior college staff members for assistance in resolution of these issue, but to no avail. Not only was her office staff overworked and stressed out, the result was that a lot of good students were failing to get admission due to missing out on scholarship deadlines, not knowing where to apply or not receiving the scholarship money on time. This distressed her to no end, and she saw herself failing at her job miserably.

One Tuesday afternoon, she was attending a half-yearly joint review meeting of a set of college admission and Nodal officers under the University. Usually, she raised her concerns with a lot of enthusiasm in the hope of receiving some valuable advice, but today, she was just too demotivated. Passively listening to some of her colleagues from other colleges, her interest was suddenly piqued by a brief presentation being made by one of her peers, Mr. Promil Chowdhary, the Nodal Officer, also heading the admissions process at Shri Janardhan College of Business Studies. He was narrating his experience of using a **portal called the National Scholarship Portal 2.0, a single and simple application form devised for all categories of scholarships**. Mrs. Agarwal sprang into action and furiously started taking some notes:

- The Government Resource Planning (GRP) yielded a secured system with all schemes of scholarship clubbed together under one umbrella of NSP 2.0.
- The complex processes from application submission to processing and disbursement of scholarships to meritorious and deserving students are done through a simplified and transparent manner through adoption of adequate Government Business Process Reengineering (GBPR) in NSP 2.0.
- In order to provide timely support to stakeholders, 16 helpdesk resources at the call center are setup in addition to a separate Grievance Redress Mechanism. Besides these, an IVRS based application is also implemented for students to know their application status. NSP 2.0 is continuously made more efficient and user- friendly by resolving the technical issues which are reported by stakeholders.

NSP at a glance - last 4 years

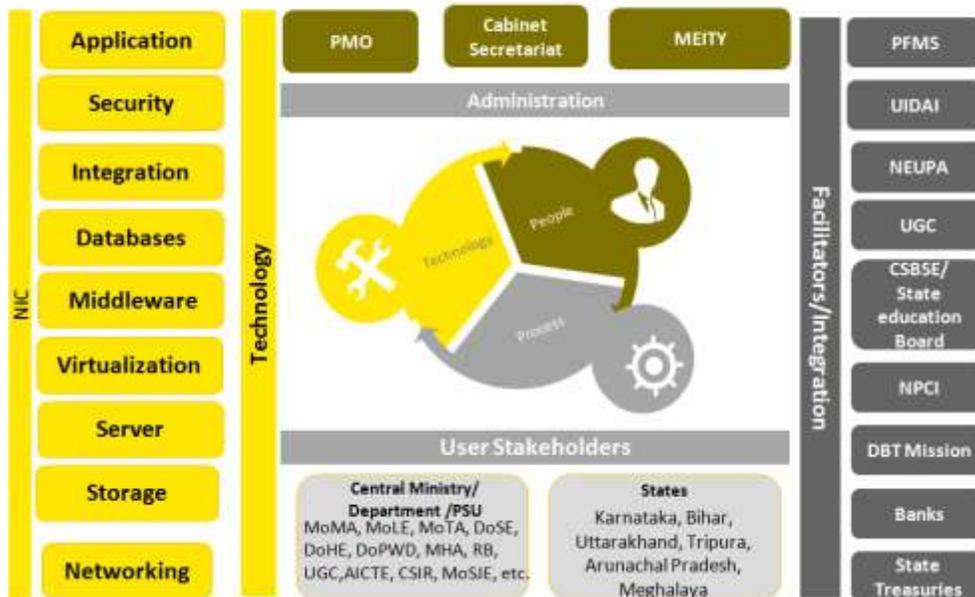
#	Particulars	Status (AY 2015-16)	Status (AY 2016-17)	Status (AY 2017-18)	Status (AY 2018-19)
1	Number of Ministries/Departments On-boarded	10	8	16 (Ministry -10, State-6)	18 (Ministry -10, State-8)
2	Number of Schemes On-boarded	21	24	52	60
3	Total number of Applications Received	1.04 Cr	1.20 Cr	1.33 Crore	1.45 Crore
4	% of Applications with Aadhaar	43%	82%	90%	82%
6	Number of Applicants to whom scholarship is disbursed*	65.84 L	52.95 Lakh	65.65 Lakh	67.7 Lakhs**
7	Total Scholarship amount disbursed/sent to PFMS in Rs.	1,699 Cr	1,568 Cr	2028 Cr	2104 Cr**

* Data as on 29.03.2019 **Payment file sent to PFMS for final disbursement

- In AY 2018-19, Rs. 2104 crore has been pushed to PFMS to approximately to 67.7 lakhs beneficiary to disburse scholarship directly into their bank account
- Commutatively, in last four Academic year (2015-16, 16-17, 17-18, 18-19) approximately 5.02 Crores applications received and total Rs 7400 crores disbursed to 2.5 crore students

- Further, integration with UIDAI for instant online verification of Students' Aadhaar numbers while applying for scholarship along with Public Financial Management System (PFMS) has been in-built in NSP 2.0 to authenticate error-free eligible beneficiaries for payment of scholarships and subsequent instantaneous updation of receipt status thereof.
- Mr. Chowdhary also mentioned that during his interaction with the NSP team, he came to know that the team is also working on incorporation of Business Intelligence in NSP 2.0 which could yield cost saving and other value additions pertaining to outcome based analysis and Decision Support System (DSS) for various Ministries/ Departments.

Overall NSP Architecture



Soon after the meeting, Mrs. Reena Agarwal caught up with Mr. Chowdhary to get more details on usage and accessibility of the NSP portal. Mr. Chowdhary encouraged her to try out the NSP Mobile app which provided the following features:

- **Scheme Display:** NSP App displays all scholarship schemes - Central Schemes, UGC Schemes and State Schemes along with deadlines, guidelines and FAQs.
- **Student Registration:** Students can enter their details, scheme type, bank account details, etc. for registering to availing the schemes. SMS alert along with application ID go to student through SMS.
- **Student Dashboard:** Student dashboard enables student to view the progress of application and status of application at various stages of application life-cycle.
- **Application Form:** Student can fill entire application form detailing registration, academic and basic information. App provides user friendly interfaces for Entry/ Submit and download of filled application form in PDF.

Salient Features/ Services

- A Common application form for all students.
- One student, one application to increase the ambit of scholarship beneficiaries.
- Autonomy to administer the scheme by Individual Ministries/States.
- Serves as a decision support system (DSS) for Ministries and departments and States for real-time decision making.
- Unique login ID and Password will be made available for all stakeholders.
- Comprehensive MIS System to facilitate monitoring at every stage of Scholarships distribution
- Provision for SMS/email alert at various process of implementation

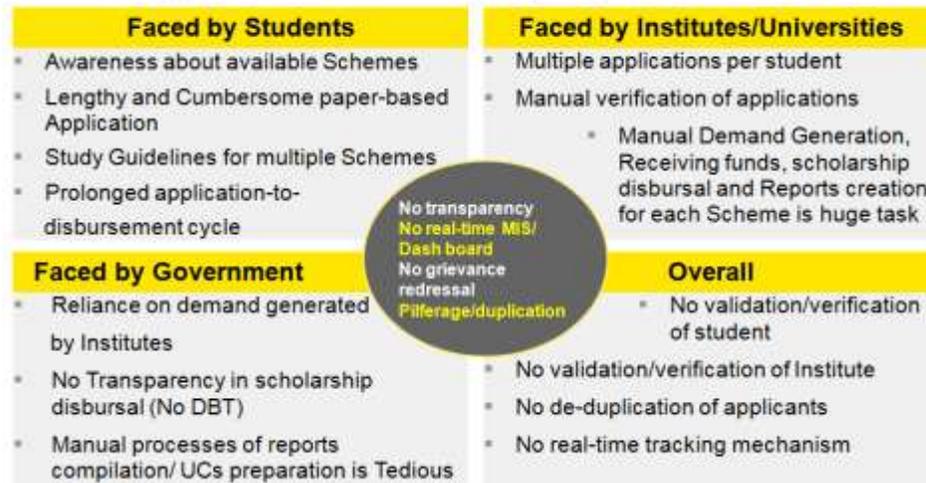
NSP 2.0 Solution

Mrs. Reena Agarwal’s delight knew no bounds upon having stumbled upon this valuable information. She spent an entire week studying about the National Scholarship Portal 2.0, its key features and solutions. Over nights of research and exploration, she drafted a detailed presentation, mapping the problems her team and staff faced to probable solutions offered by the NSP platform. In her weekly review meeting, next Monday, she decided to elaborate upon the same and persuade her supervisors and other senior staff members to allow a trial usage of the platform. Her presentation highlighted the following:

a. Issues and Challenges

Earlier, the process of availing benefits under various educational scholarship schemes was a difficult task for students due to lengthy paperwork. They had to run from one place to another for getting financial help through educational scholarships by the Government.

Challenges faced in legacy system



Needless to say that in IT age, intervention of ICT in scholarship will not only facilitate ‘Ease of doing’ but also enlighten many ideas for achieving ‘Education for all’.

Towards this noble mission of ‘Right to Education’, National Scholarship Portal Version 2.0 (NSP-2.0) has been designed and developed by National Informatics Centre (NIC). NSP-2.0 is a unique and simplified ICT platform based on GRP (Government Resource Planning) created for countrywide students to avail benefits of educational scholarships.

It operates as an integrated system in near real time with common database supporting nationwide wide range of scholarships in different categories having a consistent look and feel across all modules.

b. Solutions and Services

With deployment of ICT based solution as NSP 2.0, the system automatically inherited the benefits that are inbuilt with any computerized system besides fulfillment of the prime objectives which are as under:

- Ensure timely disbursement of Scholarships to students in a very simple manner ensuring the transparency of processing criteria.

Key Functionalities Covered

G2C	G2G	G2B
<p>Consumers: Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single place information for all scholarship schemes offered under different Ministries/ Department, States for informed decision • Online Registration, application submission • Application Tracking • Paperless Services • Student Helpline, Grievance Redressal • Scholarship Disbursement into the bank account • SMS updates at all stages of application processing 	<p>Central/State Ministries/Dept.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheme Configuration • Application Verification by District/State/Ministry • Overall Scheme administration and budget forecasting • Customized MIS Creation • Backend Validation of various data like : Aadhaar, Bank A/c Details, State board results etc. for timely processing • Single Unified system for all Stakeholders including Institutes, Districts, States and Central Govt. 	<p>Institutes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st Level verification by Institutes • Application Tracking • SMS/email updates • Customized Dashboards • Scheme-wise Portfolio based application processing

- Provide a single portal for various Scholarships schemes of Central and State Governments
- Create a transparent database of students’ scholarships, institutes
- Avoid duplication in processing
- Harmonization of different Scholarships schemes & norms
- Timely disbursement of scholarship amount in students’ bank account through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT)
- Linkage with PFMS

c. Impact Analysis

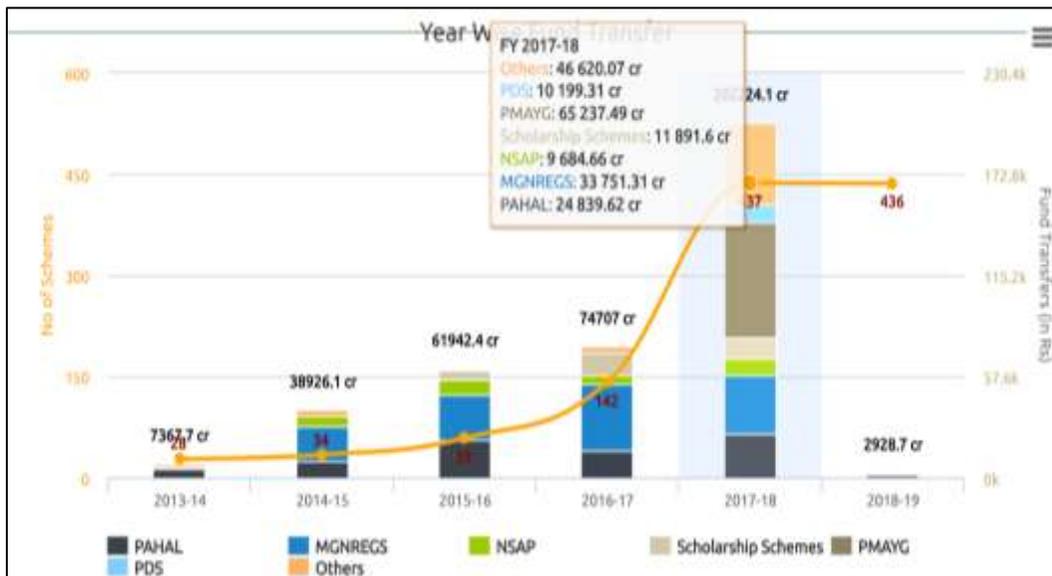
For academic year **2016-17**, **24** Schemes of **8** Ministries/ Departments have been on-boarded on NSP 2.0. For these schemes, 1.20 crore students applied for scholarship, out of which 53.59 lakh fresh and renewal students received scholarship amounting to Rs.1,607 crores that was transferred directly to students’ bank accounts through DBT.

For Academic year **2017-18**, **52** Schemes of **16** Ministries/ Departments have been on-boarded on NSP 2.0. For these schemes, 1.33 crore students applied for scholarship, out of which 65.65 lakh fresh and renewal students received scholarship amounting to Rs.2,028 crores that was transferred directly to students’ bank accounts through DBT.

In academic year A.Y. **2018-19**, **60** schemes (18 central sector + 42 state level) of 10 Ministries/Departments and 8 states were on-boarded on NSP. For AY 2018-19, 1.45 crore students applied for scholarship under fresh and renewal category.

Out of this, 1.08 crore applications were final verified by Districts/States Nodal Officers. As on date, scholarship applications of 67.7 lakh students have been sent to PFMS for disbursement of scholarship amounting to Rs.2104 crores approx.

Launch of NSP Mobile App to reach students at remote locations.



As per a rough estimate more than Rs.20,000 crores is spent annually by Government under different Students' Education Assistance, Research Promotion Programme in India. In FY 2017-18 approximately Rs.11,000 crores were disbursed through DBT in various Central Government Schemes.

Above is the data from Direct Benefit Transfer to various Government schemes in the Financial Year 2017-18. The amount of scholarship transferred in the FY 2017-18 through DBT was INR 11,891 Cr. This shows the potential of NSP growth in the coming years. In the AY 2017-18, NSP has disbursed an amount of INR 2028 Cr. to 65 Lakhs beneficiary students. This number both in terms of beneficiary coverage and the amount of scholarship disbursed through NSP can go significantly high if we maintain the same rate of growth of on boarding in the coming years. AY 2017-18 saw 100% plus surge of scholarship schemes on boarded on NSP in comparison to the last year. With the advent of Fellowship Schemes on NSP and UGC leading the way in on-boarding their Fellowship Schemes, many other Ministries/Departments are expected to onboard their Fellowship schemes this AY.

It is evident from the data analysis of last four academic years that NSP has received double applications than quota/slots available. This shows the benefit of making 'one stop solution' for all major schemes. Before NSP, applications were not evenly received across all the schemes. Some schemes were getting more application, which advertised well by Governments, secondly students had to apply for every scheme separately. Now, Students has been enabled to take the informed choice while applying for any scheme. This further has attributed to optimized utilization of fund available under scholarships schemes.

The result of Mrs. Reena Agarwal's hard work was that the senior members of Jospeh's college decided to get on-boarded with the National Scholarship Portal and even made her in-charge of training of office staff to help them utilize the various features of the portal. Mrs. Reena, and her team have now been able to gear up for the admission process for incoming students of AY 2019-2020. They have successfully been able to accept and begun verification of scholarship applications of 48 students across Categories of Disabled students, Minority Community students and girl students from Disadvantaged sections of the society.

Way Forward

NSP-2.0 is increasingly being adopted by various Ministries and Educational Institutions for offering scholarship schemes to eligible students.

The portal is emerging as a primary channel of offering scholarships to students in fulfilment of the challenge of ensuring all children including differently-abled children to enjoy equal access to education and educational institutions under the 12th Plan.

NSP 2.0 is a revamped system enabling students to fulfil the constitutional mandate of Right to Education for all children up to the age of 14 years, thereby reducing the dropouts between the age group of 6 to 14.

Presently, 18 Ministries/ Departments/ States, 60 Schemes (Central/ States), 14.5 lakh Universities/ Boards/ Institutions are on-boarded in NSP 2.0.

There are 18 Centrally Sponsored Schemes belonging to, Ministry of Minority Affairs, Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Ministry of Labour & Employment, Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Department of School Education and Literacy, Department of Higher Education, Welfare And Rehabilitation Board, Ministry of Home Affairs, RPF/ RPSF, Ministry of Railways, UGC and 42 Schemes which belong to various States like Assam, Bihar, Uttarakhand, Chandigarh, Tripura, Karnataka, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh.

Day by day, more States are requesting for on-boarding their States' Scholarship Schemes in NSP 2.0.

b) How can Nodal Officers like Mrs. Reena Agarwal and Mr. Promil Chowdhary help in the following?

- Improve features of NSP 2.0 web and mobile portal
- Increase awareness of NSP 2.0 among students

Prepare a 5 slider presentation covering both aspects from the perspective of a college Nodal Officer

Group Discussion and Role Play Activity

Divide the participants in groups of 4 -5 and discuss the case on following aspects. Each group should take one aspect:

1. Grievances and Complaints of students and how can they be tackled through NSP 2.0 without the hassle of manually running from pillar to post, thereby saving time, cost and energy for the students during the critical admission period
2. How can students use the AI feature of NSP 2.0 to assess their eligibility under various scholarship schemes and find their best fit

Role Play Activity

Make three groups of 3-4 participants each

- The first group (Team Students) should represent a mixed group of a female Muslim girl student, a student from the North-East, and a student with physical disability.
- The second group (Team Nodal Officers) should represent a group of Nodal Officers, at least one Nodal Officer should have already utilised NSP 2.0 and at least one should not be aware of the platform.
- The third group should represent Team NSP 2.0

In the beginning, let **Team Nodal Officers** enact out the roles of Reena and Promil as in the Case. This group then introduces the **Team Students** to the features of NSP 2.0 to the students, offering solutions through the already existing solutions and taking note of other specific concerns. Let the two groups finally interact with **Team NSP 2.0** in the end, highlighting new features they have brainstormed above and let Team NSP discuss how this can be taken forward.

The objective of this exercise is to highlight expectations of stakeholders and the readiness of Government in meeting them. It is a role play type of exercise which offers plenty of flexibility in the way services can be further augmented.

Summary - Key lessons learnt (15 minutes). Each participant shall write down a summary in not more than 500 words highlighting key learnings from the case.

Abbreviations

Abbreviations	Full Form
NSP	National Scholarship Portal
DBT	Direct Benefit Transfer
NIC	National Informatics Centre
MMP	Mission Mode Project
NeGP	National e-Governance Plan
SMART System	Simplified, Mission-oriented, Accountable, Responsive and Transparent System
UGC	University Grants Commission
GRP	Government Resource Planning
GBPR	Government Business Process Reengineering
PFMS	Public Financial Management System
DSS	Decision Support System
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
MoHRD	Ministry of Human Resource Development
MoMA	Ministry of Minority Affairs
FAQs	Frequently Asked Questions