F. No. SS-15/23/2020-Scholarship-MoMA
Ministry of Minority Affairs
Scholarship Division
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11ᵗʰ Floor, Pt. Deendayal Antyodaya Bhawan,
CGO Complex, Lodhi Road,
New Delhi-110003
Dated: 18ᵗʰ November, 2020

To

The Principal Secretary/Secretary
of all States/UTs dealing with Minority Scholarship Schemes.

Subject: Implementation of preventive measures by States/UTs for the implementation of three Scholarship Schemes meant for Minority students through the NSP during 2020-21.
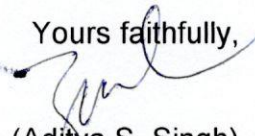
Madam/Sir,

I am directed to refer to the recent series of newspaper articles regarding alleged "siphoning of scholarship" meant for eligible beneficiaries belonging to minority communities under the Pre-Matric Scholarship Scheme of Ministry of Minority Affairs (MoMA) for the FY 2019-20 in the State of Jharkhand and also a few fraudulent cases pertaining to the States of Assam, Bihar and Punjab. The report details instances as well as the modus operandi adopted by unscrupulous elements in collusion with some school authorities, possibly related Officials and the bank correspondents to defraud the beneficiaries under the Pre-Matric Scholarship Scheme of Ministry of Minority Affairs.

2.   While the concerned States have been requested to thoroughly investigate the matter and furnish a report to this Ministry -it has also been decided with the approval of the Hon'ble Minister for Minority Affairs to implement a few preventive measures immediately for securing the process during the current year i.e 2020-21. Further longer term measures are also proposed to be taken in due course. The proposed measures entail that NSP will provide a few additional features for the verification process and DBT Mission, Cabinet Secretariat is being requested to direct NIC to incorporate these features on the Portal immediately.

3.   A copy of the aforesaid measures are enclosed with the request that necessary directions may kindly be issued to the concerned officers viz., DNOs and SNOs to strictly implement these measures within the given time frame so that genuine beneficiaries under these Schemes do not suffer.

4. This issues with the approval of the Competent Authority.

Yours faithfully,
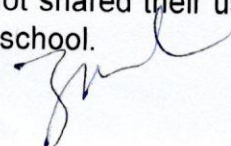
(Aditya S. Singh)
Under Secretary to the Govt. of India
Tel: 011-24364311

Copy to:
1. The Principal Secretary/Secretary (Education Department) of all States/UTs.
2. Joint Secretary (DBT), DBT Mission, Cabinet Secretariat, New Delhi.
3. Dy. Director General (NSP), NIC HQ, New Delhi.
4. State Nodal Officer of all States/UTs dealing with Minority Scholarship Schemes.

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The list of various preventive measures to be taken by SNO, DNO, INO, etc with immediate effect for the implementation of three Scholarship Schemes of MOMA through NSP, is as under:

i. At present, NSP uses only one indicator of U-DISE (Unified District Information System for Education) i.e., the U-DISE Code of a School. It is proposed that U-DISE data on other specific indicators pertaining to a school like total enrollment, class-wise strength, gender-wise enrollment of students, strength of minority students in the school etc. may be shared with NSP. The said information would form the baseline data against which the verification at L1 level would be undertaken. The DNO/SNO can also cross verify from this baseline data at 2nd level of verification. MOMA is discussing the proposal with U-DISE and NSP for implementation at the earliest.

ii. The SOP for NSP defines in detail the roles and responsibilities of all users of the Portal. The INO, responsible for the 1st level verification, is required to maintain copies of supporting documents such as income certificate, community certificate, mark-sheet, birth- certificate, copy of Aadhaar card, domicile proof, etc. submitted by the Applicant. The INO needs to show the physical record to the DNO/SNO as and when required.

iii. All the applications already verified as on date this year will be sent back to the respective INOs with the direction that they should be re-verified on the basis of the documents submitted by the applicant and cross checked with the school record. In case a student has not submitted any document or has not submitted the required number of documents- the INO may "mark the application as "defective" so as to provide another opportunity to the genuine applicant to rectify the mistake. Further, NSP will also provide the following data in schools' login: - (i) the number of scholarship application verified by the school in the previous year (ii) the number of scholarship applications verified by the school in the current year. The figures under (ii) will be updated by the Portal till the last day of verification. The said information on the schools' login will alert the INO in case there is an unusual spike in the number of applications.

iv. The Head of the School will certify the list of applications verified by the INO and send it to the DNO/SNO for L-2 verification. A copy of the certified list and the documents submitted by the applicants will be maintained year-wise by the School and DNOs/SNOs will check these documents physically on random basis. The INO will maintain the records separately for applicants under fresh and renewal categories respectively. The school will maintain the documents in hard copy in Scholarship File financial year wise and the records will be retained by the school for at least 5 years. Principal/Head of School/Institute is made responsible for the effective supervision of INO activities.

v. NSP will prepare a list of institutions from where bulk of doubtful applications has been pushed or received and also all other doubtful cases/suspicious institutions and share the list with the respective DNO/SNO before the last date for L-2 verification is over for cross verification. The DNO/SNO will conduct mandatory physical verification of such institutions and furnish a declaration of having done so on the Portal. Further, for the verified applications also about 2% applications may be selected by the SNO for random check/third party audit of scholarships.

vi. The States Nodal Officers will re-verify the credentials of the DNOs and certify that they are regular employees of the State Government. Similarly, the DNOs/SNOs will verify the credentials of all the INOs under them this year and ensure through the Head of the School that the INOs are permanent/regular employees of the school concerned and that they have not shared their user ID and password with any other person inside or outside the school.

vii. The doubtful/suspicious applications identified by the NSP Portal through 'Fraud Detection Software' will also be resent for re-verification to the States. All such applications must be re-verified by SNO with the hard copy of the application and supporting documents obtained from the INO.

viii. In case of any incidence of fraud the States/UTs shall be duty bound to thoroughly investigate the matter and ensure initiation of penal action against the culprits. Ministry of Minority Affairs shall regularly follow up with the State/UT in the matter.

ix. DNO/SNO may be advised to frequently change their passwords and use their OTP cautiously to avoid any outside intervention.

x. As per the existing guidelines Ministry of Minority Affairs pays hostel fees to an applicant if the claim is verified at both L-1 as well as L-2 levels. It has been decided that in case of Pre-Matric Scholarship and for classes 11th and 12th under Post-Matric scholarship, hostel fees shall henceforth be payable **only** if these applicants reside in a hostel facility, managed by the School/Institution itself. For higher classes i.e. after class XII, the hostel fees shall be payable against rent receipts/ rent agreement in the name of the applicant.

xi. After the State/community-wise merit list is prepared, the NSP will send the final approved list of students of a School/institution, along with the admissible Scholarship amount, student-wise to the INO/Principal of the school, who are required to share that with the Public representatives/nominated parents in the School Management Committee, etc.

xii. If any students application is marked fake by District Nodal officer (DNO)/State Nodal Officer (SNO), applications against the said Institute may be put on hold until re-verification is complete.

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