



REPORT OF THE COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL OF INDIA

ON PRE AND POST-MATRIC SCHOLARSHIP SCHEMES FOR SCHEDULED CASTE, SCHEDULED TRIBE AND MINORITY STUDENTS



SUPREME AUDIT INSTITUTION OF INDIA
लोकहितार्थं सत्यनिष्ठा
Dedicated to Truth in Public Interest



GOVERNMENT OF KERALA
REPORT NO. 3 OF THE YEAR 2024

Presented to the Legislature on 11 July 2024

**REPORT OF THE COMPTROLLER AND
AUDITOR GENERAL OF INDIA**

ON

**PRE AND POST-MATRIC SCHOLARSHIP
SCHEMES FOR SCHEDULED CASTE,
SCHEDULED TRIBE AND MINORITY
STUDENTS**

**GOVERNMENT OF KERALA
REPORT NO. 3 OF THE YEAR 2024**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Description	Paragraph No.	Page No.
Preface		v
Executive Summary		vii
Chapter I - Introduction		
Organisational setup	1.1	2
Audit approach	1.2	3
Audit objectives	1.3	3
Audit criteria	1.4	3
Audit scope, methodology and sampling	1.5	3
Acknowledgement	1.6	5
SECTION A - Pre and Post-Matric scholarship schemes for Scheduled Caste students		
Chapter II - Scholarship schemes for Scheduled Caste students - Pre-Matric		
Eligibility for claiming scholarship	2.1	7
Procedure/ Process flow	2.2	8
Coverage of beneficiaries (Pre-Matric Central)	2.3	9
Planning and financial management	2.4	14
Implementation of Pre-Matric SC scholarship schemes	2.5	17
Sri Ayyankali Memorial Talent Search and Development scheme (State scheme)	2.6	25
Monitoring and evaluation	2.7	27
Chapter III - Scholarship schemes for Scheduled Caste students - Post-Matric		
Eligibility for claiming scholarship	3.1	29
Procedure/ Process flow	3.2	31
Coverage of beneficiaries (Post-Matric Central)	3.3	32
Planning and financial management	3.4	34
Implementation of Post-Matric SC scholarship schemes	3.5	37
Monitoring and evaluation	3.6	52
Recommendations (Pre and Post-Matric scholarship schemes for SC students)		53
SECTION B - Pre and Post-Matric scholarship schemes for Scheduled Tribe students		
Chapter IV - Scholarship schemes for Scheduled Tribe students - Pre-Matric		
Eligibility for claiming scholarship	4.1	55
Procedure/ Process flow	4.2	56
Coverage of beneficiaries (Pre-Matric Central and State)	4.3	57
Planning and financial management	4.4	59
Implementation of Pre-Matric ST scholarship schemes	4.5	62
State Pre-Matric scholarship scheme	4.6	66
Monitoring and evaluation	4.7	68

Description	Paragraph No.	Page No.
Chapter V - Scholarship schemes for Scheduled Tribe students - Post-Matric		
Eligibility for claiming scholarship	5.1	71
Procedure/ Process flow	5.2	72
Coverage of beneficiaries (Post-Matric Central)	5.3	73
Planning and financial management	5.4	74
Implementation of Post-Matric ST scholarship schemes	5.5	76
Monitoring and evaluation	5.6	83
Recommendations (Pre and Post-Matric scholarship schemes for ST students)		83
SECTION C - Pre and Post-Matric scholarship schemes for Minority students		
Chapter VI - Scholarship schemes for Minority students - Pre and Post-Matric		
Eligibility for claiming scholarship	6.1	85
Procedure/ Process flow	6.2	87
Planning and financial management	6.3	87
Implementation of schemes	6.4	91
Monitoring and evaluation	6.5	100
Recommendations (Pre and Post-Matric scholarship schemes for Minority students)		101

APPENDICES

Appendix No.	Description	Page No.
1.1	Various scholarship schemes operated by Central Government and State Government	103
1.2	Organisational setup in SC Development, ST Development and Minority Welfare Departments	105
1.3	List of test-checked institutions in the selected districts	108
1.4	Details of portals for processing various scholarships	111
3.1	Delay in disbursement of various components of Post-Matric scholarship to SC students - Central and State schemes	112
3.2	Savings in Book Bank scheme in selected districts	115
3.3	Multiple payment of components of Post-Matric scholarship to SC students - Central and State schemes	116
3.4	Part payment of Post-Matric scholarship to SC students due to non-processing of different components of Central and State schemes	117
4.1	Delay in disbursement of various components of Pre-Matric scholarship to ST students - Central scheme	118
5.1	Delay in disbursement of various components of Post-Matric scholarship schemes to ST students - Central and State schemes	119
5.2	Multiple payment of components of Post-Matric scholarship to ST students - Central and State schemes	122
5.3	Part payment of Post-Matric scholarship to ST students due to non-processing of different components of scholarship - Central and State schemes	123

P R E F A C E

This Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India for the year ended 31 March 2022 has been prepared for submission to the Governor of the State of Kerala under Article 151(2) of the Constitution of India.

This Report contains the results of the Performance Audit on 'Pre and Post-Matric scholarship schemes for Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe and Minority students' covering the period 2017-22.

The audit has been conducted in conformity with the Auditing Standards issued by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India.





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Education improves an individual's quality of life. Government of India (Central Government) operates scholarship schemes for students belonging to economically weaker sections among Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Minority Communities with the objective of increasing enrolment, arresting dropout rate during education and helping students in completing their education. Article 46 of Part IV ("Directive Principles of State Policy") of the Constitution enjoins upon the States to promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, in particular, of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The SCs, STs and Minorities constitute 55.52 *per cent* of the population of the State. In addition to Central Government schemes, State Government also operates scholarship schemes for these weaker sections.

All India Performance Audit on 'Pre and Post-Matric Scholarship Schemes for Students belonging to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Minority Communities' in respect of Central schemes was conducted in 2022 for inclusion in the Central Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India. Based on the importance of the topic, it was decided to conduct a Performance Audit on Pre and Post-Matric scholarship schemes for SC, ST and Minority students in respect of Central and State schemes and include in the Reports of the respective States.

Pre-Matric scholarship schemes for Scheduled Caste students

Planning is essential for assessing the number of potential beneficiaries of the schemes and to ensure timely disbursement of the benefits to them. However, Audit noticed that the SC Development Department did not conduct a survey or study to identify and prepare the list of potential beneficiaries of SC Pre-Matric schemes. Ten to 12 *per cent* of SC students did not receive Pre-Matric scholarship for the period 2017-21. During the academic year 2019-20, 379 schools registered in Sampoorna were not registered in e-grantz and thereby 3,499 SC students in these schools were excluded from the scheme. Further, in 5,437 Aided/ Government/ recognised unaided schools which were registered in e-grantz, 23,138 SC students were excluded from the schemes as they were not registered in e-grantz. In two schools, number of SC students in e-grantz was 104 more than that in Sampoorna (52 students more in each school). Instances of non-processing of scholarship applications at SCDO/ Directorate level resulting in non-payment of scholarship to beneficiaries, delay in disbursement of various components of Pre-Matric State scholarship to students and students availing same scholarship on multiple occasions were noticed. Though Guidelines envisage giving sufficient publicity for scholarship schemes, Audit noticed that the same was not ensured. An amount of ₹3.60 crore remitted by 5,828 SC students of Kendriya Vidyalayas towards enhanced rate of Vidyalaya Vikas Nidhi was not reimbursed to them. Deficiencies were also noticed in the implementation of Sri Ayyankali Memorial Talent Search and

Development Scheme. On the monitoring side, it was observed that there existed no effective mechanism for periodic review of progress of the schemes at State/ Regional level.

Post- Matric scholarship schemes for Scheduled Caste students

As regards Post-Matric SC scholarship scheme, there was wide variation between estimated and actual number of beneficiaries which was indicative of inadequate planning. Survey or study to identify the potential beneficiaries was not carried out. State lost ₹96.65 lakh for the period 2017-22 due to non-claiming of administrative expenses from Central Government. Divyang (differently abled) SC students were not given the admissible 10 *per cent* additional amount of scholarship. Non-processing of scholarship applications at institution/ Directorate level resulted in non-payment of scholarship to 1246 students. There was delay of upto five years in payment of scholarship, though e-grantz portal had been conceived with the intention of reducing delay in disbursement of scholarships. Students did not receive scholarship on account of errors in account number, IFS code, closure of bank account etc. Audit noticed anomalies in the implementation of scholarship for overseas studies as well as in implementation of book bank scheme. Eligible students studying in institutions of national importance did not receive scholarship due to delayed action by the Department. Instances of multiple payment of scholarship to students were noticed. Instances of short payment of private accommodation charges to students and non-payment of tuition fee, exam fee, special fee to the institutions by the students were also noticed. There existed no effective mechanism for periodic review of progress of the schemes at the State and Regional level. Audit certificate was not obtained for Centrally sponsored Post-Matric scholarship scheme for SC students. Reconciliation of expenditure figures was not carried out by the Department in respect of State funded SC Post-Matric scholarship scheme.

Pre- Matric scholarship schemes for Scheduled Tribe students

In Pre-Matric ST scholarship schemes, the Department did not maintain the data pertaining to the eligible beneficiaries based on a survey or study to identify the potential beneficiaries. Four to 20 *per cent* of ST students did not receive Pre-Matric scholarship for the period 2017-21. Adequate publicity was not given to the schemes. Scheduled Tribe beneficiaries did not receive scholarship on account of non-processing of scholarship applications at the Directorate. There was delay in processing and payment of different components of scholarship. Similar to implementation of SC scholarship schemes, errors in bank account number, IFS code etc. of beneficiaries resulted in non-receipt of scholarship by students. Audit certificate was not obtained for Centrally sponsored Pre-Matric scholarship scheme. Audit also observed non-receipt of certain components of the scholarship by the beneficiaries. Administrative expenses due from Central Government were not claimed. Reconciliation of expenditure figures was not carried out by the Department in respect of Centrally sponsored ST Pre-Matric scholarship scheme. The Department had not taken measures to conduct social audit and consequently failed to identify the issues faced by the stakeholders.

Post-Matric scholarship schemes for Scheduled Tribe students

Recommendations of Public Accounts Committee with regard to conduct of a survey or study to identify the potential beneficiaries were not complied with in the case of Post-Matric ST scholarship schemes. Non-processing of scholarship applications at institutions and Directorate was noticed. There was delay of one year to four years in disbursement of various components of the scholarship to students. Non-implementation of book bank scheme resulted in non-receipt of benefits by eligible students. Failure of input control in e-grantz software resulted in payment of accommodation charges for institutional hostel and private hostel to the same student. Instances of multiple payment of components of scholarship and granting of State funded scholarship to students pursuing unaided courses in unaided colleges were noticed by Audit. Reconciliation of expenditure figures was not carried out by the Department in respect of Centrally sponsored ST Post-Matric scholarships.

Pre and Post-Matric scholarship schemes for Minority students

The Director of General Education did not furnish utilisation certificate of Minority Pre-Matric scholarship fund received for the year 2014-15. In the case of Minority Pre-Matric scheme, unspent scholarship fund was diverted for other purposes such as purchase of cars, iPads etc. Administrative expenses were not claimed during the period of Audit. Instances of non-processing of applications at institutions were noticed. There was no mechanism in the portal to identify the students registered as fresh applicants in the previous years, based on their registration ID and to deny further registration as fresh applicants in the subsequent years. Instances of more than two members in a family availing minority scholarship and students availing more than one scholarship were noticed. In violation of CH Muhammed Koya scheme Guidelines, payment of scholarship to male students instead of female students was also noticed.

Recommendations

The following recommendations pertain to Sections A and B

- *Government must ensure that the Department and Institutions work conjointly for efficient implementation of the schemes.*
- *Physical and financial targets for scholarship should be set after assessing the number of potential beneficiaries/ students actually enrolled or based on trends of previous years. Department should make use of statistics on students maintained by Education Department for preparing the list.*

(Recommendation 1)

- *Government needs to fix responsibility on the heads of Institutions/SCDOs for non-processing of applications at various levels, leading to non-receipt of scholarship by students. Educational institutions/SCDOs may exercise due diligence in accepting the*

applications, verifying documents submitted by the students in support of the claims, uploading student data and details of scholarship into the application software and sanctioning claims within the allotted time, subject to fulfilment of eligibility criteria.

(Recommendation 2)

- *Department should proactively utilise the services of SC/ST promoters for ensuring that all necessary assistance is provided to students in obtaining supporting documents for applying for scholarship, opening of bank account, etc.*

(Recommendation 3)

- *Officials handling different scholarship portals should be given adequate training to enable them to check the authenticity of certificates and eliminate duplicate applications.*

(Recommendation 4)

- *The deficiencies in the e-grantz portal should be addressed at the earliest so that all the eligible students receive the scholarship.*

(Recommendation 5)

- *Department should conduct awareness and orientation programmes at least annually at the beginning of the academic year for all stakeholders so that no students are left out due to lack of awareness about the scholarship scheme.*

(Recommendation 6)

- *Students may be encouraged to maintain Aadhaar linked bank accounts to ensure transparency in transfer of scholarship amount via DBT to their accounts.*

(Recommendation 7)

- *Government should take action to claim the eligible administrative expenses from Central Government and utilise the same for permitted activities.*

(Recommendation 8)

- *Government should evolve a monitoring mechanism to ensure that no scholarship applications remain unprocessed at various levels i.e., institution and directorate level.*

(Recommendation 9)

Recommendations specific for Section A: Pre and Post-Matric scholarship schemes for SC students

- *Government should ensure that the Guidelines regarding scholarship for students pursuing overseas studies are strictly adhered to and assistance is provided only to those students who*

secure admission in universities which satisfy the criteria set by the Government.

(Recommendation 10)

- *Government should ensure that no Divyang students are deprived of the extra 10 per cent allowance they are entitled to.*

(Recommendation 11)

Recommendations specific for Section B: Pre and Post-Matric scholarship schemes for ST students

- *The Directorate should forward to Government a detailed proposal for implementation of the book bank scheme for Post-Matric ST students.*

(Recommendation 12)

Recommendations for Section C: Pre and Post-Matric scholarship schemes for Minority students

- *Government should ensure that the time frame prescribed for processing of scholarship applications for minority community students is strictly adhered to and no students are deprived of the scholarship due to non-processing of applications.*

(Recommendation 13)

- *Government should consider integration of different scholarship payment portals for cross-checking data available in different portals to prevent beneficiaries from drawing multiple scholarships.*

(Recommendation 14)

- *State Government should bring to the notice of the Central Government the changes to be made in the National Scholarship Portal to capture the identification details of parents of beneficiaries to ensure that more than two students from the same family do not draw the scholarship.*

(Recommendation 15)

- *Government should forward the utilisation certificate of Minority scholarship fund to Central Government without delay and ensure that funds diverted for other purposes are returned to Central Government.*

(Recommendation 16)



INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

Education is the most crucial input for empowering people especially youth with skills and knowledge and giving them access to productive employment in future. Education improves an individual's quality of life. The Central and State Government play an important role in financing the education by providing scholarships to the eligible students. Government of India (Central Government) operates scholarship schemes for students belonging to economically weaker sections among Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Minority Communities (Minority) with the objective of increasing enrolment, arresting dropout rate during education and helping students in completing their education. Pre-Matric and Post-Matric scholarship schemes for SC, ST and Minority students are administered by Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE), Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA) and Ministry of Minority Affairs (MoMA) respectively and are implemented in the States/ UTs by respective State Government and Union Territory (UT) Administration. In addition to Central Government funded schemes, Government of Kerala (GoK) also operates scholarship schemes for students belonging to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Minority Communities.

The SCs, STs and Minorities constitute 55.52¹ per cent of the population of the State. Of the different Central and State schemes implemented for the promotion of education among SC, ST and Minority students, the category-wise list of 11 schemes considered for evaluation in the Performance Audit are shown in **Table 1.1**.

Table 1.1: List of Central and State scholarship schemes

SC	ST	Minorities ²
i. Pre-Matric scholarship scheme (State and Central)	i. Pre-Matric scholarship scheme (State and Central)	i. Pre-Matric scholarship scheme (Central)
ii. Post-Matric scholarship scheme (State and Central)	ii. Post-Matric scholarship scheme (State and Central)	ii. Post-Matric scholarship scheme (State and Central)

Details of these scholarship schemes such as income limit, various components provided by Central Government and GoK etc. are shown in **Appendix 1.1**.

Audit obtained the data pertaining to SC, ST and Minority students who studied in Higher Education Sector³ from All India Survey of Higher Education conducted by Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Central Government, data on SC, ST and Minority students who studied in Higher

¹ SC-9.1 per cent, ST-1.45 per cent, Muslim-26.56 per cent, Christian-18.38 per cent, Sikh-0.01 per cent, Buddhist-0.01 per cent, Jain-0.01 per cent

² No State scheme was implemented by GoK for Pre-Matric Minority students.

³ SC, ST and Minority students securing admission through Management quota are not eligible for Post-Matric scholarship.

Secondary schools⁴ (XI and XII) (State syllabus) and data on SC, ST and Minority students who studied in Pre-Matric Classes (I to X) from Director of General Education⁵, General Education Department, GoK to depict the enrolment of SC, ST and Minority students in the State as shown in **Tables 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4.**

Table 1.2: Estimated enrolment of SCs, STs and Minority Community students in Higher Education Sector

Community	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
SC	67764	69411	72272	96596
ST	10089	10727	11237	14414
Minority	266345	276154	284004	285815
Others	738719	739550	770340	967711
Total	1082917	1095842	1137853	1364536

Table 1.3: Enrolment of SCs, STs and Minority Community students in Higher Secondary Schools (State syllabus)

Community	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
SC	40571	39675	38890	37921
ST	5551	5952	5898	6181
Minority	185306	192483	191434	183333
Others	148692	149069	146638	140870
Total	380120	387179	382860	368305

Table 1.4: Enrolment of SCs, STs and Minority Community students in Pre-Matric stage (CBSE/ State/ ICSE syllabus)

Community	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
SC	416717	414328	409542	412840
ST	79607	78559	76044	76176
Minority	2474687	2497279	2519653	2601957
Others	1753769	1764608	1738185	1623723
Total	4724780	4754774	4743424	4714696

1.1. Organisational setup

Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE), Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA) and Ministry of Minority Affairs (MoMA), Central Government provides assistance to the State Government for implementation of SC, ST and Minority scholarship schemes respectively. At the State level, the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Development Department was headed by the Additional Chief Secretary and Minority Welfare Department by the Principal Secretary. The Directors of Scheduled Castes Development, Scheduled Tribes Development and Minority Welfare look after the matters relating to SCs, STs and Minorities respectively. Director of General Education (DGE) was the authority at the State level for processing the Central Pre-Matric

⁴ Data did not include details of students studying in other Education Boards such as CBSE and ICSE

⁵ Data did not include details of the annual family income of the student

Minority scholarship applications and Director of Collegiate Education (DCE) was the State level authority for processing Central and State Post-Matric Minority scholarship applications. The organograms of each Department are shown in **Appendix 1.2**.

1.2. Audit approach

All India Performance Audit on ‘Pre and Post-Matric Scholarship Schemes for Students belonging to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Minority Communities’ in respect of Central schemes for inclusion in the Audit Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) was conducted during April to July 2022. Based on the importance of the topic, it was decided to conduct a Performance Audit on Pre and Post-Matric scholarship schemes for SCs, STs and Minorities in respect of Central schemes and State schemes and include in the Reports of respective States.

1.3. Audit objectives

The Performance Audit was conducted to assess whether;

- the schemes were planned and implemented efficiently and effectively to cover all the eligible and to exclude ineligible beneficiaries.
- the overall financial management was prudent and the schemes implemented in a timely manner.
- effective control mechanism existed for monitoring the schemes.

1.4. Audit criteria

The Audit observations included in the Report were benchmarked against the criteria derived from:

- Prescribed Guidelines/ orders/ circulars/ instructions issued by the Central Ministries/ State Departments/ Directorates concerned.
- Prescribed norms of funding of each scheme.
- Prescribed norms for implementation of the schemes.
- PFMS/ DBT related orders/ instructions.

1.5. Audit scope, methodology and sampling

The Performance Audit covered the period 2017-18 to 2021-22 and was conducted from July 2022 to December 2022. It assessed the efficacy of implementation of various Central and State scholarship schemes implemented by Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Development Department and Minority Welfare Department. Fourteen districts were arranged in alphabetical

order and four⁶ districts were selected randomly using IDEA software. In each selected district, six institutions/ schools/ colleges each for SC, ST and Minority for Pre-Matric and Post-Matric scholarship schemes respectively were selected using Probability Proportional to Size without Replacement (PPSWOR). Accordingly, 144 institutions/ schools/ colleges were selected for test-check. Audit methodology also included beneficiary survey of 1200⁷ students from the 144 selected educational institutions to assess whether the beneficiaries of various scholarship schemes actually derived the intended benefits and whether it helped them in completing their education. Relevant records in Government Secretariat, Directorate of Scheduled Caste Development Department (SCDD), Directorate of Scheduled Tribes Development Department (STDD), Directorate of Minority Welfare, Sub Offices and 144 educational institutions were scrutinised during the course of Audit. The list of test-checked institutions in the four selected districts is given in **Appendix 1.3**. Audit conducted analysis of e-grantz⁸ data (State Government portal in respect of Pre/ Post-Matric scholarship for SC/ ST) obtained from Centre for Development of Imaging Technology (C-DIT), Electronic Benefit Transfer (ebt) data⁹ from State NIC (Pre-Matric scholarship for SC (Central scheme) for Classes IX and X), dcescholarship (State Government portal for Post-Matric scholarship for Minorities) from State National Informatics Centre (NIC) and National Scholarship Portal (NSP) data in respect of Pre/ Post-Matric scholarships for Minorities (Central scheme). Audit also obtained “Sampoorna Software” data from Kerala Infrastructure and Technology for Education (KITE)¹⁰ and HSCAP data¹¹ from Information and Communication Technology of Kerala (ICTAK). The portals meant for processing various scholarships covered in Audit are given in **Appendix 1.4**.

An Entry Conference was held on 14 September 2022 with the Principal Secretary to Government, Minority Welfare Department, Special Secretary to Government, SCST Development Department, Directors of SC Development, ST Development and Minority Welfare (Directorates), Additional Director, DGE and Special officer for scholarships, Collegiate Education during which the Audit objectives, scope, criteria, methodology of Audit including selection of samples were discussed and agreed upon. On conclusion of Audit, Exit Conferences were held with the Principal Secretary, General Education Department on 16 May 2023 and with the Special Secretary SCST Development

⁶ Kollam, Ernakulam, Kozhikode and Wayanad

⁷ SC Pre-Matric (241), SC Post-Matric (200), ST Pre-Matric (154), ST Post-Matric (169), Pre-Matric Minority (219) and Post-Matric Minority (217)

⁸ The e-grantz data was obtained from C-DIT in June 2022, updation thereafter (eg. payment done) is not taken for data analysis. E-grantz was an online centralised system for disbursement of various educational assistance schemes for SC, ST and Other Backward Classes (OBC).

⁹ Electronic Benefit Transfer (ebt) software was obtained from NIC and contained data pertaining to Pre-Matric scholarship for SC students (Central scheme).

¹⁰ Sampoorna software contains information of all students (name, class, academic year, caste etc) studying in Classes I to X in Government/ Aided/ recognised unaided schools (state syllabus) of Kerala. The custodian of Sampoorna software was Director of General Education.

¹¹ HSCAP (Higher Secondary Centralised Allotment Process) contains information of all students (name, class, academic year, caste etc) studying in Classes XI and XII in Government/ Aided schools (State syllabus) of Kerala. The custodian of HSCAP is the Director of Higher Secondary Education.

Department and Director of Collegiate Education on 24 May 2023. The replies furnished by Government of Kerala have been suitably incorporated.

1.6. Acknowledgement

Audit acknowledges the cooperation and assistance extended by the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Development Department, Minority Welfare Department, Higher Education Department and General Education Department, Government of Kerala and all the test-checked institutions in the conduct of the Performance Audit.



SECTION A - Pre and Post-Matric scholarship schemes for Scheduled Caste students

CHAPTER II

SCHOLARSHIP SCHEMES FOR SCHEDULED CASTE STUDENTS - PRE-MATRIC

Planning is essential for assessing the number of potential beneficiaries of the schemes and to ensure timely disbursement of the benefits to them. However, Audit noticed that the SC Development Department did not conduct a survey or study to identify and prepare a list of potential beneficiaries. Ten *per cent* to 12 *per cent* of SC students did not receive Pre-Matric Scholarship for the period 2017-21. During the academic year 2019-20, 379 schools registered in Sampoorna were not registered in e-grantz portal and thereby 3,499 SC students in these schools were excluded from the scheme. Further, in 5437 Aided/ Government/ recognised unaided schools which were registered in e-grantz, 23,138 SC students were excluded from the schemes as they were not registered in e-grantz and in two schools number of SC students in e-grantz was 104 more than that in Sampoorna (52 students in each school). Instances of non-processing of scholarship applications at SCDO/ Directorate level resulting in non-payment of scholarship to beneficiaries, students not receiving scholarship on account of errors in account number, IFS code etc. delay in disbursement of various Pre-Matric scholarships and students availing same scholarship on multiple occasions were also noticed. Though Guidelines envisage giving sufficient publicity for scholarship schemes, Audit noticed that the same was not ensured. A total of ₹3.60 crore remitted by 5,828 SC students of Kendriya Vidyalayas towards enhanced Vidyalaya Vikas Nidhi was not reimbursed to them. Deficiencies were also noticed in the implementation of Sri Ayyankali Memorial Talent Search and Development Scheme. On the monitoring side, it was noticed that there existed no effective mechanism for periodic review of progress of the schemes at State/ Regional level.

2.1. Eligibility for claiming scholarship

The conditions of eligibility for claiming scholarship under Centrally sponsored and State Pre-Matric schemes for SC students were as given in **Table 2.1**.

Table 2.1: Conditions of eligibility for claiming the scholarship

	Centrally sponsored scheme	State schemes
Eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students who belong to Scheduled Caste, whose parents/ guardians' income from all sources does not exceed ₹2.5 lakh per annum. 	Students who belong to Scheduled Caste and without any income limit
For study in	IX and X Classes in all Government schools or in schools recognised by Government or Central/ State Board of Secondary Education	All students who belong to Scheduled Castes studying in Classes I-X in Government/ Aided schools and recognised unaided schools

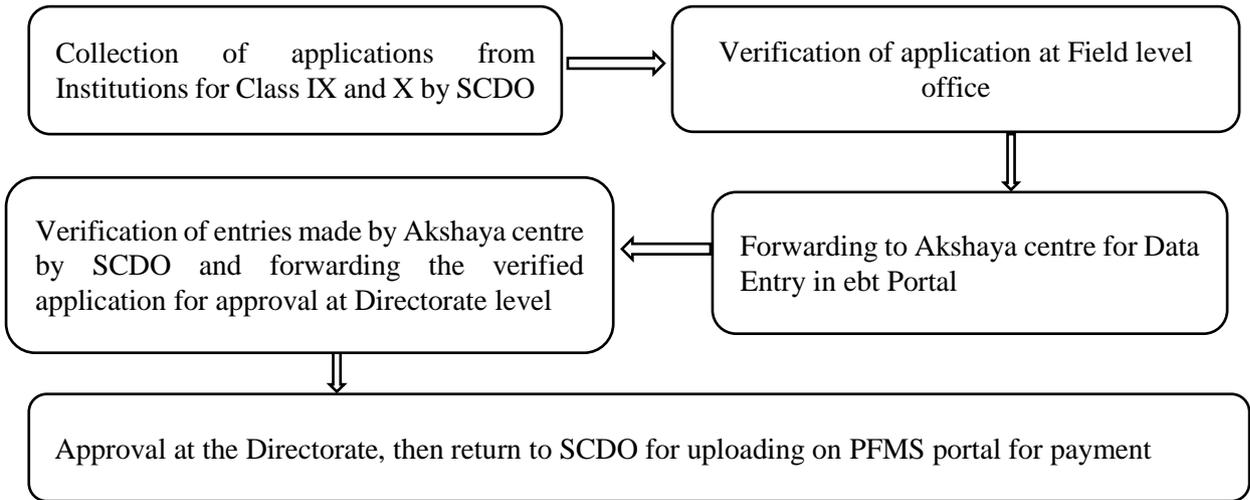
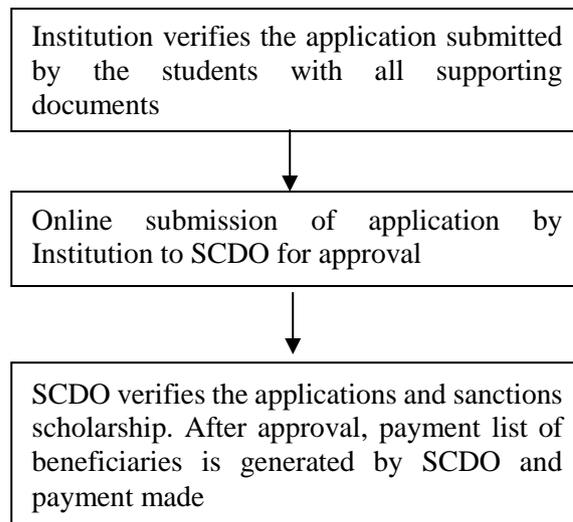
	Centrally sponsored scheme			State schemes	
	Item	Day scholars	Hostellers	Item	Amount
Rate of Scholarship and other grants	Scholarship (₹ per month) (for 10 months)	₹225	₹525	Lumpsum Grant	Upto 2019-20 ₹320 (Std I to IV) ₹630 (Std V to VII) ₹940 (Std VIII to X) From 2020-21 ₹750 (Std I to IV) ₹900 (Std V to VII) ₹1000 (Std VIII to X)
	Books and Adhoc Grant (₹ per annum)	₹750	₹1000	Stipend (monthly)	Upto 2019-20 ₹130 (Std I to IV) ₹160 (Std V to VII) ₹190 (Std VIII to X) From 2020-21 ₹200 for all Classes
				Primary and Secondary Education Aid for Class I to VIII	₹2000

2.2. Procedure/ Process flow

Applications for Pre-Matric scholarship were to be submitted to the Head of the institution/ school, being attended or last attended by the student. The application was to be forwarded by the Head of the institution after scrutiny and with his recommendation to the sanctioning authority i.e., Scheduled Caste Development Officer (SCDO) at respective block/ Municipality/ Corporation level. The SCDO was responsible for checking the eligibility for the scholarship.

In Kerala, the management of Pre-Matric scholarship (Central scheme) for SC students studying in Classes IX and X was done through ebt portal of NIC and Pre-Matric scholarships for SC students (State scheme) studying in Classes I to X were done through e-grantz portal¹² as shown in **Figures 2.1 & 2.2**.

¹² Prior to the academic year 2019-20, management of Pre-Matric scholarship for SC students (State scheme) was done manually, and through e-grantz from 2019-20 onwards.

Figure 2.1: Process flow in ebt portal (Pre-Matric Central scheme)**Figure 2.2: Process flow in e-grantz (Pre-Matric State scheme)**

2.3. Coverage of beneficiaries (Pre-Matric Central)

2.3.1. Non-identification of potential beneficiaries

Planning is essential for assessing the number of potential beneficiaries of the schemes and to ensure timely disbursement of the benefits to the beneficiaries. Planning, in respect of Pre-Matric scholarship schemes for students belonging to SC category involved identification of universe of potential beneficiaries, development of mechanism to cover the potential beneficiaries in the schemes along with mechanism to exclude ineligible applicants, awareness generation about the scheme, etc. Preparation of a universe of potential beneficiaries was required to compare and assess the extent of coverage achieved in a particular year in quantitative terms. Non-conduct of survey or study to identify the

potential beneficiaries by the authorities vested with these tasks in Pre-Matric schemes is detailed below.

2.3.1.1. Pre-Matric scholarships to students belonging to SC category

Audit observed that the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) (2016-19)¹³ in its 15th Report recommended that an effective survey was mandatory to ensure that all the schemes intended to benefit the SC population were successfully implemented. In the Action Taken Report submitted by the Department, it was stated that they had conducted a survey of SC/ ST colonies during 2010-12 and steps were being taken to update the data. Audit observed that during the period 2017-18 to 2021-22, no survey or study was conducted to identify the potential beneficiaries of Pre-Matric scheme and there existed no mechanism for timely coverage of beneficiaries.

Audit also observed that SC promoters were assigned with the task of assisting in the effective implementation of various developmental schemes for SCs. These promoters were selected on the basis of interview conducted by a Committee consisting of District SCDO, Assistant SCDO and subject expert/community social worker. The selected SC promoters are appointed on temporary basis and are entitled to a service period of one year, which can be extended to one more year on the basis of recommendation by SCDO concerned. These promoters were required to compile the basic details with respect to students who were studying / passed out/ failed at various levels of education viz., class X, XII, graduation, post-graduation and professional courses.

The SCDOs in Local Self Government Institutions (LSGIs) were to review the performance of SC promoters every week and the District SCDOs were to review the performance of promoters once in three months and give directions regarding the implementation of the scheme. However, Audit observed that though the potential beneficiaries could have been identified through SC promoters¹⁴, the Department did not effectively utilise their services. Lapses in implementation of the scheme, viz., non-exclusion of ineligible applicants, non-submission of documents by students in a timely manner, lack of awareness regarding the scheme among the students, etc. could have been addressed more effectively, by ensuring active intervention of these promoters.

Also, no Action Plan/ Perspective Plan was prepared for assessing the number of eligible beneficiaries in the State. Due to the absence of list of potential beneficiaries, effective coverage of all eligible beneficiaries under the State and Central schemes could not be ensured. Audit observed that the non-identification and non-conduct of survey or study to identify the potential

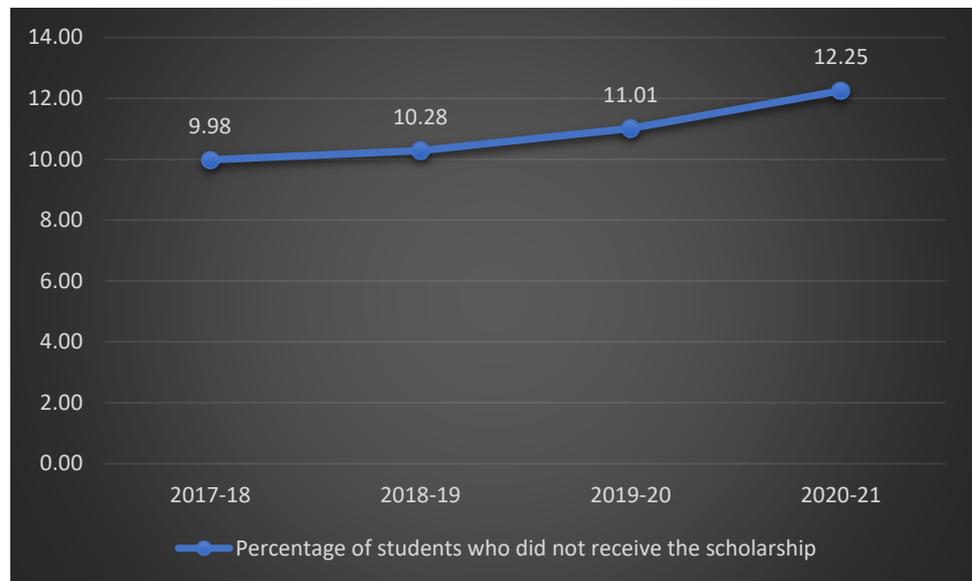
¹³ Subsequent to discussion on Performance Audit on 'Educational Development of Scheduled Castes/ Scheduled Tribes' (Paragraph 3.4) included in the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (Civil) for the year ended 31 March 2007, GoK.

¹⁴ The duties and responsibilities of SC Promoters required them to compile the basic details of all SCs under their jurisdiction in a register and a consolidated data to be maintained by the SCDO which included details on who were studying/ passed out/ failed at various levels of education viz., X, XII, Graduation, Post Graduation and Professional courses.

beneficiaries by the authorities vested with these tasks resulted in the exclusion of eligible students from the schemes.

In order to examine whether all the SC students in Pre-Matric stage in the State benefitted through the scheme, Audit obtained the data of SC students who studied in Pre-Matric Classes during the academic years 2017-21 from Director of General Education (DGE) and compared it with the data on disbursement of lumpsum grant¹⁵ received from the Directorate of Scheduled Caste Development. Audit observed that 10 per cent of SC students against an enrolment of 4,16,717 in 2017-18 and 12 per cent of SC students against an enrolment of 4,12,840 in 2020-21 did not receive Pre-Matric scholarship for the period 2017-21 as shown in **Chart 2.1**.

Chart 2.1: Percentage of SC students who did not receive the Pre-Matric Scholarship (lumpsum grant)



In order to verify whether all SC students (Pre-Matric stage) in Government/ Aided/ recognised unaided schools (Kerala syllabus) in the State received benefits through the scheme, Audit obtained the data of SC students¹⁶ who studied in Pre-Matric Classes during the academic year 2019-20¹⁷ from KITE (Sampoorna software) through Director of General Education (DGE) and compared it with the data available in e-grantz portal regarding disbursement of lumpsum grant. Audit observed that during the academic year 2019-20,

- no student from SC category in 379 schools registered in Sampoorna was registered in e-grantz portal, due to which 3,499 students were excluded from the scheme. Out of 379 schools, 223 schools were

¹⁵ Lumpsum grant was given to all SC students studying in Classes I to X irrespective of family income.

¹⁶ Total SC students in Sampoorna for the Academic Year 2019-20 was 3,83,357.

¹⁷ Academic year 2019-20 was selected for analysis as it was informed by KITE that the data was authenticated/ vetted.

recognised unaided schools, 90 were Aided schools and 66 were Government schools.

- in 5,437¹⁸ Aided/ Government/ recognised unaided schools which were registered in e-grantz portal, 23,138 students were excluded from the scheme as they were not registered in e-grantz. The school authorities stated (May 2023) that the students did not receive scholarship as supporting documents were not produced by students, students were not interested and denied scholarship, even though parents were informed about the scheme, they did not submit bank account and other details for registering students in e-grantz, late registration of schools in e-grantz, technical difficulty in performing registration through e-grantz, etc.
- in two schools, number of SC students in e-grantz was 104 more than that in Sampoorna (52 students more in each school). The authorities of two schools replied (May 2023) that the difference occurred due to inclusion of students who passed Class X in 2018-19, again in Pre-Matric scholarship for the year 2019-20. Based on the reply received from the two schools, Audit analysed e-grantz data in this regard across all the schools for 2019-22 and found that 766 SC students who had completed the Pre-Matric stage in 2018-19 had drawn both Pre-Matric scholarship of Class X and Post-Matric scholarship of Class XI in the same academic year during the period 2019-20 to 2021-22.

Thus, Audit observes that the weak control system in e-grantz resulted in grant of scholarship to ineligible students.

Government replied (June 2023) that while the students submit the scholarship applications through e-grantz, there were chances that some of them may not get Caste certificate from the authorities. Hence, all SC students registered in Sampoorna may not get reflected in e-grantz. The reply is not acceptable as the Department did not effectively utilise the services of SC promoters who were assigned with the duty of assisting the students in obtaining the relevant documents to apply for the scholarship.

2.3.2. Preparation of Annual Demand/ Estimate

SC Directorate furnishes the Annual proposal in the prescribed proforma for Pre-Matric Central scholarship Scheme to GoK for onward transmission to Central Government. The proforma of the scheme includes details of actual expenditure and actual number of beneficiaries of the previous year and physical and financial target for the proposed year.

In Central Pre-Matric scheme, Audit noticed that Annual demand (physical target) for 2017-18 was fixed by adding five *per cent* over and above the actual enrolment in 2016-17 (72,055 numbers). Annual demand for 2018-19 to 2020-21 was fixed uniformly at 76,050 and Annual demand for 2021-22 was

¹⁸ Aided-2,917, Government-2,134, recognised unaided -386

fixed at 74,527 without any reference to the actuals of the previous years. Physical target and achievement during period 2017-22 is shown in **Table 2.2**.

Table 2.2: Coverage of beneficiaries - Target and achievement under Pre-Matric Central scheme during 2017-22

Year	Physical target (estimated number)	Estimated amount (₹ in lakh)	Actual number of applications approved at Directorate (As per NIC portal)	Achievement (number of students benefitted)	Total expenditure (₹ in lakh)	Shortfall in achievement of target beneficiary students (percentage)	Number of Students who did not receive scholarship even after approval by Directorate
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)=(2)-(5)	(8)=(4)-(5)
2017-18	75728	2081.05	61302	59405	1649.46	16323 (21.55)	1897
2018-19	76050	2313.38	53550	42219	1281.81	33831 (44.49)	11331
2019-20	76050	2313.38	54390	51818	1582.27	24232 (31.86)	2572
2020-21	76050	2313.38	57791	52300	1577.13	23750 (31.23)	5491
2021-22	74527	2270.16	28836*	60585	1827.46	13942 (18.71)	-

* Only class X data was available at NIC. Registration of class IX students was done through e-grantz in 2021-22.

(Source: Annual proposal and NIC data)

During the period of Audit viz., 2017-22, the shortage in achievement of physical targets ranged between 18.71 to 44.49 *per cent*. There was wide variation between estimated number of beneficiaries and actual number of applications approved at Directorate each year. This proves that figures of estimated demand projected by the Directorate were unrealistic and not prepared based on reliable data, despite availability of data of students in Sampoorna software maintained by General Education Department. Further, every year, eligible beneficiaries were seen left out and the number was highest in the year 2018-19. The Director, SC Directorate replied (January 2023) that the main reasons for non-receipt of benefits by students were lack of proper technical knowledge of staff in handling ebt / e-grantz portals, and the mismatch in bank account details. However, Audit noticed that though e-grantz and ebt portals were functional since 2009¹⁹ and 2013-14 respectively, the Department failed to impart adequate skills to the staff in using the portals and that institutions did not ensure correctness of details of bank accounts as provided by students, resulting in students not receiving benefits they were eligible to receive. Audit also noticed that out of the 225 SC beneficiaries who responded to the survey, 23 beneficiaries stated that they experienced difficulty in obtaining relevant documents²⁰ required for applying for scholarship.

This also indicated that the services of SC promoters were not effectively utilised to assist the beneficiaries to obtain relevant documents to apply for the scholarship.

¹⁹ Pre-Matric State scheme was incorporated in e-grantz from the Academic Year 2019-20 onwards.

²⁰ Caste certificate and income certificate.

2.3.3. Inadequate publicity to Pre-Matric SC scholarship schemes

According to paragraph number XI of the Guidelines²¹, every year at an appropriate time, the State Government will announce the details of the scheme and invite applications by issuing an advertisement in the leading newspapers of the State and through their respective websites and other media outfits and the expenditure for advertisement shall be incurred from the administrative expenses sanctioned. However, from the details furnished by the Directorate regarding administrative expenses incurred for Pre-Matric scheme during 2019-22²², it was noticed that no expenditure was incurred towards advertising in newspapers and through other media.

During the Exit Conference (May 2023), Special Secretary, SCSTDD assured that separate SNA would be operated for claiming administrative expenses and for its utilisation.

2.4. Planning and financial management

2.4.1. Centrally sponsored Pre -Matric SC scholarship scheme

Central Government provided funds to the States under Pre-Matric scholarship scheme for SC students to meet their demand over and above their committed liability²³ from 2017-18 onwards. The committed liability was the contribution of the State. The funding pattern of the scheme was revised in September 2019 from the concept of committed liability to a fixed sharing pattern of 60:40 between the Centre and State of the total annual demand or notional allocation whichever was lower and this continued till 2019-22. During the period 2017-22, the entire fund for disbursement of scholarship was allotted by State Government through budget in anticipation of reimbursement from Central Government. Central funds were released on reimbursement basis after incurring of expenditure by the States. The direct payment to the beneficiary account was processed and made through ebt portal in 2017-18 (ebt Kerala.nic.in). Processing in ebt portal and payment through PFMS software was implemented from 2018-19 to 2021-22.

The year-wise details of funds released by GoK and reimbursement from Central Government, expenditure incurred etc. are given in **Table 2.3**.

²¹ Guidelines for Centrally sponsored Pre-Matric scholarship scheme for SC students studying in Classes IX and X (19 September 2017).

²² Since the expenditure of the State was below its committed liability, administrative expenses were not due from the Central Government for the years 2017-18 and 2018-19.

²³ Committed Liability of the State/ UT was defined as the highest demand for any of the years of the previous Plan period/ Finance Commission Cycle. The highest demand during the previous Plan period (in 2012-13), ₹19.84 crore, was taken and fixed by Central Government as committed liability for the years 2017-18 and 2018-19.

Table 2.3: Availability of fund for Centrally sponsored Pre-Matric SC scheme implementation*(₹ in crore)*

State release						Central reimbursement		
Year	Demand	State budget allocation and release	Total expenditure	Amount refunded	Closing Balance	OB (unspent balance available)	Central reimbursement and adjustment in further release	Closing balance
2017-18	20.81	20.00	17.58*	2.42	Nil	5.91	--	5.91
2018-19	23.13	22.00	12.82	9.18	Nil	5.91	3.29**	2.62
2019-20	23.13	22.00	15.82	6.18	Nil	2.62	2.81 (2.62 + 0.19)	0.19
2020-21	23.13	18.00	15.77	2.23	Nil	0.19	13.87***	Nil
2021-22	22.70	18.00	18.27	--	Nil	Nil	10.74	Nil

* out of ₹17.58 crore, only ₹16.49 crore was allowed in audited certificate due to deposit in bank account

** adjusted from the unspent balance

*** includes unspent balance of ₹0.19 crore. The reimbursement was ₹2.88 crore in excess which was adjusted against the release during 2021-22 (Firstly, the amount due as Central Assistance for the year was calculated as ₹13.87 crore based on the projected demand of ₹23.13 crore, then recalculated as ₹10.80 crore based on the GoK release of ₹18 crore)

(Source: Annual Demand and fund releasing orders of Central Government)

As the demand for each year was much higher than the actuals, during 2017-21, against ₹82 crore released by GoK, only ₹61.99 crore was utilised leaving unspent balances each year ranging from ₹2.23 crore to ₹9.18 crore. As the expenditure was less than committed liability fixed (₹19.84 crore), there was no Central release in 2017-18 and 2018-19. However, Central Government adjusted an amount of ₹3.29 crore from the unspent balance of ₹5.91 crore available with GoK towards the Central share in 2018-19, taking into account the estimated demand for that year (₹23.13 crore), which resulted in ineligible reimbursement of Central assistance of ₹3.29 crore. During 2019-20, the notional allocation was ₹5.62 crore. Central Government released only ₹2.81 crore (50 per cent) initially. The Department did not claim the second instalment of Central assistance for the year 2019-20. Considering the releases of 2018-19 and 2019-20, State had received ₹48 lakh more than what was eligible as Central assistance and for 2020-22, State had received ₹ four crore more since the Central release was based on the estimated demand/ State release which was higher than the actual expenditure incurred for the period. Though these amounts were to be refunded to Central Government, the State neither refunded the amount nor adjusted the amount in the fund released in subsequent years. Audit also observed that in the above instances, utilisation certificates for the entire Central release were furnished by the State to Central Government.

Government reply (June 2023) was silent on this aspect.

2.4.2. State Pre-Matric SC scholarship scheme

In addition to the Central Pre-Matric scholarship scheme, State Government implemented Pre-Matric scholarship schemes fully funded by the State. The Pre-Matric scheme covered SC students studying in Classes I to X and included components such as lumpsum grant, stipend for vulnerable communities within

SC, and fee reimbursement scheme of unaided schools. In Pre-Matric scheme, on getting allocation from GoK, Directorate distributed the fund among the 14 district offices for onward transmission to beneficiary account. Budget allocation and expenditure incurred for the scheme during the audit period is given in **Table 2.4** below.

Table 2.4: Utilisation of fund for State Pre-Matric SC scholarship scheme
(₹ in crore)

Pre-Matric scholarship scheme (2225-01-277-99-12 (NP))			
Year	Budget allocation (additional authorisation/re-appropriation)	Expenditure as reported by the Directorate	Expenditure as per VLC ²⁴
2017-18	33.00 (+0.83)	33.02	31.24
2018-19	33.00	32.53	32.52
2019-20	33.00 (-4.90)	28.10	28.02
2020-21	33.00 (+20)	34.47	34.41
2021-22	33.00	32.72	32.71

(Source: Expenditure figures from Directorate and VLC data)

It was noticed that for Pre-Matric scheme, ₹33 crore was allotted on an *ad hoc* basis each year in the budget without proposal based on estimated number of beneficiaries. The planning exercise of the Department was deficient as they did not assess the demand for funds under the scheme. Audit observed that GoK transferred funds to district offices as and when required and utilisation certificates indicating the amount utilised with the number of beneficiaries were not submitted by any of the district offices. Also, the coverage of beneficiaries under each component of the schemes was not verified at the Directorate. Joint Director (Education) stated (April 2023) that since the project was implemented through e-grantz portal, the number of beneficiaries and amount could be fetched through the dashboard and the district offices need not submit such details to Directorate. The reply was factually incorrect as the component of fee reimbursement scheme was implemented manually during the entire period of 2017-22 and both lumpsum grant and stipend were implemented manually for the period upto 2017-19. Audit observed that the dashboard displayed only the total number of applications received and approved in respect of all the scholarships implemented through e-grantz. Component-wise financial and physical progress was not available in e-grantz dashboard. Further, the fund allotment order of the Director prescribed that class-wise and gender-wise details of distribution and utilisation of fund shall be reported to the Directorate by district offices as soon as the distribution was completed. Failure of the Department in timely processing and disbursement of scholarship so as to ensure component-wise coverage is detailed in paragraphs 2.5.2, 2.5.4 and 2.5.7 of this Report.

²⁴ Voucher Level Computerisation details obtained from Accountant General (Accounts and Entitlement), Kerala.

2.4.3. Non-reconciliation of expenditure figures Pre-Matric SC State scheme

According to paragraph 74 (1) of Kerala Budget Manual, every Drawing officer should reconcile the monthly Departmental figures of expenditure with the figures booked in the Treasury and Office of the AG (A&E) to detect misclassifications, misappropriations, fraudulent drawal etc. Audit observed that in Pre-Matric scheme, though there was a difference of ₹1.78 crore between the expenditure figures reported by the SC Directorate and that booked by the Office of the AG (A&E) in 2017-18, the Directorate had not reconciled the difference (March 2023).

During the Exit Conference (May 2023), the Special Secretary, SCSTDD assured that a special drive would be initiated to clear such pending issues.

2.4.4. Non-claiming of administrative expenses by the State

The Guidelines of Centrally sponsored SC Pre-Matric scholarship scheme stipulated that 1.5 *per cent* of the total Central expenditure towards scholarship could be utilised on administrative expenditure, monitoring, evaluation etc. It was to be released to States over and above the scholarship amount on the basis of proposals received from them in this regard. Audit observed that GoK did not submit any proposal for claiming the 1.5 *per cent* admissible for Centrally sponsored Pre-Matric SC scholarship scheme during the Audit period. On account of this, State lost ₹46.08 lakh for the period 2017-22 which could have been utilised for monitoring and evaluation including social audit of the schemes.

During the Exit Conference (May 2023), Special Secretary, SCSTDD stated that the Department had recently (March 2023) opened a dedicated SNA for operating administrative expenses and once the new SNA became operational, the administrative expenses would be claimed and utilised.

2.5. Implementation of Pre-Matric SC scholarship schemes

2.5.1. Non-Processing of Pre-Matric SC scholarship applications at Directorate/ SCDO (Central scheme)

Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE) issued the scheme Guidelines for “Centrally sponsored Pre-Matric scholarship for SC students studying in Classes IX and X” applicable from 19 September 2017. GoK had issued detailed Guidelines regarding the roles and responsibilities of SC promoters in July 2010. As per the Guidelines, it was the duty of the promoters to ensure that the SC students were receiving Pre-Matric scholarship in time. As per order dated 22 September 2017 of the Director of Scheduled Caste Development Department (SCDD), it was the duty of the Assistant District Development Officers for Scheduled Castes to implement Pre-Matric scholarship, Ayyankali scholarship, Central scholarship schemes, etc.

On analysing the data relating²⁵ to the period 2017-22 in the ebt portal, it was noticed that 186 applications were pending at the Directorate and 10 applications were pending with the SCDOs in the selected districts as shown in **Table 2.5**.

Table 2.5: Central Pre-Matric scholarship scheme – Applications pending with SCDO/ Directorate

District	Pending with SCDO		Pending at Directorate	
	No. of applications	Amount involved (₹)	No of applications	Amount involved (₹)
Ernakulam	Nil	Nil	37	111000
Kollam	Nil	Nil	61	168420
Kozhikode	Nil	Nil	88	267250
Wayanad	10	27300	0	0
Total	10	27300	186	546670

(Source: ebt Portal data furnished by NIC)

Pending applications indicated that the officers concerned had not taken the responsibility to process the applications of students in time, which resulted in the non-receipt of scholarship amounting to ₹5.74 lakh by 196 students of Classes IX and X. Out of 196 applications, 64 are pending since 2017, 111 applications are pending since 2018 and 21 applications are pending since 2019.

Government replied (June 2023) that manual applications received by SCDOs were entered into the portal, verified and forwarded to the Directorate for approval and payment. There was no provision in the portal to close the applications year-wise or to block delayed applications received from SCDOs. Hence, erroneous entries and applications received after the academic year for which payment could not be made were displayed as pending at Directorate level. Further, it was also due to non-imparting of proper training to the officials concerned.

The beneficiary survey revealed that nine out of 232 students who had applied for scholarship had not received SC Pre-Matric scholarship. The Government reply confirms the Audit finding that the beneficiaries did not receive scholarship.

2.5.2. Non-Processing of applications of Pre-Matric SC scholarship State scheme by SCDO

Lumpsum grant for Classes I to X, stipend for SC students (vulnerable communities²⁶ (Classes I to X)) and primary and secondary education aid (Classes I to VIII) were the different category of Pre-Matric scholarships granted by GoK to SC students studying in Classes I to X. The process flow of submission, approval and disbursement of Pre-Matric scholarship is detailed in **Figure 2.2** of this Chapter.

On analysis of the e-grantz data²⁷ pertaining to the State scheme in the selected districts for the period 2019-20 to 2021-22, Audit noticed that 526 applications

²⁵ Total applications received in the selected districts was 76,933.

²⁶ Vedan, Arunthathiyar/ Chakkiliyan, Kalladi and Nayadi are the vulnerable communities within SC.

²⁷ Total number of applications was 4,76,760.

were pending with SCDOs without any payment after approval by the institutions (June 2022) as shown in **Table 2.6**.

Table 2.6: Applications pending with SCDOs

District	Scheme	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	Total
Ernakulam	Lumpsum grant (I -X)	23	0	24	47
	Primary and secondary education aid (I-VIII)	10	4	65	79
	Stipend for vulnerable communities (I-X)	14	1	2	17
Kollam	Lumpsum grant (I-X)	6	16	77	99
	Primary and secondary education aid (I-VIII)	2	17	71	90
	Stipend for vulnerable communities (I-X)	33	3	17	53
Kozhikode	Lumpsum grant (I-X)	17	5	10	32
	Primary and secondary education aid (I-VIII)	17	13	12	42
	Stipend for vulnerable communities (I-X)	29	3	2	34
Wayanad	Lumpsum grant (I-X)	8	1	1	10
	Primary and secondary education aid (I-VIII)	6	2	1	9
	Stipend for vulnerable communities (I-X)	8	0	6	14
Total		173	65	288	526

(Source: e-grantz portal data furnished by C-DIT)

Government stated (June 2023) that applications approved by SCDOs were processed automatically to generate the payment list of beneficiaries in e-grantz and some of the applications remained unprocessed due to technical issues in e-grantz. The reply is not acceptable since it was the responsibility of the SCDOs to ensure that all applications were processed and any technical issues noticed should have been taken up with C-DIT for rectification.

2.5.3. Non-receipt of scholarship on account of invalid bank account

Based on orders dated 16 April 2016 of the Finance Department, GoK, all payments from the treasuries of the State were made directly to the beneficiaries' bank accounts, by integrating all treasuries of the State with the e-kuber portal of RBI. Thus, all scholarship payments were made through the treasuries and paid directly to the beneficiaries through the e-kuber portal of RBI and no payment of scholarship was being made through an intermediary. Situations arise wherein the payments to beneficiary's bank account get rejected due to various reasons such as invalid account number, IFS code, freezing of the account etc. When the payment gets rejected from the e-kuber system, RBI intimates the position to Treasury system from where an automatic alert message gets sent to the mobile number of the Drawing and Disbursing Officer (DDO) at the Directorate and the beneficiary concerned. It is the duty of the DDO at the Directorate to collect the required information from the beneficiaries and make corrections in their accounts and re-initiate the payment within 30 days. No fresh submission of bills was required in this case, as the bill had been passed earlier. At the end of every month, the e-treasury officer shall credit back the undisbursed amount pending for a period of more than 30 days, to Government account.

On verifying the e-grantz data for the period 2019-22 in the selected districts, it was revealed that as regards Pre-Matric (State) scholarship scheme, 2,360

transactions²⁸ involving an amount of ₹30.24 lakh were rejected due to invalid bank account, IFS code etc. and returned to Government account during the period 2019-22 due to inaction on the part of DDO at the Directorate.

While verifying the above issue in the selected institutions, the institutions informed Audit that there was no provision in the software to confirm whether the amount was actually credited to the student's account. In cases where the portal displayed "Payment Initiated," actual credit of scholarship could not be ascertained by the institution as the portal did not display the credit information.

Government replied (June 2023) that it was not practically possible for the Department to watch every payment as the number of transactions was in lakhs. It was also informed that a new provision was included in e-grantz for sending an auto-generated message to alert students regarding rejection of payment and verification of their bank account details.

The reply was silent on the scope of payment of scholarship to the students whose claims were already rejected.

Audit observed that since institutions functioned as the linking factor between the students and the Department, there has to be a provision in e-grantz for institutions to know the status of the applications approved by them.

2.5.4. Delay in disbursement of various components of Pre-Matric scholarship- State scheme

One of the objectives of implementing the e-grantz portal was to avoid delay in disbursement of scholarship. However, on verification of e-grantz data for the period 2019-22, it was seen that there was delay of more than one year from the due date of payment in the disbursement of scholarship in 393 transactions²⁹ as shown in **Table 2.7**.

Table 2.7: Delay in disbursement of components of scholarship

District	Academic year	Scheme	Delay of more than one year and less than two years	
			No. of Transactions	Amount (in ₹)
Ernakulam	2019-20	Primary and Secondary education aid	28	56000
		Lumpsum Grant (LSG)	19	11970
	2020-21	Primary and Secondary education aid	187	374000
		LSG	4	3600
Kollam	2019-20	Stipend	5	950
Kozhikode	2019-20	Primary and Secondary education aid	87	174000
		LSG	27	15150
		Stipend	35	4970
Wayanad	2019-20	LSG	1	630
Total			393	641270

(Source: Data from e-grantz portal furnished by C-DIT)

²⁸ Total transactions in the selected districts were 6,00,509.

²⁹ Total transactions for the period 2019-21 in selected districts were 4,01,447.

The survey also reiterated the findings of Audit as 86 out of 192 beneficiaries who responded to the question regarding delay in receipt of scholarship stated that they had not received the scholarship at the beginning of the year.

Government replied (June 2023) that State Pre-Matric scholarship was disbursed from SCDOs' offices and not from the Directorate. Applications received by SCDOs were disposed of in the same year itself, and in the case of late submission of applications by the institutions to the SCDOs, permission was given to all SCDOs to draw the amount payable to such students by obtaining an official request from the institution head.

The delay in disbursement of various components despite having a provision for processing late applications pointed towards the laxity of SCDOs and lack of monitoring at higher level. Audit observed that the Directorate needs to take proactive steps to ensure that applications are processed by the institutions/ SCDOs in time.

2.5.5. Non-reimbursement of Vidyalaya Vikas Nidhi amounting to ₹3.60 crore to students of Kendriya Vidyalayas - State Scheme

GoK accorded sanction (October 2003) for the reimbursement of Vidyalaya Vikas Nidhi (VVN) to SC students studying in Kendriya Vidyalayas (KV), if the same was collected by the institutions from the students. The Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS) enhanced (March 2013) the rate of VVN from ₹240/ ₹300³⁰ to ₹500 with effect from 01 April 2013 which was challenged by the Kendriya Vidyalaya Parents Association in the High Court of Kerala. On dismissal of the petition by the High Court (June 2014), the Association filed a Special Leave to Appeal in the Supreme Court of India against the order of the High Court, which was dismissed by the Supreme Court of India (26 November 2019).

Based on the above judgement, KVS Regional office, Ernakulam issued (December 2019) direction to the Principals of KVs to collect VVN at the enhanced rate from the fourth quarter of 2019-20. It was also directed to collect the differential fees for the period 2013-14 to 2018-19. Accordingly, the KVs collected VVN at enhanced rate from the students and the Principals preferred claims to the Scheduled Caste Development Officers (SCDOs) concerned for reimbursement. The SCDOs took up the matter with the District Development Officers for Scheduled Castes (DDOs for SC). The DDOs for SC sought (between January 2021 and November 2021) clarification from the Director on the admissibility of reimbursement of VVN at enhanced rate and the matter was referred to Government (February 2021). Though Government directed (October 2021) to furnish the details of additional liability that would arise due to reimbursement of VVN at enhanced rate, the Director called for the details from the DDOs for SC only in May 2022. Audit noticed that only 10³¹ out of the 14 DDOs in the State furnished the details of additional amount required.

³⁰ ₹240 for all streams except Science stream from I to XII and ₹300 for XI and XII Science stream.

³¹ Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, Pathanamthitta, Alappuzha, Kottayam, Idukki, Palakkad, Kozhikode, Wayanad, Kasaragod.

Five³² DDOs furnished the details of amount required for payment of arrears. However, the Director did not take action to collect the details from the remaining DDOs and the SCDOs continued to reimburse VVN at the pre-revised rates.

Thus, due to lack of timely and effective action at the Directorate and by the DDOs, ₹3.60 crore³³ remitted by 5,828 students towards enhanced VVN amount was not reimbursed (May 2023).

Government replied (June 2023) that the recommendation of the Directorate to sanction VVN at the rates fixed from time to time was under consideration.

2.5.6. Dual/ ineligible payment of scholarship

2.5.6.1. Students availing same scholarship on multiple occasions – Centrally sponsored Pre-Matric SC scholarship (Classes IX and X)

According to Paragraph 4 (vi) of the scheme Guidelines issued by MoSJE, Central Government (applicable from 19 September 2017), one of the conditions of eligibility for the scheme was that scholarship for students studying in any class could be availed for one year only. If the student had to repeat a class, he/ she would not get scholarship for that class for a second (or subsequent) year. Thus, the maximum number of times, the student could avail scholarship under this scheme was two i.e., in IX and X.

However, on verification of ebt data obtained from NIC relating to the period 2017-22, using Aadhaar number as unique field it was seen that in the selected districts, approval and payment was made to 182 students³⁴ more than once in an academic year. The details of such payment noticed in the selected districts are given in **Table 2.8** below.

Table 2.8: Approval and payment made to students more than once in a year

District	No. of Applicants	Excess Amount (₹)
Ernakulam	74	222000
Kollam	74	222000
Kozhikode	33	99000
Wayanad	1	3000
Total	182	546000

(Source: ebt portal data furnished by NIC)

Audit verified the above issue of payment of scholarship on multiple occasions, found in two selected institutions in one district³⁵. It was informed by the institutions that details were not available in the institutions as they did not have access to the ebt portal.

³² Ernakulam, Thrissur, Palakkad, Malappuram and Kannur.

³³ relating to five districts.

³⁴ Total applications received in four districts was 76,933.

³⁵ Wayanad district

NIC informed Audit (January 2023) that options were available in the ebt portal to identify duplication at the levels of Akshaya Centre (data entry), SCDO (forwarding the application) and Joint Director (approval).

Government replied (June 2023) that only verification of Student's name, caste, class, whether fresh/ renewal etc. were done at Directorate and approval given. Approval by verification of hardcopy of application at Directorate was not practical. Moreover, training was not imparted by NIC for the identification of duplicate applications.

Audit observed that even though there was a provision in the portal to display the duplicate applications, SCDO/ Directorate did not make use of it, which resulted in excess payment of scholarship to the tune of ₹5.46 lakh in the selected districts during the period of Audit. Further, the Department failed to impart proper training to the officials regarding functionalities of the portal through NIC.

2.5.7. Exclusions from the scholarship schemes

2.5.7.1. Non-Payment of Lumpsum Grant, Primary and Secondary Education Aid and Stipend to Vulnerable Communities- Pre-Matric, State scheme

GoK implemented a new scheme (August 2014) "*Primary Education Aid*" for SC students studying in Classes 1 to IV in Government/ Aided schools to procure study materials, school bags, uniforms etc. The above benefit was extended to students studying in Classes V to VIII in October 2017. The amount fixed for the above scheme was ₹2000 per annum.

In addition to the above scheme, SC students studying in Classes I to X in Government/ Aided schools were eligible to receive lumpsum grant at varying rates depending on the class in which the student was studying.

The above schemes were incorporated in e-grantz portal from the Academic Year 2019-20 onwards. It was observed that for the period 2019-22, in the selected districts, 714 students who received primary and secondary education aid did not receive lumpsum grant. Similarly, 7,229 students who received lumpsum grant did not receive primary and secondary education aid. Audit observed that some of the SC students received only one benefit (despite eligibility for both components), indicating that the system in place was not adequate to ensure that all the components of the scholarship were received by all eligible student beneficiaries.

Audit verified non-payment of lumpsum grant and primary and secondary education aid in the selected institutions. As regards non-receipt of the components by eligible students, the institutions stated as follows;

- Non-receipt of Primary and Secondary Education Aid³⁶ - One hundred and six students did not submit the application in time, 31 applications

³⁶ 150 cases were seen in 17 selected institutions in three selected districts (Ernakulam, Kozhikode, Wayanad).

could not be forwarded due to lack of awareness of clerical staff, six applications were currently being processed at the Directorate and transfer certificate (TC) was issued to three students. Non-receipt in one case each was attributed to (a) student's name not found in the school records, (b) receipt of scholarship from the previous school (c) student not able to come to school due to covid (d) seen as approved in the portal.

- Non-receipt of Lumpsum Grant³⁷ - two applications were not sanctioned by the SC Department. Besides, non-receipt in one case each was due to (a) lack of awareness of clerical staff (b) TC issued/certificate not attached/ long absence (c) application forwarded to the next level (d) no specific reason stated (e) student not able to come to school due to covid (f) application could not be processed (g) other reasons.

Similarly, Audit verified whether a student who received lumpsum grant in Class X had received the same in Class IX. Examination of e-grantz data for the period 2019-22 in the selected districts revealed that, 510 students who received lumpsum grant in Class X did not receive lumpsum grant when studying in Class IX.

On verifying the above issue in the selected institutions³⁸, the institutions stated that payment to 17 students was made in cash and not through e-grantz. Other reasons seen were as follows: nine students did not submit the documents, non-submission of application in time by the institutions in respect of eight students, invalid bank account details in respect of eight students, the names of three students were not in school records and payment was made to the students after June 2022 (after the dump data was provided to Audit) in three cases. One case each of non-receipt was on account of change in caste and refusal by the student. Audit also verified whether the students who received stipend in Class X, had received stipend in Class IX. Examination of e-grantz data for the period 2019-22 in the selected districts revealed that, 249 students who received stipend in Class X did not receive stipend when studying in Class IX. No cases were noticed in the selected institutions.

Government replied (June 2023) that for each student, the institutions had to choose the three schemes *viz.*, lumpsum grant, education aid and monthly stipend separately. However, due to failure of the institutions to adhere to the instructions issued in this regard, the students did not receive the benefit of some of the schemes. It was also stated that SCDOs of the Department were not in a position to ascertain whether the institutions had applied for all the schemes for each student.

Reply is not acceptable as scrutiny at different levels was envisaged to ensure that all eligible students receive all benefits.

³⁷ Nine cases were seen in nine selected institutions in two selected districts (Kozhikode, Wayanad).

³⁸ 50 cases were seen in 19 selected institutions in three selected districts (Kozhikode, Wayanad, Kollam)

2.5.7.2. Stipend for Pre-Matric SC students- State Scheme

As per Government order (25 June 2016), stipend was permissible only to Pre-Matric SC students studying in Classes I to X and belonging to vulnerable communities. The monthly stipend was ₹200 payable for a period of 10 months during an academic year. The above scheme was incorporated in e-grantz portal from the academic year 2019-20 onwards.

On verifying the e-grantz portal, it was seen that in the selected districts for the period 2019-22, 2,818 students belonging to vulnerable communities did not receive stipend as detailed in **Table 2.9** below.

Table 2.9: Stipend not given to vulnerable communities

District	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	Total
Ernakulam	195	144	125	464
Kollam	472	329	263	1064
Kozhikode	674	236	220	1130
Wayanad	58	64	38	160
Total	1399	773	646	2818

(Source: Data from e-grantz)

On verifying the above issue in the selected institutions³⁹, it was stated by the institutions that in 86 instances, applications of students were not submitted in time by institution due to lack of awareness of the scheme/ delay in communication from the SC Department, and in 54 cases, due to lack of awareness of clerical staff. Eight applications were not forwarded due to non-submission of documents by the student. Further, in seven cases, payment was made to the students after June 2022 (after the dump data was provided to Audit), TC was issued in seven cases, approval was granted, but no payment made in two cases. In three cases, payment was in process at the Directorate. Non-payment in two cases was due to technical error.

Government replied (June 2023) that the responsibility to forward the Pre-Matric scholarship claims was entrusted with the institutional authorities. Necessary directions were given to the educational institutions by SC Department and through DGE for eliminating such lapses. Training sessions were also arranged for the school authorities.

Audit observed that despite imparting training and issuing directions, eligible SC students belonging to vulnerable communities did not receive stipend which pointed towards the ineffectiveness of training and non-adherence to directions.

2.6. Sri Ayyankali Memorial Talent Search and Development scheme (State scheme)

Sri Ayyankali Memorial Talent Search and Development scheme, a State scheme envisaged for identifying brilliant students (of Classes IV and VII) of SC community who were unable to excel educationally due to their poor financial background, to improve their educational level. As per the Guidelines (17 April 2009), students of Government/ Aided schools with annual family

³⁹ 169 cases were verified in 26 selected institutions in the four selected districts.

income less than ₹ one lakh who secure A plus and A grades in classes IV and VII were to be selected from a list prepared at the district level by ensuring 50 *per cent* representation of girl students and 10 *per cent* reservation for vulnerable communities. Further, students whose parents' annual income was less than ₹12,000 were to be given ₹2,000 for purchasing furniture for studying purpose and ₹100 for 10 months for providing nutritious food.

During 2017-18, the scheme covered 1,600 SC students in the State. This was enhanced to 2,200 students in 2018-19. The amount of scholarship was ₹4,500 per annum. Audit noticed the following deficiencies in the implementation of the scheme:

2.6.1. Fund utilisation – lack of monitoring at Directorate

During the period 2017-22, the Director sanctioned ₹1,493.06 lakh to the 14 DDOs for SC for implementing the scheme. The fund releasing orders required that the DDOs for SC should furnish copy of Utilisation Certificate (UC) to the Directorate. But only eight DDOs for SC in 2017-18 and one DDO for SC in 2019-20 furnished the same for a total amount of ₹165.29 lakh. Audit noticed that even though UCs for only 11 *per cent* of the sanctioned funds were submitted by the DDOs for SC and none of the DDOs for SC furnished UCs in 2018-19, 2020-21 and 2021-22, the Director did not insist for the same, thereby failing to ensure that the funds were utilised for the purpose for which they were sanctioned.

Audit examined the utilisation of funds in the selected districts and noticed that while the funds for new scholarships were utilised fully by the DDOs of selected districts, funds earmarked for renewal and other components such as furniture, nutrition, etc. remained unutilised, which was 15 *per cent* of the total funds allotted. Monitoring of the utilisation of funds would have enabled the Directorate to take timely action to improve the utilisation.

2.6.2. Low number of renewals and absence of provision to cater to the increased demand for fresh scholarship

During the period 2017-22, the targeted number of renewals⁴⁰ in the four selected districts was 5,858. However, only 4,187 students became eligible for renewal of scholarship, which was only 71 *per cent* of the target. The DDOs for SC attributed lower number of renewals to non-maintaining of grades by the students. At the same time, as against the target of 2,697 fresh scholarships, there were 5,100 eligible applicants in the four selected districts. Due to the large number of eligible applicants, DDOs for SC had to resort to elimination by imposing additional criteria, drawing lots, etc. Requests for additional fund, utilisation of unspent funds under renewal for sanctioning fresh scholarship, etc. made by the DDOs were not acceded to by the Director. Thus, due to lack of permission to utilise excess funds available under the head for renewal, the increased demand for fresh scholarship from eligible students could not be met.

⁴⁰ A student who maintains the grade (secured by him at the time of selection) in the subsequent year will be eligible for renewal of scholarship during that year.

2.6.3. Non-fulfilment of percentage of students belonging to vulnerable categories

As per the Scheme Guidelines, 10 per cent of the beneficiaries in a district were to be from vulnerable categories viz., Vedan, Nayadi, Chakkiliyan/ Arunthathiyar and Kalladi. There was shortfall in selection of students belonging to the above categories in two of the selected districts as detailed in **Table 2.10**.

Table 2.10: Coverage of students belonging to vulnerable categories

District	Year	No. of students from the above categories	No. of fresh scholarships available for the year	No. of beneficiaries to be selected (10 per cent of total beneficiaries)	No. of beneficiaries selected	Shortfall
Wayanad	2017-18	1	35	3	Nil	1
	2018-19	3	50	5	1	2
	2019-20	2	50	5	1	1
Kollam	2021-22	57	160	16	11	5

(Source: Data compiled from Departmental orders)

During the Exit Conference (May 2023), GoK agreed to the audit findings and stated that measures would be taken to ensure enrolment of more number of students belonging to vulnerable categories.

2.7. Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation is an integral part of any scheme as it helps the Administrative Department to identify the problems in implementation so that it can take necessary corrective steps to rectify the same. With regard to Pre-Matric SC scholarship schemes, the State Government⁴¹ had not issued any Guidelines/ circulars/ directions till date to the implementing agencies⁴² to ensure that the data for processing in e-grantz were genuine, complete, not previously processed, properly authorised and were entered accurately without duplication. Similarly, as the Central scholarship schemes were also being implemented by the State Government, Scheme Guidelines envisaged the State Government to ensure effective monitoring and evaluation of the schemes. Audit also examined whether effective control mechanisms and robust IT systems existed for monitoring and evaluation. The observations are summarised as follows:

There existed no effective mechanism for periodic review of progress of the scheme at the State and Regional level. As a result, instances of delayed payments and non-payment could not be identified and prevented by the Department. Full coverage of beneficiaries could also not be ensured.

The Central Guidelines suggest that social audits were to be conducted by the social audit units⁴³ of the State Governments, by meeting the cost from the

⁴¹ SCSTD Department, GoK

⁴² SCSTD Department, C-DIT, respective State level Directorates, District level offices, educational institutions etc.

⁴³ As per Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act

administrative cost of the scheme. The Department had not taken measures to conduct social audit⁴⁴ till date, and consequently the Department failed to identify the issues faced by the stakeholders of which, the majority comprised of marginalised/ under privileged groups.

Audit scrutiny revealed instances of double payment, rejection of payment, non-processing of scholarship applications at institutional levels, etc. The above instances pointed to the lack of a robust IT enabled monitoring system.

The Central Guidelines suggests that the State Government shall set up a robust monitoring mechanism for monitoring the academic progress of the students enrolled in the scheme, which was not implemented till date (May 2023).

The Central Guidelines further insisted that to ensure proper accountability, physical verifications at various levels *viz.*, block/ district/ state levels shall be done by the State Government covering at least 10 *per cent* of the institutions/ students, chosen randomly through an algorithm. All private institutions offering courses at the level of graduation or above shall, however, be mandatorily inspected annually. However, Audit noticed that no target was set by the Departments and no inspections were conducted.

During the Exit Conference (May 2023), the Special Secretary, SCSTDD agreed to the audit observations on monitoring and evaluation and stated that most of the issues pointed out by Audit regarding lack of monitoring would be sorted out on enforcement of the revised Government order (January 2023).

2.7.1. Non-obtaining of Audit certificate - SC scholarships - Central Pre-Matric schemes

As per the fund releasing orders of Central Government for the Centrally sponsored Pre-Matric scholarship scheme to SC students, the State Government should get its accounts of the grant-in-aid audited by the Government Auditor⁴⁵ and shall furnish the Utilisation Certificate (UC) in the prescribed format (GFR 12C). It was observed that audit of expenditure of Centrally sponsored Pre-Matric SC scholarship scheme was conducted for the year 2017-18 only. An amount of ₹1.09 crore was disallowed in audit stating that it was ‘deposited in bank account’. The Director stated (January 2023) that there was no Central release during 2018-19, and hence no Audit certificate was obtained. It was also stated that Audit certificate would be obtained from the Accountant General for the period 2020-21. During the Exit Conference (May 2023), the Special Secretary, SCSTDD agreed to the audit findings regarding non-obtaining of Audit certificate and assured that a special drive would be initiated to solve the issue.

⁴⁴ It is a way of measuring, understanding, reporting, improving an organisation’s social and ethical performance. It helps to narrow gaps between vision/ goal and reality, between efficiency and effectiveness.

⁴⁵ Office of the Principal Accountant General (Audit-I), Kerala.

CHAPTER III

SCHOLARSHIP SCHEMES FOR SCHEDULED CASTE STUDENTS - POST-MATRIC

There was wide variation between estimated number of beneficiaries and actual number of beneficiaries which was indicative of inadequate planning. Survey or study to identify the potential beneficiaries as recommended earlier by Public Accounts Committee was not carried out. State lost ₹96.65 lakh for the period 2017-22 due to non-claiming of administrative expenses from Central Government. Divyang (differently abled) SC students were not given the admissible 10 *per cent* additional amount of Scholarship. Non-processing of scholarship application at institution/directorate level resulted in non-payment of scholarship to beneficiaries. There was delay up to five years in payment of scholarship, though e-grantz portal was envisaged with the intention of reducing delay in disbursement of scholarships. Students did not receive scholarship on account of errors in account number, IFS code, closure of bank account etc. Audit noticed anomalies in the implementation of scholarship for overseas studies as well as in implementation of book bank scheme. Eligible students studying in institutions of national importance did not receive scholarship due to delayed action by the Department. Instances of multiple payment of scholarship to students were noticed. Instances of short payment of private accommodation charges to students and non-payment of tuition fee, exam fee and special fee to the institutions by the students were also noticed. Reconciliation of expenditure figures was not carried out by the Department in respect of State funded SC Post-Matric scholarship. There existed no effective mechanism for periodic review of progress of the schemes at the State and Regional level.

3.1. Eligibility for claiming scholarship

The conditions of eligibility for claiming scholarship under Centrally sponsored Post-Matric schemes for SC students for 2017-20 are given in **Table 3.1**.

Table 3.1: Conditions of eligibility for claiming Centrally sponsored Post-Matric scholarship for SC students (2017-2020)

Eligibility	Students who belong to Scheduled Castes pursuing intermediate/ graduate/ post graduate, doctoral courses etc, whose parents/ guardians' income from all sources does not exceed ₹2.5 lakh per annum.
For study in	Institutions of national importance, State/Central Universities, Autonomous colleges recognised by UGC and Universities/ Colleges recognised under Section 2(f) and 12(b) of UGC Act, Deemed Universities, Private Universities recognised by State/ Centre with 'A' Level or equivalent accreditation by NAAC/ NBA, Private professional institutions affiliated to recognised Central/ State Universities and covered by Fee Fixation Committee, recognised schools/ colleges for Class XI and XII, Diploma granting institutions, Vocational Training institutes affiliated to NCVT, Institutions affiliated/ approved by MCI/ AICTE etc.

Scholarship Components ⁴⁶	Item		Day Scholars	Hostellers	
	Maintenance Allowance	Group I – Engineering/ Medical/ CA/ ICWA/ M.Phil/ PhD/ LLM etc.		₹550	₹1200
		Group II – Professional courses leading to Degree (BFS, other para-medical courses, etc.)		₹530	₹820
		Group III – Graduate and Post Graduate courses		₹300	₹570
		Group IV – All post matriculation, XI and XII, ITI, three year Diploma courses in Polytechnics		₹230	₹380
	Tuition Fee	All compulsory fees payable by the scholar to the University/ Board			
	Study Tour	Maximum of ₹1,600 per annum			
	Thesis Typing/ Printing charges	Maximum of ₹1,600			
Book Bank	Varies from ₹2,400 to ₹7,500 ;One set for two students				

The conditions of eligibility for claiming scholarship under Centrally sponsored Post-Matric schemes for SC students for 2020-22 are given in **Table 3.2**.

Table 3.2: Conditions of eligibility for claiming Centrally sponsored Post-Matric scholarship for SC students (2020-21 onwards)

Eligibility	Students who belong to Scheduled Castes pursuing intermediate/ graduate/ post graduate courses/ doctoral courses etc. whose parents/ guardians' income from all sources does not exceed ₹2.50 lakh per annum.			
For study in	Institutions of national importance, State/ Central University, Autonomous colleges recognised by UGC and Universities/ Colleges recognised under Section 2(f) of UGC Act, Deemed Universities, all Private Universities recognised by State/ Centre, Private professional institutions affiliated to recognised Central/ State Universities and covered by Fee Fixation Committee, recognised schools/ colleges for Class XI and XII, Diploma granting institutions, Vocational Training institutes affiliated to NCVT, Institutions affiliated/ approved by NMC/ AICTE etc.			
Scholarship Components ⁴⁷	Item		Day Scholars	Hostellers
	Academic Allowance	Group I – Degree and Post Graduate level professional courses.	₹7000	₹13500
		Group II – Other Professional courses leading to Degree, Diploma, Certificate	₹6500	₹9500
		Group III – Graduate and Post Graduate courses not covered under Group I and II	₹3000	₹6000
		Group IV – All post matriculation (Post class X level) non-degree courses	₹2500	₹4000
Tuition Fee	All compulsory non-refundable fees including tuition fee			

⁴⁶ Since it is a committed liability, State provides all fees (tuition fee, exam fee, special fee), Lumpsum Grant, Stipend, etc. in lieu of the components provided by Central Government.

⁴⁷ Shared between Central and State in the ratio 60:40 from 2020-21 onwards.

The conditions of eligibility for claiming scholarship under State Post-Matric schemes for SC students are given in **Table 3.3** below.

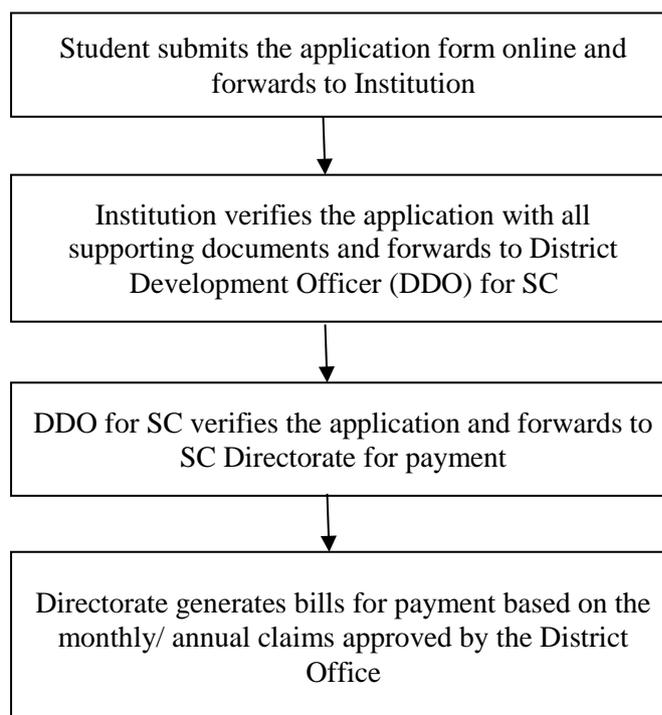
Table 3.3: Conditions of eligibility for claiming State Post-Matric scholarship for SC students

Eligibility	All students who belong to Scheduled Castes without any income limit.	
For study in	Plus 1 and 2, VHSE, KV, Sainik School, Technical Schools, GV Raja School, Polytechnic colleges, IHRD schools, Diploma/ Degree/ PG/ Professional courses approved by Universities, ITI/ ITC Matric trade, courses offered by Government regulated Co-operative institutions, Central/ State Government institutions, LBS, C-DIT, CDAC, ER&DC, unaided courses of University/ aided institutions (rates fixed by University/ Government), M Phil, M Tech, M Lit, Off-campus courses of State Universities/ IGNOU, Evening courses, Distance Education courses, etc.	
Scholarship Components	Item	Amount (in ₹)
	State provides all components provided in Post-Matric scholarship for SC (Central Scheme) for students whose parents' annual income is more than ₹2.5 lakh. In addition, State Government provides Lumpsum Grant, Actual Boarding and Lodging Charges (ABLC), Private Accommodation Charges, Pocket Money (for Hostellers), Fellowship, Stipend (for Day Scholars) up to 2020) and Additional State Allowance (from 2021 onwards) for all SC students without any income limit.	<u>Lumpsum Grant (depending upon the course)</u> up to 2019-20 – ₹440 to ₹3130 from 2020-21 – ₹500 to ₹3800 <u>ABLC: actuals/ ₹4500 whichever was less.</u> <u>Private Accommodation: ₹1500 per month (10 months)</u> <u>Pocket Money: ₹200 per month</u> <u>Stipend: up to 2019-20 – ₹500 to ₹750</u> <u>Additional State Allowance: Given in lieu of Stipend from 2020-21</u>

3.2. Procedure/ Process flow

Applications were to be submitted online by the student in the beginning of the academic year. Following the online application, original copies were to be submitted to the District Scheduled Caste Development Officer through the head of the institution. Management of Post-Matric scholarship (Central and State schemes) for SC students was done through e-grantz. However, the State scholarship scheme for SC students studying abroad was managed manually. The e-grantz was a centralised system for disbursement of scholarship/benefits of schemes for all Pre/Post-Matric students of SC, ST and OBC community in the State. The process flow in e-grantz portal was as shown in **Figure 3.1**.

**Figure 3.1: Process flow in e-grantz
Post-Matric (State and Central)**



3.3. Coverage of beneficiaries (Post-Matric Central)

3.3.1. Preparation of annual demand/ estimate

SC Directorate furnishes the annual proposal in the prescribed proforma for Post-Matric Central scholarship schemes to GoK for onward transmission to Central Government. The forwarded proforma included details of actual expenditure and actual number of beneficiaries in the previous year and physical and financial target for the proposed year. Audit noticed that in Post-Matric schemes the physical target for a particular year was fixed by adding 10 *per cent* over and above the actuals of the previous year, as shown in **Table 3.4**.

Table 3.4: Coverage of beneficiaries - Target and achievement under Post-Matric Central scheme for 2017-22

Year	Physical target (estimated number)	Estimated amount (₹ in lakh)	Number of beneficiaries who were granted scholarship	Total expenditure (₹ in lakh)
2017-18*	-	-	130113	12110.47
2018-19	143123	13321.35	122092	12643.78
2019-20	134297	13908.16	119749	12157.07
2020-21	131712	13390.80	117329	11980.00
2021-22	Data not furnished			

*Annual proposal for the year 2017-18 was not made available to Audit.
(Source: Annual proposals)

Every year there was significant variation between estimated number of beneficiaries and actual number of beneficiaries which indicates that figures of

estimated demand projected by the Directorate were unrealistic and not based on reliable data.

Government reply (June 2023) was silent on the issue.

3.3.2. Non-identification of potential beneficiaries

Public Accounts Committee (PAC) (2016-19) in its 15th Report recommended that an effective survey was mandatory to ensure that all the schemes intended to benefit the SC population were successfully implemented. In the Action Taken Report submitted by the Department, it was stated that they had conducted a survey of SC/ ST colonies during 2010-12 and steps were being taken to update the data. However, for the period 2017-18 to 2021-22, no survey or study was conducted to identify the potential beneficiaries of Post-Matric scholarship schemes.

3.3.2.1. Coverage in Post-Matric (Central and State schemes) scholarship to SC students

In order to verify whether all SC students (Post-Matric stage) in Government/ Aided Higher Secondary schools (Kerala Syllabus) in the State were benefitted through the scheme, Audit obtained the data of SC students who studied in these schools during the academic years 2018-22 from Information and Communication Technology of Kerala (HSCAP software) through Higher Secondary Directorate and compared⁴⁸ it with the data available in e-grantz portal. Audit observed that during the academic years 2018-21, 19,379 students in 1352 Aided/ Government Higher Secondary Schools were not given scholarship. Audit verified 729 of these applications in 35 selected institutions. The institutions stated reasons such as students not producing sufficient documents (216), not applying/ not availing scholarship (303), lack of attendance (27), discontinued studies (42), applied and availed scholarship (after June 2022) (25), website issues (10), file closed/not traceable (62), long absence (seven), obtained TC (21), not a student of institution (six), other reasons (six) and students from other States (four).

The total number of beneficiaries in Higher Education Sector could not be ascertained as HSCAP software did not contain the details of students studying in Higher Secondary Schools in other Boards of Education like CBSE, ICSE etc. and the information on Higher Education Sector obtained from the survey conducted by Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Central Government included the students who secured admission through Management quota, who were not eligible for Post-Matric scholarship.

Audit noticed that the SC Department did not prepare or maintain year-wise database of eligible SC students who cleared matriculation examination though the details were available with General Education Department. The Director replied (June 2023) that there were chances that students may not get SC

⁴⁸ Email ID field of institution was common for both softwares.

certificate from the authorities concerned (Tahsildar) which was required for applying for the scholarship and hence the variation.

The reply is not tenable as it was the duty of SC Department (through its SC promoters) to ensure that all assistance was provided to SC students to obtain necessary documents to avail the scholarship. Further, despite availability of data of SC students in HSCAP (Kerala syllabus), SC Department failed to utilise it. During the survey conducted by Audit, 81 out of 200 beneficiaries informed Audit that they had experienced difficulty in obtaining relevant documents required for applying for SC Post-Matric scholarship.

3.3.3. Inadequate publicity of SC scholarship schemes

Similar to Pre-Matric scholarship scheme, Post-Matric scholarship scheme Guidelines⁴⁹ also envisaged the State Government to publicise the scheme and invite applications by issuing an advertisement in the leading newspapers of the State and through their respective websites and other media and the expenditure for advertisement was to be incurred from the administrative expenses sanctioned. From the details furnished by the Directorate regarding administrative expenses incurred for Post-Matric scheme during 2017-22, it was noticed that no expenditure was incurred by the Directorate towards advertising in newspapers or through other media.

During the Exit Conference (May 2023), Special Secretary, SCSTDD assured that separate SNA would be operated for claiming administrative expenses and for its utilisation.

3.4. Planning and financial management

3.4.1. Centrally sponsored Post-Matric SC scholarship scheme

In the case of Post-Matric SC Scholarship Scheme (Central), as the annual income limit adopted by the Central Government for the eligibility of scholarship was ₹2.50 lakh, the State Government provided additional assistance to provide scholarship to the students, without any limit on annual income. However, separate accounts for Central scheme and Additional State assistance were not maintained by GoK.

GoK received 100 *per cent* Central assistance for meeting the total expenditure under the scheme, over and above State's committed liability. Central Government fixed ₹144.47 crore as committed liability for the State for the period 2017-18 to 2019-20. The funding pattern was revised (December 2020) with sharing pattern of 60:40 between Centre and States. The Central share for the period 2020-21 was 60 *per cent* of the average demand for the last three years (2017-18 to 2019-20). Starting from 2021-22, the Central share is being released directly to the bank accounts of the beneficiaries after ensuring that the State Government had released its share.

⁴⁹ Centrally Sponsored Post-Matric scholarship scheme for students belonging to SC category effective from 01 July 2010.

GoK submits Annual proposals for reimbursement of Central Government share in the prescribed proforma each year to Central Government, with the expenditure figures as per Central Government regulations for those students who fall under the income criteria of the Centrally Sponsored Scheme. Figures of utilisation of State grant and Central Government grant as derived from Central Government's fund releasing orders and the annual proposal forwarded by GoK are illustrated in **Table 3.5**.

Table 3.5: Utilisation of State grant and Central grant during the period 2017-22
(₹ in crore)

Year	Actual expenditure (State + Central assistance) and additional State	Committed liability of the State	Total expenditure as per Centrally sponsored scheme	Reimbursement received from Central Government
2017-18	216.92	144.47	121.10	Nil
2018-19	205.73	144.47	126.44	Nil
2019-20	208.60	144.47	121.57	9.80
2020-21	334.64	Nil	119.80	86.85
2021-22	394.52	Nil	161.29	*

* During 2021-22, Central Government grant was disbursed directly to the bank account of the beneficiary students through PFMS

(Source: Annual demand and fund releasing orders of Central Government)

As the total expenditure reported to Central Government was below the committed liability of the State during 2017-18 to 2019-20, there was no central release due for the period 2017-18 to 2019-20. However, Central Government released ₹9.80 crore as central assistance for the year 2019-20. Central Government also released ₹86.85 crore in 2020-21, considering 60 per cent of the average demand for the previous three years as ₹144.76 crore, as against ₹123.03 crore as reported in the annual proposals. Thus, State had received ₹13.03 crore (difference between 60 per cent of ₹144.76 crore and 60 per cent of ₹123.03 crore) more in the year 2020-21. It was seen that the excess amount was not refunded to the Central Government.

3.4.2. State Post-Matric SC scholarship scheme

In addition to the Central Post-Matric scholarship schemes, State Government implemented State Post-Matric scholarship schemes fully funded by the State. Scholarships for SC students who were studying for Post-Matric courses in Parallel Colleges, Kerala State Rutronix courses and vocational engineering/non-engineering courses were covered under the scheme. On getting allocation from GoK, Directorate disburses the fund among the 14 district offices for onward transmission to beneficiary account. Budget allocation and expenditure incurred for the scheme during the Audit period are given in **Table 3.6**.

Table 3.6: Utilisation of fund for State Post-Matric SC scholarship scheme
(₹ in crore)

Post-Matric scholarship Scheme (2225-01-277-98-12 (NP))				
Year	Budget allocation (re-appropriation in bracket)	Expenditure as reported by the Directorate	Expenditure as per VLC	
2017-18	18.00 (-0.83)	4.77	4.68	
2018-19	18.00 (-3.98)	14.02	13.96	
2019-20	18.00 (-3.08)	14.92	14.84	
2020-21	18.00	15.27	15.22	
2021-22	18.00	14.18	14.13	

(Source: Statement of expenditure furnished by the Department and VLC data from AG (A&E))

It was noticed that for Post-Matric schemes ₹18 crore was allotted on an *ad hoc* basis each year in the budget without proposal, based on estimated number of beneficiaries. The planning exercise of the Department was deficient as they did not assess the demand for funds under the scheme. The Department failed to fully utilise the fund received from GoK during 2017-22. Only 26 per cent of the allocation was utilised in 2017-18. Audit observed that GoK transferred funds to district offices as and when required and utilisation certificates indicating the amount utilised with number of beneficiaries were not submitted by any of the district offices. Also, the coverage of beneficiaries under each component of the scheme was not verifiable at the Directorate, which indicated absence of monitoring of the scheme by the Department. Joint Director (Education) replied (April 2023) that the progress report was submitted by the district offices in time. However, the reply is not acceptable as the expenditure was not consolidated head of account-wise at the Directorate. Further, the progress of scholarship disbursement for Kerala State Rutronix courses and for vocational engineering/ non-engineering courses was not reported to the Directorate by district offices and in the case of scholarship disbursement for parallel college students, the compilation was carried out from the year 2019-20 onwards.

No remarks were offered by the Government to this audit observation.

3.4.3. Non-claiming of administrative expenses by the State

The Guidelines of Centrally sponsored SC Post-Matric scholarship scheme stipulated that one per cent of the total Central expenditure could be utilised on administrative expenditure, monitoring, evaluation etc. It was to be released to States over and above the scholarship amount, on the basis of proposals received from them in this regard. Audit observed that GoK did not submit any proposal for claiming one per cent admissible for Centrally sponsored Post-Matric scholarship scheme during the Audit period. On account of this, during the period 2017-22, the State lost ₹96.65 lakh in the case of Post-Matric SC scholarship schemes which could have been utilised for monitoring and evaluation including social audit of the schemes.

During the Exit Conference (May 2023), Special Secretary, SCSTDD stated that the Department had recently (March 2023) opened a dedicated SNA for operating administrative expenses and once the new SNA became operational, the administrative expenses would be claimed and utilised.

3.4.4. Non-reconciliation of expenditure figures (Post-Matric SC State Scheme)

According to paragraph 74 (1) of Kerala Budget Manual, every Drawing Officer should reconcile the monthly Departmental figures of expenditure with the figures booked in the Treasury and Office of the AG (A&E) to detect misclassifications, misappropriations, fraudulent drawal etc. Audit observed that as regards Post-Matric schemes, the SC Directorate had not reconciled the Departmental expenditure with the expenditure figures booked by the Office of the AG (A&E), Kerala during the period 2017-22. There were discrepancies between the expenditure figures reported by the Directorate and those booked by the Office of the AG (A&E) in all the years during 2017-22, ranging from ₹ five lakh to ₹ eight lakh.

During the Exit Conference (May 2023), Special Secretary, SCSTDD assured that a special drive would be initiated to clear such pending issues.

3.5. Implementation of Post-Matric SC scholarship schemes

3.5.1. Non-Processing of Post-Matric scholarship applications of SC students at institutions – Central and State schemes

The management of Post-Matric scholarship scheme for SC students was done through the e-grantz portal. On verification of the applications of SC students in the selected districts, it was noticed that processing of 461 applications⁵⁰ (2018-19 to 2020-21) at Post-Matric level was pending (June 2022) with educational institutions without any action, as detailed in **Table 3.7**.

Table 3.7: Post-Matric scholarship applications pending at institutions in the selected districts

District	2018-19*	2019-20	2020-21**	Total
Ernakulam	41	60	62	163
Kollam	54	41	46	141
Kozhikode	25	43	34	102
Wayanad	17	16	22	55
Total	137	160	164	461

(Source: e-grantz portal data furnished by C-DIT)

* Data for 2017-18 was not available for verification, as e-grantz 3.0 was rolled out in the Academic Year 2018-19. Earlier versions of e-grantz were not available to cross-check the authenticity.

** Central Government issued (March 2021) fresh Guidelines for the implementation of the scheme in 2020-25, which required software updation and integration with NSP/ PFMS. Hence, there was natural delay in implementing the scheme in the new module in 2021-22. Hence, data for 2021-22 was not considered for analysis.

On verifying the above issue at the selected institutions⁵¹, the institutions stated that 19 applications were not approved for reasons such as students discontinued studies, shortage of attendance, TC issued, not eligible for the allowances, 17 cases due to non-submission of documents by the students, four cases due to

⁵⁰ Total number of students who applied for the period 2018-21, in the selected districts was 1,32,686.

⁵¹ 47 cases were seen in 22 selected institutions in four selected districts.

clerical error, three cases due to non-submission of application by the student on time, two cases due to delay in commencement of course and one case each, of student not in the institution and no specific reason stated.

Government replied (June 2023) that it was the combined responsibility of the student and the institution to register and forward the application in time to enable the Department for timely release of scholarships. However, many students did not submit their online applications in time and in some cases, delay was due to the negligence on the part of the institutions in forwarding the applications submitted by the students. Further, some claims could not be forwarded due to the technical issues in the portal which were not resolved by C-DIT. It was informed that necessary instructions were issued for disposing all the applications in a timely manner.

The reply is not acceptable as once a student submits the application through e-grantz, the Directorate had the provision to monitor the pendency at the institutional level through e-grantz portal. Further, Government should have monitored the pendency in processing of applications at each level and should have evolved a mechanism to ensure that all the eligible SC students were benefitted through the scheme.

3.5.2. Non-Processing of Post-Matric SC scholarship applications at the Directorate - Central and State Schemes

On verification of e-grantz data, it was seen that 785 Post-Matric scholarship applications relating to the period 2018-21 in the selected districts were pending (June 2022) at the Directorate without any payment, after approval by the institution and district office as detailed in **Table 3.8**.

Table 3.8: Scholarship applications pending at the Directorate

District	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	Total
Ernakulam	124	92	110	326
Kollam	62	83	167	312
Kozhikode	19	46	72	137
Wayanad	1	5	4	10
Total	206	226	353	785

(Source: e-grantz portal data furnished by C-DIT)

Government stated (June 2023), that all pending applications upto 2020-21 were closed now by giving ample time to the institutions. It was further stated that all applications received at the Directorate for payment were processed, but the status of some of the claims were being still shown as “not processed” due to technical error and C-DIT has been addressed to rectify the error. Post Government reply, Audit re-examined the issue and noticed that claims were still being shown as “not processed” and the beneficiaries were not provided scholarship.

3.5.3. Delay in disbursement of various components of Post-Matric SC scholarship - Central and State schemes

An important task of SCDD was the timely disbursement of educational assistance by way of payment of fees, boarding charges to institutions, lumpsum grant and monthly payments to students. One of the objectives of implementing e-grantz software was to avoid delay in disbursement of scholarship. However, on verification of e-grantz data in the selected districts, it was observed that there was delay ranging from one to five years (from the due date of disbursement) in the disbursement of various components of scholarship to the students. The number of cases in which there was delay in disbursement of various components of scholarship (June 2022) was as follows - one to two years in 79070 cases, two to three years in 9006 cases, three to four years in 729 cases and four to five years in one case. The details are given in **Appendix 3.1**.

During beneficiary survey, 195 out of 316 SC students stated that they had not received Pre and Post-Matric scholarship at the beginning of the academic year.

Further, components like Pocket Money, Private Accommodation charges (for post-matric scholarship), etc. are intended for daily expenses and boarding charges for students staying in private hostels. Delay in disbursement of these components of the scholarship necessitates the students to identify alternate sources to pay hostel fees, which is against the objectives of the scheme.

Article 46 of Part IV Directive Principles of State Policy of the Constitution enjoins upon the States to promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of people, in particular, of SCs and STs. In Kerala, SCs, STs and Minorities constituted a prominent 55.52 per cent of the total population. The scholarship schemes are operated by Central Government/State Government with the objective of realising enrolment, arresting dropout rates during education and facilitating financial aid to students in completing their education. Defective implementation of the scheme is depriving the SC students of the benefits aimed at promoting their educational and economic interests as laid down in the Constitution.

Government replied (June 2023) that payment was effected at the Directorate after the claims entered by the students or forwarded by the institutions were approved and forwarded by the district offices. The claims pertaining to previous years were also honoured from the current year's budget provision, giving priority to current year's claims. Further, the delay might have been due to temporary banning of fund allotment by way of ceiling imposed by the budget wing and treasury restrictions.

Thus, Audit observed that the purpose of providing scholarship in time was defeated and one of the main objectives of implementing e-grantz software was also not achieved.

3.5.4. Non-receipt of scholarship on account of invalid bank account

The detailed procedure to be followed when payment gets rejected by e-kuber portal of RBI is given in paragraph 2.5.3 of this Report. On verifying the

e-grantz data relating to SC Post-Matric (Central and State) scholarship schemes in the selected districts, Audit noticed that 7438 transactions⁵² involving an amount of ₹43.14 lakh were rejected due to invalid bank account/ IFS code and returned to Government account during the period 2018-21 due to inaction on the part of Drawing and Disbursing Officer at the Directorate.

While verifying the above issue in the selected institutions, the institutions informed that there was no provision in the software to confirm whether the amount was actually credited to the student's account. In cases where the portal displayed "Payment Initiated," actual credit of scholarship could not be ascertained by the institutions as the portal did not display the credit information.

Government replied (June 2023) that it was practically not possible for the Department to watch every payment as the number of transactions was in lakhs. It was also informed that there is an auto generated SMS from e-grantz portal, initialised to alert the students for verification of their profile in case of rejection of the scholarship amount by the bank.

The reply was silent on the scope of payment of scholarship to the students whose claims were already rejected.

Audit observed that since institutions functioned as the linking factor between the students and the Department, there has to be a provision in e-grantz for the institutions to know the status of applications approved by them.

3.5.5. Discrepancies noticed in the implementation of scholarship for overseas studies - State scheme

GoK provides high priority to extend financial assistance to the students belonging to SC categories for pursuing their higher studies abroad. Accordingly, GoK formulated a detailed Guidelines (October 2017) for hassle free and transparent scheme implementation.

The scholarship for overseas studies was a merit-cum-means scholarship for higher studies outside India. It was envisaged as a means to help talented and meritorious students to pursue higher studies abroad, which would allow them access to a broader area of knowledge and widen the scope of their activities.

In order to be eligible for availing the benefits of the scheme, the student was to be a resident of Kerala, who had scored 55 *per cent* marks in the qualifying graduate examination and was below 35 years of age on the date of application.

Based on the annual family income of the student and his/ her parents, three slabs were fixed as shown in **Table 3.9**.

⁵² Total transactions for the period 2018-21 was 12,28,595

Table 3.9: Three slabs based on annual family income

Annual family income from all sources	Expenses covered under the scheme
upto ₹12 lakh	Full scholarship to meet all the expenses certified by the authorities concerned including accommodation and living expenses and air travel expenses in economy class
Between ₹12 lakh and ₹20 lakh	Actual expenses incurred for tuition fee certified by the authorities concerned, visa charges, air fare admissible, medical insurance premium plus 50 per cent of accommodation and living expenses
Above ₹20 lakh	Eligible only for actual tuition fee certified by the authorities concerned

(Source: GO dated 04 October 2017 issued by SCSTDD)

The courses covered under the scheme were Postgraduate degree, Postgraduate diploma considered equivalent to a Postgraduate degree, MPhil and equivalents, Ph.D and Post-Doctoral programmes from any of the following streams as shown in **Table 3.10**.

Table 3.10: Category of courses covered under the scheme

Category	Areas/ Subjects
Category A	Pure Science, Management and Business Administration, Engineering, Medicine, Agricultural Science, Applied Science, Computer Science and Information Technology, Language of the host country
Category B (courses which are not available in India)	Social Science and Humanities, Commerce, Arts, Fine Arts, Music and allied subjects, Law

(Source: GO dated 04 October 2017 issued by SCSTDD)

GoK revised the Guidelines (March 2019)⁵³ and the total grant to a student was limited to ₹25 lakh, which could be paid in lump on requisition from student.

The application of the student with the requisite documents was to be verified by the Director, SCDD and if found in order, an intimation was to be given to the student regarding the provisional sanction of the scholarship.

During the period 2017-22, GoK expended ₹24.20 crore and provided scholarship to 157 SC students in the State.

Audit examined the records of the scheme pertaining to the years 2017-18 to 2021-22 and audit scrutiny revealed the following:

- As per the scheme Guidelines, the scholarship was to be limited to the courses in Universities or other institutions of higher learning which were listed among the first 500 ranks as per Times Higher Education World University rankings⁵⁴. Audit observed that three students studying in Universities⁵⁵ not fulfilling the above criteria were granted scholarships amounting to ₹53.40 lakh.

⁵³ Prior to March 2019, the scholarship was granted without any limit subject to the conditions specified in the Guidelines.

⁵⁴ The latest available rank list in the year of submission of application was to be considered.

⁵⁵ University of Greenwich (rank between 600 to 800 during 2021), University of Northampton, United Kingdom (was not included in the rank list).

- Even though the Guidelines specified that courses falling under Category 'B' should not be available in India, Audit observed that the Director, SCDD sanctioned scholarship worth ₹79.11 lakh to five students who had selected courses⁵⁶ that were available in India.
- The Scheme Guidelines envisaged that the second instalment or subsequent instalments were to be sanctioned only on receipt of progress report of the student's performance. However, test-check of details of 50 students who were granted second instalment revealed that only three students had submitted the academic progress report.
- In the absence of monitoring of the academic progress of the students financed by Government, the Department could not ensure that the students had successfully completed the studies for which they were provided scholarship.
- Though provision was made in e-grantz 3.0 software for implementing the scheme through digital mode, the Department had not initiated action in this regard. In the absence of a database, monitoring and evaluation of the financial and physical aspects of the scheme was difficult.

Government agreed to the Audit findings and stated (June 2023) that Department was planning a comprehensive revamping of the scheme, wherein it was proposed to select Overseas Development and Employment Promotion Consultants (ODEPC)⁵⁷ as a consultant. Further, it was also stated that through the revamping of the scheme, the Department hoped to eliminate all the deficiencies pointed out by Audit.

3.5.6. Deficiencies in implementing Book Bank scheme for Post-Matric SC students - Central scheme

The book bank scheme, a 100 *per cent* Centrally assisted scheme, aimed to set up book banks in all recognised Medical, Engineering, Agriculture, Law and Veterinary degree colleges and institutions imparting Chartered Accountancy, MBA and similar Management courses and Polytechnics where SC students received Post-Matric scholarship under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS). As per the scheme Guidelines issued by MoSJE, Central Government in 2010 and in 2018, prescribed textbooks for the entire course were to be provided to SC students. The books were to be supplied to SC students in instalments depending on the course, semester structure etc. Central assistance for purchase of books for different courses is given in **Table 3.11**.

⁵⁶ MSc Psychology, MA Social policy, Master of Laboratory Medicine, MA creative writing poetry, M.Sc Marketing.

⁵⁷ ODEPC is a Government of Kerala enterprise.

Table 3.11: Course-wise details of cost of books and sharing criteria

Course	Cost of books and sharing criteria
Degree courses in Medical and Engineering	₹7500 per one set for two students
Degree courses in Veterinary	₹5000 per one set for two students
Degree courses in Agriculture	₹4500 per one set for two students
Polytechnic	₹2400 per one set for two students
For all PG courses in above subjects, Law, MBA, Chartered Accountancy, Bio science	₹5000 per one set for one student

(Source: Guideline for the implementation of book bank scheme)

Directorate of Scheduled Caste Development, GoK was the Nodal office for implementing the scheme for eligible SC beneficiaries in the State. Audit observed the following deficiencies in implementation of the scheme.

3.5.6.1. Coverage of beneficiaries

Coverage of beneficiaries under the scheme during the Audit period was as given in **Table 3.12**.

Table 3.12: Details of funds available and coverage of beneficiaries

Year	Amount allotted for purchase of books (₹)	Eligible beneficiaries as per e-grantz data	Number of beneficiaries covered (percentage)	Shortage in coverage
2017-18	6340800	-	1919	-
2018-19	6780200	2766	2206 (79.75)	560
2019-20	7210700	2784	1495 (53.70)	1289
2020-21	4000000	2737	1343 (49.07)	1394
2021-22	4000000	2835	1824 (64.34)	1011

(Source: e-grantz data and beneficiary details furnished by the Department)

On allotment of fund from GoK, Directorate disburses the funds among the district offices and district offices disburse the funds to the institutions, considering the number of newly admitted SC students (first year) for the prescribed course. The scheme did not cover all the eligible SC students in the State. Comparison of number of eligible SC students in e-grantz with that of the SC students covered under book bank scheme for the period from 2018-19 to 2021-22 revealed that the coverage of beneficiaries was in the range of 49.07 per cent to 79.75 per cent.

In all the four selected districts, it was found that many institutions⁵⁸ were not covered under the scheme despite availability of funds (**Appendix 3.2**). The Director, SCDD replied (March 2023) that books and almirahs were purchased at institutional level. So, funds were allotted to institutions after district level verification of list of eligible students furnished by them. Audit observed that since the number of beneficiaries of scholarship was available in the e-grantz portal and the number of students covered under the book bank scheme was low,

⁵⁸ In Kozhikode district, out of 10 institutions, six, nine and seven number of institutions were not covered in 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22 respectively. In Wayanad district, out of six institutions, two, two and one institutions were not covered in 2018-19, 2019-20 and 2021-22 respectively. In Ernakulam district, out of 16 institutions, five, five, 12 and 13 institutions were not covered in 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22 respectively. In Kollam district, out of eight institutions, two, four and four institutions were not covered in 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22 respectively.

the Department should have followed up with the institutions and ensured that maximum number of students received the benefit of the scheme.

3.5.6.2. Delay in allotment of fund and purchase of books

For the successful implementation of the scheme and achievement of its objectives, the books were to be made available to the eligible students at the beginning of the academic year. However, there was delay ranging from three months to 13 months at every stage, from allotment to district offices from the Directorate to the release of the same to the eligible institutions. Assistance under the scheme was disbursed to institutions during the end of the academic year (February to March). From the scrutiny of invoices kept at district offices, it was noticed that the purchase of books was completed only during the next academic year and in two cases, time taken for purchasing the books ranged from two to three years, defeating the very purpose of the scheme. Director replied (March 2023) that the delay was on the part of the institutions, which were required to submit the list of students. The reply that institutions were responsible for delay is not tenable as Audit noticed that there was also delay on the part of the Directorate in releasing funds to district offices.

3.5.6.3. Non-formation of expert group

The State Government was to constitute expert groups consisting of members from selected colleges/ educational institutions of different regions to decide the adequate number of text books in a set required for each course. Audit observed that the Directorate did not constitute such an expert group in the State for the period 2017-22. Under the scheme, prescribed text books were to be provided to SC students covering their entire course period. In the selected districts, Audit found that Heads of the institutions did not purchase the books in sets as per the requirement of the eligible student for the entire course. The books purchased were kept in the library for reference only and were not issued to the eligible students during their course period. Director, SCDD, replied (December 2022) that books purchased under the scheme were kept in the custody of the institution and distributed for reference only. Audit observed that the fund releasing orders of the Director stipulated for purchase of reference books which was a deviation from the scheme Guidelines.

The above instances clearly bring out the laxity on the part of authorities in adhering to Central Government guidelines in implementation of book bank scheme, which resulted in denial of prescribed study material for use by students.

Government stated (June 2023), that the funds were released to the institutions for purchasing books after verifying their claims at the District level. The delay in implementation as pointed out by Audit would be examined and remedial measures taken by imposing timeline for fund utilisation. District offices would be alerted to strictly monitor the progress of implementation of book bank scheme.

3.5.7. Dual/ ineligible payment of scholarship

3.5.7.1. Multiple Payment of components of Post-Matric scholarship-Central and State schemes

The different components of Post-Matric scholarships (Central and State) given to SC students are detailed in **Tables 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3.**

As a recurring process, the Principals of the educational institutions should ensure that the current month's attendance statement of the student, actual boarding and lodging charges (ABLC) of the current month and any other additional fee like examination fee, tuition fee etc. which were payable for the succeeding months were entered in e-grantz without fail within the fifth working day of the succeeding month for claims in respect of stipend, academic allowances, pocket money etc. which required sufficient attendance for each month (75 per cent every month). The DDO shall verify the claims from the educational institutions (monthly fund statement) and sanction the same subject to eligibility. The Directorate approves and the Superintendent/ Uploader at the Directorate generates the bill using the SBI Internet Banking Module/ e-treasury for crediting of funds to the student's account.

On verifying the Bill Status module of e-grantz portal, audit noticed that in Post-Matric scholarship for SC students, 460 transactions involving an amount of ₹3.69 lakh were made in excess by multiple payment during the period 2018-19. Multiple payment varied from two to 31 transactions per student. Details are given in **Appendix 3.3.**

Government replied (June 2023) that from 2018-19, payments were being made through treasury integration system and the software was designed with a provision to curtail duplication of payments by using Aadhaar authentication and checking of course period to prevent generation of claims for same period of course. It was informed that necessary instructions would be given to recover the excess amount paid.

Though Government claimed that the software had the provision to curtail duplication of payments, instances of multiple payments brought out in this paragraph point to the ineffectiveness of process control in e-grantz software, which needs to be rectified.

3.5.7.2. Irregular payment of both ABLC and Private Accommodation charges to same students-Post-Matric State scheme

SC students studying in Government/ Aided/ Private institutions and staying in private hostels due to non-availability of accommodation in the institutional hostels were eligible for Private Accommodation charges and students occupying hostels of the educational institutions they were studying in, were eligible for ABLC. Thus, a hosteller was eligible for either ABLC (maximum of ₹4500 per month) or private accommodation charges (₹1500 per month).

On verification of e-grantz data in the selected districts for the period 2018-19 to 2021-22, it was seen that in 120 transactions, claims for both ABLC and Private Accommodation charges were generated for the same student during the

year 2018-19. Since the data did not contain details as to whether the student was eligible for ABLC or Private Accommodation charges, Audit calculated the excess amount by assuming that the students were eligible for ABLC. Audit noticed that the failure of the input control in e-grantz software resulted in generation of ABLC and Private Accommodation charges to the same student and excess payment of at least ₹1.75 lakh as shown in **Table 3.13**.

Table 3.13: Details of transactions wherein both ABLC and Private Accommodation charges were paid

District	Number of transactions	Excess amount paid (₹)
Ernakulam	10	15000
Kollam	5	7500
Kozhikode	45	67200
Wayanad	60	85440
Total	120	175140

(Source: e-grantz data)

On verifying the above issue at the selected institutions⁵⁹, it was admitted by an institution that in 13 transactions, both ABLC and Private Accommodation charges were granted (in the same month) to the same student and that the institution came to know about the issue only when Audit pointed out the same.

Government replied (June 2023) that student may have changed accommodation status from Private Accommodation to institutional hostel or *vice-versa* during the period. Based on the change in the status, necessary changes were made in the portal to enable payment in the revised status, but the data relating to payment made based on the earlier status remained unchanged in the portal. It was also stated that directions had been issued to students to decide on their status of accommodation, course details etc. before applying for scholarship and that changes would be permitted only during renewal. Further, instructions would be given to C-DIT for verification of payments based on which directions would be given to students to refund the excess amount.

Audit observed that payment of both ABLC and Private Accommodation charges to the same student was possible due to the deficiencies in process control in e-grantz and could be rectified only if necessary modifications were made in e-grantz.

3.5.7.3. Irregular payment of both ABLC and Stipend to the same student- Post-Matric State scheme

As per Handbook of Scheduled Caste Development Department (December 1991), monthly stipend (for meeting travel expenses) was given to Post-Matric students who were day scholars. Pocket money (to meet the cost of soaps, hair cutting and washing charges) were given to boarders (hostellers) in the Government/ Institutional hostel. Both stipend and pocket money were fixed by

⁵⁹ 13 cases were seen in one selected institution in one selected district (Wayanad).

the Government from time to time. In addition, hostellers were paid actual boarding and lodging charges (ABLC).

Thus, from the above, it can be seen that students who were entitled to get stipend were not entitled to pocket money or ABLC and *vice-versa*.

However, on verification of data in e-grantz pertaining to the selected districts for the period 2018-19 to 2021-22, in respect of Post-Matric scholarship scheme for SC students, it was seen that claims were generated by the institutions for ABLC and stipend in 293 transactions. Since details to ascertain whether the beneficiaries were entitled to ABLC or stipend were not available in the portal, ABLC being the higher amount, Audit quantified the excess amount paid based on the stipend provided in these 293 transactions. It was seen that the failure of process control in e-grantz resulted in excess payment of at least ₹2.08 lakh in the selected districts during the period 2018-19 to 2021-22 as shown in **Table 3.14**.

Table 3.14: Details of Payment of ABLC and Stipend to students

District	2018-19		2019-20		2020-21		Total	
	No. of transactions	Amount (₹)	No. of transactions	Amount (₹)	No. of transactions	Amount (₹)	No. of transactions	Amount (₹)
Ernakulam	104	73445	11	8250	3	1890	118	83585
Kollam	22	15300	17	10879	0	0	39	26179
Kozhikode	98	70719	22	16500	2	1800	122	89019
Wayanad	14	9540	0	0	0	0	14	9540
Total	238	169004	50	35629	5	3690	293	208323

(Source: e-grantz data)

On verifying the above issue in the selected institutions⁶⁰, it was acknowledged by the institutions that both ABLC and stipend were granted to 74 students and that the institutions came to know about the issue only when Audit pointed out the same.

Government replied (June 2023) that status of the students may have changed from day scholar to hosteller or *vice-versa* during the period. It was also stated that directions had been issued to students to decide on their status of accommodation, course details etc. before applying for scholarship and changes would be permitted only during renewal. Further, instructions would be given to C-DIT for verification of payments, based on which directions would be given to students to refund the excess amount.

Audit observed that payment of both ABLC and stipend to the same student occurred due to the deficiencies in process control in e-grantz and could be rectified only if necessary modifications were made in e-grantz.

⁶⁰ 74 cases were seen in 11 selected institutions in three selected districts (Ernakulam, Kozhikode and Wayanad).

3.5.8. Exclusions from the scholarship schemes

3.5.8.1. Non-payment of extra allowance to Divyang students - Central Post-Matric scheme

As per Guidelines⁶¹ of Post-Matric scholarship scheme for SC students (Central scheme) applicable from 2020-21 onwards, students studying in Classes XI and XII were eligible for academic allowance of ₹4000 (hostellers) and ₹2500 (day scholars). Ten *per cent* extra allowances were to be provided to Divyang students.

Audit collected the number of Divyang students in the State studying in Higher secondary classes (Kerala syllabus) from HSCAP software. On comparing the e-grantz data with details obtained from HSCAP, it was seen that the 10 *per cent* extra allowance payable to Divyang students was not provided. On further verification, it was observed that 1,222 Divyang students studying in Higher secondary classes were not given this allowance for the period 2020-21 and 2021-22, resulting in short payment of ₹3.06 lakh⁶².

Government stated (June 2023) that the revised Guidelines issued by the Central Government was implemented in the State at the end of 2021-22 and that the data of Divyang students were being collected.

However, Audit observed that the delay in implementation of the scheme resulted in non-receipt of the extra 10 *per cent* allowance by the existing students.

3.5.8.2. Non-payment of scholarship to SC students studying in class XI - Post-Matric, Central and State schemes

In respect of Post-Matric scholarship for SC, 312 students belonging to SC category did not initiate XI Standard scholarship even though they received XII Standard scholarship. Details are given in **Table 3.15**.

Table 3.15: Details of students who have not initiated XI Standard scholarship even though they received XII Standard scholarship

District	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	Total cases
Ernakulam	69	10	17	96
Kollam	43	11	28	82
Kozhikode	29	18	50	97
Wayanad	7	10	20	37
Total	148	49	115	312

(Source: e-grantz data)

On verifying the above issue at the selected institutions⁶³, it was stated by the institutions that nine students did not submit the application and in one case, student discontinued the course⁶⁴. Audit observes that the Departmental and

⁶¹ Post-Matric Scheme Guidelines 2020-21 to 2025-26.

⁶² Considering that all Divyang students are Day scholars for whom ₹2,500 was the academic allowance, and its, 10 *per cent* worked out to ₹250.

⁶³ 10 cases were seen in eight selected institutions in two selected districts (Kozhikode and Kollam).

⁶⁴ The reply stated by the institution that the student discontinued the course in Class XI was not acceptable, as the student has received XII Standard Scholarship.

institutional authorities did not fulfil their responsibility to ensure that all SC students were applying for and receiving the scholarship every year without fail.

Government replied (June 2023) that it was the combined responsibility of the students and institutions to register and forward the applications to enable the Department for timely release of scholarship. However, some students would not submit applications in time and institutions show negligence in forwarding the applications submitted by the students. It was further stated that necessary instructions were being issued in this regard.

3.5.8.3. Part payment of Central and State Post-Matric scholarship to SC students due to non-processing of different components of scholarship

The process of payment of different components of the Post-Matric scholarship to the student is as shown below:

- Institution (authorised personnel and Principal) shall initiate different claims (components) such as stipend, LSG, ABLC, pocket money, fees etc. and forward to the DDO.
- The DDO shall verify the claims from the educational institutions (monthly fund statement) and sanction the same subject to eligibility.
- Processing at the Directorate for approval, following which the claim becomes ready for payment.
- The Superintendent/ Uploader at the Directorate shall upload to the SBI Internet Banking Module/ treasury by generation of bill for the crediting of funds to the student.

On verifying the disbursement of different components of the Schemes in e-grantz, it was seen that the claims of various components of the Post-Matric scholarship were not processed and amount not transferred to the students on account of non-marking of attendance, claim not processed at institution/ DDO/ Directorate etc. Such non-processing resulted in non-receipt of ₹3.29 crore, being the benefit in the form of various components to eligible beneficiaries in the selected districts during the period 2018-19 to 2020-21 as detailed in **Appendix 3.4.**

On verifying the above issue at the selected institutions⁶⁵, the institutions informed that 1,383 transactions were pending due to technical error (even though attendance was marked in the system, the system was not updating), 953 transactions were pending due to reasons like clerical mistake (non-marking of attendance etc.), 916 transactions were pending due to other reasons such as course discontinued, shortage of attendance, TC issued, student not eligible for the allowances etc. 880 transactions were pending / not processed at Directorate and in 824 transactions, payment was made after June 2022 i.e., after the receipt of dump data by Audit.

⁶⁵ 4956 cases were seen in 71 selected institutions in four selected districts.

Government replied (June 2023) that necessary steps would be taken to disburse all the pending components to students.

3.5.8.4. Non-receipt of Post-Matric scholarships by the students of premier institutions like IIM/ IIT - Central scheme

As per the scheme Guidelines (2020), the Post-Matric scholarship for SC students was open to Indian Nationals belonging to SC community and whose annual family income was less than ₹2.50 lakh. The Guidelines specified that scholarship was to be given for all recognised post matriculation courses pursued in recognised institutions/ universities/ colleges falling under certain categories which included, *inter alia*, institutions of national importance, private professional institutions affiliated to a recognised Central/ State University and covered by a fee fixation committee as mandated by Supreme Court, institutions affiliated/ approved by bodies like National Medical Commission/ AICTE etc. or any regulatory body established by State/ UT/ Centre.

The SC/ST scholarship Guidelines issued (2009) by GoK also stated that students who secure admission through CAT, MAT, JEE, JMET, XAT, ATMA etc. and get admitted to self-governing institutions were also eligible to claim scholarship as per the rates fixed by GoK/ University.

As per the Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Central Government, there were 161 institutions of national importance which included six institutions⁶⁶ from Kerala. As per the procedure for granting scholarship to students enrolled in institutions of national importance, the institutions were to submit applications with relevant documents to the Additional District Development Officer for SC (ADDO) of the district concerned for registering the institution. After registration, course of study was to be added to the portal at Directorate level on receiving request from the institution/ district office. The course added in the portal will be available in the database and students of the institution can apply for scholarship to such courses. Audit noticed that despite repeated requests⁶⁷ from IIT, Palakkad, the ADDO had not initiated steps (December 2022) to register the institution in the portal. In the case of IIM, Kozhikode, though the institution was registered in the portal the students were not able to apply for scholarship through the portal as the course fee structure of the institution was not approved (December 2022) by the SCDD district office. Due to above-mentioned reasons, the eligible students studying in these institutions of national importance did not receive the benefit of scholarship.

It was pertinent to note that for pursuing Post Graduate studies in private medical colleges, GoK was providing more than ₹six lakh per SC/ ST student as tuition fees to the institutions, while students studying in institutions of national importance did not receive this benefit.

⁶⁶ Indian Institute of Information Technology, Kottayam, Indian Institute of Management, Kozhikode, Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology, Thiruvananthapuram, Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Thiruvananthapuram, National Institute of Technology, Kozhikode and Indian Institute of Technology, Palakkad.

⁶⁷ 22 November 2021 and series of follow up requests thereafter through emails and phone calls.

Government replied (June 2023) that institutions of national importance were coming under the purview of the orders regarding Post-Matric scholarship. But some district officers were sceptical in disbursing huge amount of fees fixed by such autonomous institutions and clarifications were sought from Government. It was informed that revised Government order was issued (January 2023), in which institutions of national importance were included within the purview of scholarship, enabling students in these institutions to apply for the scholarship.

However, Registrar, IIT Palakkad informed Audit (May 2023) that though guidance was sought from the authorities concerned for getting the institution registered in the portal, no response was received from e-grantz till date (May 2023).

Delay on account of indecision by the Department despite clear Guidelines resulted in eligible students being deprived of scholarship.

3.5.8.5. Short payment of private accommodation charges to students-Post-Matric SC scholarship scheme

Central Government provides academic allowance as part of the SC Post-Matric scholarship. The rate at which academic allowance was paid for different courses for hostellers and day scholars are as given in **Table 3.16**.

Table 3.16: Rate of Academic allowance from 2020-21 onwards

Category of courses	Rate of Academic allowance (yearly in ₹)	
	Hostellers	Day Scholars
Group 1: Degree and Post Graduate level professional courses	13500	7000
Group 2: Other Professional Courses leading to Degree, Diploma, Certificate	9500	6500
Group 3: Graduate and Post Graduate courses not covered under Group I and Group II	6000	3000
Group 4: All post-matriculation (Post Class X level) non-degree courses	4000	2500

(Source: Guidelines of Central Post-Matric scheme)

In addition to this, GoK provides ₹15,000⁶⁸ per annum (November 2009) to students who occupy private hostels. Thus, a student occupying private accommodation and pursuing post graduate professional course was entitled to ₹28,500 (₹13,500+₹15,000). However, Audit noticed that instead of providing academic allowance (varied from ₹4,000 to ₹13,500 per year depending on course) and private accommodation allowance (₹15,000 per year) separately to SC students, the Directorate merged both the allowances and provided ₹15,000 to students irrespective of the course they were pursuing. This resulted in each beneficiary not receiving amount ranging from ₹4,000 to ₹13,500 depending on the course they were pursuing. Audit noticed that in 352 transactions in the selected districts, there was a short payment of ₹28.94 lakh towards private accommodation during the period 2021-22.

⁶⁸ ₹ 1500 per month for 10 months.

Government stated (June 2023) that revised order was issued in January 2023 for effecting the provisions of the Central Guidelines from the academic year 2022-23 onwards.

However, the reply was silent on the payment of arrears related to private accommodation charges for the academic year 2021-22.

3.5.8.6. Non-payment of Tuition fee, Exam fee and Special fee to the Institutions by the students- Post-Matric Central scheme

Detailed Guidelines on Post-Matric scholarship to SC students for studies in India applicable for academic years 2021-22 to 2025-26 was issued by MoSJE, Central Government in March 2021. As per the detailed Guidelines, a freeship card (that entitles a student eligible for the scholarship, to take admission in an institution, without pre-payment of tuition fee and hostel fee) was to be issued by the State Government to the eligible student on the condition that as and when amount was released to the student's account (60 per cent by Central and 40 per cent by the State) including tuition fees, the institution would be intimated to collect the same from the student. As per the new Guidelines, all fees payable to the institutions were to be paid to the students and the students in turn were to remit it to the institution. The freeship card was implemented (January 2023) by GoK only from the academic year 2022-23. Audit observed that due to non-implementation of freeship card in the academic year 2021-22, exam fee and special fee received by 445 students of four institutions⁶⁹ amounting to ₹27.98 lakh through e-grantz were not remitted to the institutions.

Government stated (June 2023) that from 2022-23, a declaration to the effect that the components payable to the institutions would be remitted within seven days of receipt of the same, would be obtained from the students and that necessary information in this regard was issued to the institutions through the district offices and media. It was also stated that provision is given in e-grantz to know the status of disbursement of fees to the student's account.

Thus, due to non-implementation of freeship card in the academic year 2021-22, the institutions were not in a position to collect the fees due to them from the students.

3.6. Monitoring and evaluation

The deficiencies in monitoring in Post-Matric SC scholarship schemes were similar to those in Pre-Matric SC scholarship schemes as detailed in paragraph 2.7 of this Report.

3.6.1. Non-obtaining of Audit certificate - SC Central Post-Matric schemes

As per the fund releasing orders of Central Government for the Centrally sponsored Post-Matric scholarship schemes to SC students, the State

⁶⁹ ₹19.84 lakh by 251 students of NIT, Calicut, ₹5.91 lakh by 156 students of TKM Arts and Science College, Kollam, ₹1.74 lakh by 27 students of LBS, Sasthamcotta, Kollam and ₹0.49 lakh by 11 students of GHSS, Perinad, Kollam.

Government should get its accounts of the grant-in-aid audited by the Government Auditor⁷⁰ and shall furnish the Utilisation Certificate (UC) in the prescribed format (GFR 12C). However, the statement of expenditure was not got audited for the Centrally sponsored Post-Matric SC scholarship scheme and no audit certificate was obtained for the period 2018-19 to 2021-22. Further, there was a disallowance of ₹2.24 crore due to non-furnishing of vouchers for the year 2017-18. The Joint Director (Education) stated (April 2023) that scholarship was provided to all the eligible SC students irrespective of their family income. The total expenditure figure furnished by the Department included both Central and State assistance.

During the Exit Conference, Special Secretary, SCSTDD agreed to the audit findings regarding non-obtaining of Audit certificate and assured that a special drive would be initiated to settle the issue.

Recommendations (Pre and Post-Matric scholarship schemes for SC students)

Recommendation 1: Government must ensure that the Department and Institutions work conjointly for efficient implementation of the schemes. Physical and financial targets for scholarship should be set after assessing the number of potential beneficiaries/ students actually enrolled or based on trends of previous years. Department should make use of statistics on students maintained by Education Department for preparing the list.

Recommendation 2: Government needs to fix responsibility on the heads of Institutions/SCDOs for non-processing of applications at various levels, leading to non-receipt of scholarship by students. Educational institutions/ SCDOs may exercise due diligence in accepting the applications, verifying documents submitted by the students in support of the claims, uploading student data and details of scholarship into the application software and sanctioning claims within the allotted time, subject to fulfilment of eligibility criteria.

Recommendation 3: Department should proactively utilise the services of SC/ST promoters for ensuring that all necessary assistance is provided to students in obtaining supporting documents for applying for scholarship, opening of bank account, etc.

Recommendation 4: Officials handling different scholarship portals should be given adequate training to enable them to check the authenticity of certificates and eliminate duplicate applications.

Recommendation 5: The deficiencies in the e-grantz portal should be addressed at the earliest so that all the eligible students receive the scholarship.

Recommendation 6: Department should conduct awareness and orientation programmes at least annually at the beginning of the academic year for all

⁷⁰ Office of the Principal Accountant General (Audit I), Kerala.

stakeholders so that no students are left out due to lack of awareness about the scholarship scheme.

Recommendation 7: Students may be encouraged to maintain Aadhaar linked bank accounts to ensure transparency in transfer of scholarship amount via DBT to their accounts.

Recommendation 8: Government should take action to claim the eligible administrative expenses from Central Government and utilise the same for permitted activities.

Recommendation 9: Government should evolve a monitoring mechanism to ensure that no scholarship applications remain unprocessed at various levels i.e., institution and directorate level.

Recommendation 10: Government should ensure that the Guidelines regarding scholarship for students pursuing overseas studies are strictly adhered to and assistance is provided only to those students who secure admission in universities which satisfy the criteria set by the Government.

Recommendation 11: Government should ensure that no Divyang students are deprived of the extra 10 per cent allowance they are entitled to.



SECTION B - Pre and Post-Matric scholarship schemes for Scheduled Tribe students

CHAPTER IV SCHOLARSHIP SCHEMES FOR SCHEDULED TRIBE STUDENTS - PRE-MATRIC

Department did not maintain the data pertaining to the eligible beneficiaries based on a survey or study to identify the potential beneficiaries. Four *per cent* to 20 *per cent* of ST students did not receive Pre-Matric scholarship for the period 2017-21. Adequate publicity was not given to the schemes. Scheduled Tribe beneficiaries did not receive scholarship on account of non-processing of scholarship applications at the Directorate. There was delay in processing and payment of different components of scholarship. Errors in bank account number, IFS code etc. of beneficiaries resulted in non-receipt of scholarship by students, as seen in implementation of SC scholarship schemes. Audit certificate was not obtained for Centrally sponsored scholarship schemes. Audit also observed non-receipt of certain components of the scholarship by the beneficiaries. Administrative expenses due from Central Government were not claimed. Reconciliation of expenditure figures was not carried out by the Department in respect of Centrally sponsored ST Pre-Matric scholarship schemes. The Department had not taken measures to conduct social audit and consequently failed to identify the issues faced by the stakeholders.

4.1. Eligibility for claiming scholarship

The conditions of eligibility for claiming scholarship under Centrally sponsored Pre-Matric schemes for ST students are given in **Table 4.1**.

Table 4.1: Conditions of eligibility for claiming Centrally sponsored Pre-Matric scholarship for ST students

Eligibility	All students who belong to Scheduled Tribes whose parents'/ guardians' income from all sources does not exceed ₹two lakh per annum up to 2019-20 and ₹2.5 lakh per annum from 2020-21.		
For study in	IX and X Classes in all Government Schools or in a school recognised by Government or Central/ State Board of Secondary Education		
Scholarship Components	Item	Day Scholars	Hostellers
	Scholarship (₹ Per Month) for 10 months	₹150 up to 11/ 2019 and ₹225 thereafter	₹350 up to 11/ 2019 and ₹525 thereafter
	Books and Adhoc Grant	₹750	₹1000

The conditions of eligibility for claiming scholarship under State Pre-Matric schemes for ST students are given in **Table 4.2**.

Table 4.2: Conditions of eligibility for claiming State Pre-Matric scholarship for ST students

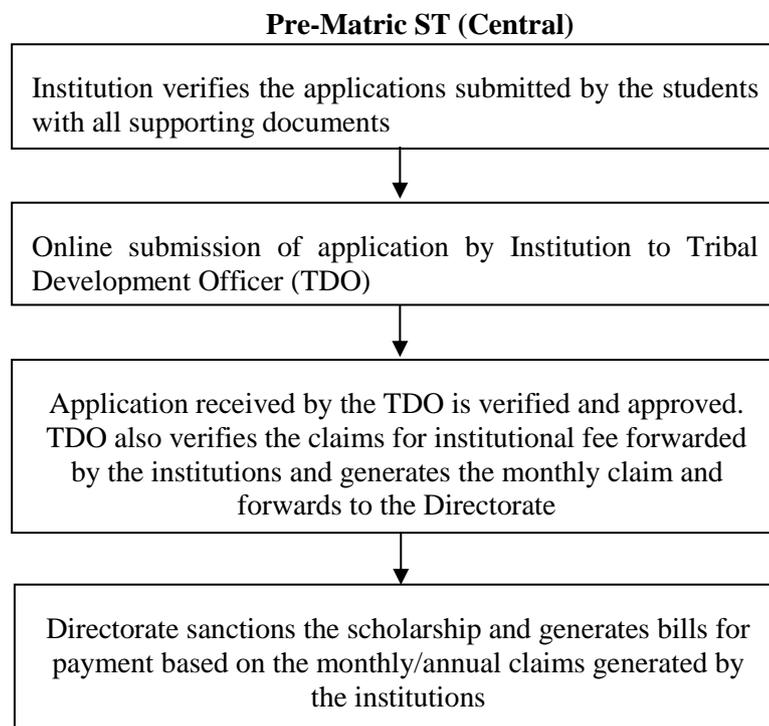
Eligibility	Students who belong to Scheduled Tribes without any income limit.	
For study in	All students studying from Class I to X in Government/ Aided School, GV Raja sports school, Kendriya Vidyalaya, Sainik School, recognised unaided school (Lumpsum Grant, tuition fees and Special fees), Technical Schools coming under Directorate of Technical Education, Technical Schools coming under Institute of Human Resource Development (IHRD), Government of Kerala. Non-Matric trades coming under ITIs recognised by SC/ ST Department, Non-Matric trades issuing Kerala Government Certificate in Engineering and for those students who are studying outside Kerala on account of temporary stay of their parents outside the State of Kerala.	
Scholarship Components	Item	Amount
	Lumpsum grant	Up to 2019-20 ₹320 (Std I to IV), ₹630 (Std V to VII) and ₹940 (Std VIII to X) From 2020-21 ₹750 (Std I to IV), ₹900 (Std V to VII), ₹1000 (Std VIII to X)
	Stipend (monthly)	Up to 2019-20 ₹130 (Std I to IV), ₹160 (Std V to VII) and ₹190 (Std VIII to X) From 2020-21, ₹200 for all categories

4.2. Procedure/ Process flow

According to Government order dated 20 October 2008 issued by SCST Development Department, the educational institutions should issue scholarship application form to the student at the time of admission itself. The educational institutions shall ensure that the students fill and submit the application within a specified time frame i.e., maximum of two days from issue of application. The e-grantz portal had the facility for online submission of application which was to be verified by the authorised personnel at the institution. Once the data entry was completed, the authorised personnel should generate fund requirement statement using the application software and forward to the Principal's inbox in the e-grantz portal. The Principal should verify the fund requirement and forward the finalised statement online to the Tribal Development Officer (TDO). The Principal should ensure that all these tasks are completed within 20 days from the beginning of classes in the educational institutions. These procedures were to be followed/ repeated in case of late admission also. No renewal application was required if the data regarding the students were already available in the e-grantz portal. In such cases, the educational institutions were to prepare the renewal statement of the continuing students and send it to the TDO for sanction. The TDO was to verify the applications submitted by the students and supporting documents received from the educational institutions and give approval in eligible cases online and forward to Scheduled Tribes Development Directorate for further processing. The Scheduled Tribes

Development Directorate verifies the application forms and forwards the sanction with the application number to the educational institutions through TDO. The process flow in e-grantz portal was as shown in **Figure 4.1**.

Figure 4.1: Process flow in e-grantz



4.3. Coverage of beneficiaries (Pre-Matric Central and State)

4.3.1. Non-identification of potential beneficiaries

4.3.1.1. Central and State Pre-Matric scholarships to students belonging to ST category

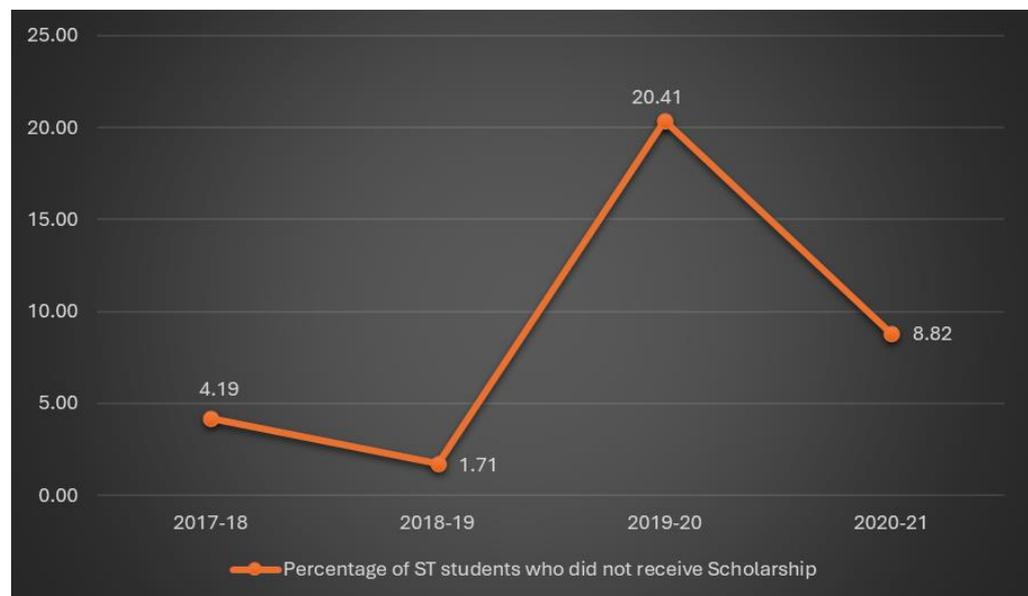
The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) (2016-19)⁷¹ in its 15th Report recommended that an effective survey was mandatory to ensure that all the schemes intended to benefit the ST population were successfully implemented. In response to the PAC recommendation, the Department in its action taken report, had stated that a survey of SC/ ST colonies was conducted during 2010-12 and steps were being taken to update the data. However, Audit observed that for the period 2017-18 to 2021-22, Directorate did not maintain the data pertaining to eligible beneficiaries based on a survey or study to identify the potential beneficiaries. Also, no action plan/ perspective plan was prepared by the ST Directorate for assessing the number of eligible beneficiaries in the State. Due to the absence of list of potential beneficiaries, effective coverage of all eligible beneficiaries under the schemes could not be ascertained and

⁷¹ Subsequent to discussion on Performance Audit on 'Educational Development of Scheduled Castes/ Scheduled Tribes' (Para 3.4) included in the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (Civil) for the year ended 31 March 2007, GoK.

ensured. Government replied (June 2023) that a detailed survey was conducted in 2018, covering all ST households but the Department had not made use of the data and since the data was old, they were in the process of updating it.

In order to examine whether all the ST students in Pre-Matric stage in the State benefitted through the scheme, Audit obtained the data of ST students who studied in Pre-Matric classes during the academic years 2017-21 from the Director of General Education (DGE) and compared it with the data on disbursement of lumpsum grant⁷² received from the Directorate of Scheduled Tribes Development. Audit observed that during the period, four *per cent* to 20 *per cent* of ST students did not receive Pre-Matric scholarship as shown in **Chart 4.1**.

Chart 4.1: Percentage of ST students who did not receive the Pre-Matric Scholarship (lumpsum grant)



4.3.2. Preparation of annual demand/ estimate

The physical target and achievement for the period 2017-18 to 2021-22 in respect of ST Pre-Matric scholarship scheme was as shown in **Table 4.3**.

⁷² Lumpsum grant was given to all ST students studying in Classes I to X irrespective of family income.

Table 4.3: Physical target and achievement for the period 2017-22

Year	Physical target (estimated number)	Estimated amount (₹ in lakh)	Achievement (number of students benefitted)	Percentage of achievement	Actual expenditure (₹ in lakh)
2017-18	14869	391.85	14265	95.94	348.10
2018-19	14577	382.93	12121	83.15	308.67
2019-20	12676	340.29	7858	61.99	231.80
2020-21	11220	374.98	9880	88.06	305.81
2021-22	10538	374.93	7071	67.10	229.31
Total	63880	1864.98	51195	80.14	1423.69

(Source: Annual proposal submitted to Central Government by the Department)

Department planned to cover 63880 students during 2017-22. However, the actual number of students covered was 51195 (80.14 per cent). The percentage of students benefitted in 2019-20 was only 61.99 per cent.

During the Exit Conference (May 2023), Special Secretary, SCSTDD acknowledged that the estimation was not realistic and stated that the target was initially fixed on higher side to claim more fund and to avoid shortfall of fund.

Government replied (June 2023) that a detailed survey covering all the ST households was conducted during 2018, but the Department had not made use of the data and now the Department was in the process of updating it. On completion of the process, complete details of the beneficiaries will be available to the Department and the deficiencies pointed out by Audit will be rectified.

4.3.3. Inadequate publicity of ST scholarship schemes

The Scheme Guidelines stipulated that the State Government should announce the scheme by giving advertisements in local language in leading newspapers and local dailies and by using other suitable publicity media. From the details furnished by the Directorate regarding administrative expenses incurred during 2017-22 for Pre-Matric scheme, it was noticed that no expenditure was incurred by the ST Directorate towards advertising in newspapers or through other media.

During the Exit Conference (May 2023), Special Secretary, SCSTDD assured that separate SNA would be operated for claiming administrative expenses and for its utilisation.

4.4. Planning and financial management

4.4.1. Centrally sponsored Pre-Matric ST scholarship schemes

According to the Guidelines of Centrally sponsored Pre-Matric scholarship scheme for ST students, Central Government was to provide 100 per cent financial assistance for expenditure under the scheme, over and above the Committed liability of the State. From the year 2014-15, the funds for the scheme were shared in the ratio of 75:25 between Central and State Government for Pre-Matric ST scholarship scheme. Each year the expenditure was first met

by the State and then the State availed the Central share (75 per cent) of the expenditure on reimbursement basis. Central Government released its share as arrear grant which was credited to the Finance Department, GoK as shown in **Table 4.4.**

In Pre-Matric scheme the flow of funds from State level to the beneficiary level was covered in two tiers during 2017-18 and 2018-19. In the first tier, funds were released from the Directorate to the district offices and in the second tier, from the district offices to the respective bank accounts of the heads of the educational institutions. From 2019-20 onwards, the scholarship amount was transferred from the Directorate directly to the beneficiary account using e-grantz portal. The funds were being allocated and settled through BAMS⁷³ and BiMS⁷⁴ monitored by the Finance Department, GoK.

Table 4.4: Fund availability and disbursement of Central Pre-Matric ST scholarship during 2017-22

(₹ in lakh)

Year	Demand	State budget allocation	State release				Central reimbursement			
			State release	Total expenditure	Amount surrendered	Closing Balance	OB (unspent balance available)	Central reimbursement and adjustment in further release	Central share pending ⁷⁵ (as on 31 March)	
2017-18	391.85	500.00	500.00	348.10	151.90	Nil	24.14	236.93*	Nil	
2018-19	382.93	500.00	500.00	308.67	191.33	Nil	Nil	71.80	159.70	
2019-20	340.29	375.00	375.00	231.81	143.20	Nil	Nil	287.31 (159.70 + 127.61)	46.25	
2020-21	374.98	375.00	375.00	305.81	69.19	Nil	Nil	116.56 (46.25 + 70.31)	159.05	
2021-22	374.93	375.00	375.00	229.31	145.69	Nil	Nil	347.07 (159.05 + 188.02)	-16.04	

* Including the unspent balance of ₹24.14 lakh

(Source: Central fund releasing orders and budget documents)

The Department did not fully utilise the budget allotment during the period of audit. There were savings ranging from ₹69.19 lakh to ₹191.33 lakh during the period 2017-22 in Pre-Matric scheme, which amounted to 33 per cent of total budget allocation for the period.

Government reply (June 2023) was silent on this aspect.

4.4.2. State funded Pre-Matric ST scholarship schemes

In addition to the Centrally sponsored Pre-Matric scholarship schemes, the State Government implemented State Pre-Matric schemes fully funded by the State. The Pre-Matric scheme covered ST students studying in Classes I to X and included components such as lumpsum grant and stipend. During 2017-18 to 2021-22, these State schemes were implemented through the 17 Project Officers, Integrated Tribal Development Project / Tribal Development Offices

⁷³ Budget Allocation and Monitoring System is an online computerised system developed by the State to distribute the budget and to authorise expenditure to the Department(s).

⁷⁴ Bill Information and Management System is an e-bill portal developed by the State for settlement of claims by the Drawing and Disbursing Officers.

⁷⁵ As the Central funds were released in instalments, these amounts were pending release at that point of time and were subsequently released based on the expenditure statement reported by the State.

(POs/ TDO) under the Directorate. It was noticed that on getting allocation from the State Government, the Directorate distributed the fund among the 17 POs/ TDOs for onward transmission to beneficiary account. The budget allocation and expenditure during the period of Audit were as shown in **Table 4.5.**

Table 4.5: Budget allocation and expenditure for the period 2017-22 under Pre-Matric ST State scheme

(₹ in lakh)

Year	Budget allocation (re-appropriation)	Amount surrendered	Net amount available	Expenditure
2017-18	1650.00	2.59	1647.41	1622.73
2018-19	1650.00	52.39	1597.61	1571.98
2019-20	1650.00	148.20	1501.80	1487.96
2020-21	1650.00	8.42	1641.58	1635.87
2021-22	1650.00 (+350.57)	Nil	2000.57	1995.40

(Source: VLC data from AG (A&E))

It was noticed that ₹1,650 lakh was allotted for Pre-Matric scheme on an *ad hoc* basis each year in the budget without a proposal, based on estimated number of beneficiaries. As a result, in the Pre-Matric schemes there was surrender of funds ranging from ₹2.59 lakh to ₹148.20 lakh during 2017-18 to 2020-21 and re-appropriation of ₹350.57 lakh in 2021-22. Audit observed that utilisation certificates for each component of the scheme with the details of beneficiaries were not submitted by the TDOs.

Government reply (June 2023) was silent on this aspect.

4.4.3. Non-reconciliation of expenditure figures (ST Central/ State schemes)

In the case of Pre-Matric scholarship for ST (Central scheme), there was a difference of ₹25.39 lakh in the expenditure figure booked by the Office of the AG (A&E) for the year 2018-19 with that of Department, which was not reconciled by the Department. In the case of Pre-Matric ST (State scheme), there were differences ranging from ₹5.70 lakh to ₹28.55 lakh during the period, which were also not reconciled.

During the Exit Conference (May 2023), Special Secretary, SCSTDD assured that a special drive would be initiated to clear all the pending issues.

4.4.4. Non-claiming of administrative expenses by the State

The Guidelines of Centrally sponsored Pre-Matric ST scholarship scheme stipulated that upto 1.5 per cent of the total Central expenditure could be utilised on administrative expenditure, monitoring, evaluation, etc. It was to be released to States over and above the scholarship amount on the basis of proposals received from them in this regard. Audit observed that during the period 2017-18 to 2021-22, GoK did not submit any proposals to claim ₹15.89 lakh.

During the Exit Conference (May 2023), Special Secretary, SCSTDD assured that a separate SNA would be operated for claiming administrative expenses and for its utilisation.

Audit observed that lack of proactive approach of the Department led to loss of ₹15.89 lakh to the Government.

4.5. Implementation of Pre-Matric ST scholarship schemes

4.5.1. Non-Processing of Pre-Matric ST scholarship applications at Directorate - Central scheme

On verification of the e-grantz data pertaining to Pre-Matric schemes in the selected districts for the period 2019-22, Audit noticed that in Pre-Matric (Central) scholarship for ST students studying in Classes IX and X⁷⁶, 1247 applications⁷⁷ were pending (June 2022) at the Directorate without payment after approval by the institutions and district offices.

Further, during the beneficiary survey, nine out of 145 students who had applied for the scholarship stated that they did not receive the ST Pre-Matric scholarship.

Government replied (June 2023) that the delay made by the institutions in forwarding the applications to the district offices resulted in late receipt of the same at the Directorate, from district offices.

The reply is not acceptable as once a student submits the application through e-grantz portal, the Directorate had the provision to monitor the pendency at the institutional level through e-grantz. Further, Government should have monitored the pendency in processing of applications at each level and evolved a mechanism to ensure that all the eligible ST students were benefitted through the scheme.

4.5.2. Delay in disbursement of various components of Centrally sponsored Pre-Matric scheme

An important task of the ST Development Department was the timely disbursement of educational assistance to students. One of the objectives of implementing the e-grantz software was to avoid delay in disbursement of scholarship. However, on verification of e-grantz data relating to Centrally sponsored Pre-Matric scheme for the period 2019-22 in the selected districts, it was noticed that there were 8806 cases⁷⁸ with one to two years' delay. The delay in disbursement of various components of the Centrally sponsored Pre-Matric scholarship is shown in **Appendix 4.1**.

⁷⁶ Pre-Matric scholarship for ST students studying in Classes IX and X was processed through e-grantz from academic year 2019-20 onwards.

⁷⁷ Total applications for the period 2018-22 in the selected districts was 10,638.

⁷⁸ Total transactions for the period 2018-22 in the selected districts was 1,00,274.

During the beneficiary survey, 146 out of 230 ST students stated that they had not received Pre and Post-Matric scholarships at the beginning of the academic year. This deprived the students of the benefits of the scheme.

Government stated (June 2023) that the delay occurred due to factors like submission of incomplete applications, invalid bank account details provided, lack of funds, etc. and that delay on the part of the Department would be avoided in future.

The reply of the Government, citing lack of funds as one of the reasons is not acceptable since there were savings under the scheme during 2017-18 to 2021-22. Thus, Audit observed that the purpose of providing scholarship was defeated and one of the objectives of implementing e-grantz software was not achieved.

4.5.3. Non-receipt of scholarship on account of invalid bank account

The detailed procedure to be followed when payment was rejected by e-kuber portal of RBI is given in paragraph 2.5.3 of this Report. On verifying the e-grantz data⁷⁹ relating to the selected districts it was revealed that as regards Pre-Matric (Central) scholarship scheme, 201 transactions involving ₹44,450 were rejected during the period 2019-22 due to invalid bank account, IFS code etc. and returned to Government account due to inaction on the part of Drawing and Disbursing Officer at the Directorate.

Government replied (June 2023) that the rejection occurred due to the entry of invalid bank account details, despite earnest efforts taken by the institutions to help children in providing accurate details in the portal. It was further stated that due to ignorance of the parents, alert messages regarding the rejection of scholarship payment sent to registered mobile numbers remained unnoticed and that rejected/ returned payments were cleared as soon as accurate details were received.

Audit observes that since institutions functioned as the linking factor between the students and the Department, there has to be a provision in the e-grantz for the institutions to know the status of the applications approved by them.

4.5.4. Exclusion from the scholarship

4.5.4.1. Centrally sponsored Pre-Matric scholarship for students studying in Classes IX and X

With the objective of implementing scholarship disbursement through e-grantz from the year 2018-19, modifications were made in the 'e-grantz 3.0' portal and the credentials for logging in, entering details of students, applying for scholarship, etc. were provided to all recognised institutions. However, since the bank account details of all ST students could not be updated in e-grantz, this was implemented in the State only from 2019-20. As per the Guidelines on e-grantz 3.0 issued by the Director, SCDD for information of the institutions,

⁷⁹ Pre-Matric ST scholarship for 2019-22

the details of the students were to be uploaded in the portal by the educational institutions. Audit noticed that out of 3,077 eligible students in the 23 selected institutions in the test-checked districts, details of only 2,107 students were uploaded by the institutions. However, as per e-grantz, scholarship was disbursed only to 1,683 students as given in **Table 4.6**.

Table 4.6: Details of students who did not receive scholarship due to non-uploading of details by the institutions / non-processing in e-grantz portal

PO/ TDO (No. of schools)	No. of eligible students			No. of students whose details were uploaded in e-grantz (as reported by the institutions)			No. of students to whom scholarship sanctioned (e-grantz data as on June 2022)			No. of students who did not receive scholarship		
	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Muvattupuzha (4)	5	10	4	4	6	4	5	3	0	0	7	4
Kozhikode (5)	66	61	70	62	39	63	61	25	8	5	36	62
Sulthan Bathery (6)	496	542	564	411	404	277	411	368	0	85	174	564
Mananthavady (4)	331	402	379	170	281	244	170	266	245	161	136	134
Kalpetta (3)	50	48	41	47	48	39	43	47	23	7	1	18
Punalur (1)	3	3	2	3	3	2	3	3	2	0	0	0
Total	951	1066	1060	697	781	629	693	712	278	258	354	782
Grand Total	3077			2107			1683			1394		

(Source: Compilation of data obtained from the institutions through ITDPO/ TDO)

The institutions attributed non-submission of Aadhaar and bank details by the students, technical issues etc. as the reasons for non-uploading of details.

Audit further noticed that in one school in Wayanad District, GHSS Thariode, all the 114 students did not receive scholarship in 2020-21. The Headmaster replied (December 2022) that details of 76 students were uploaded in the portal but not shown as 'forwarded' in the portal and that of 38 students could not be uploaded as the students did not submit Aadhaar, bank account details, etc. despite repeated instructions. The Headmaster informed (June 2022) the Project Officer that the details of 76 students forwarded by the institution in e-grantz were not shown as 'forwarded' and requested the Project Officer to initiate action to grant scholarship to them. Though the Headmaster had taken up the matter with the Project Officer, the action taken by the Project Officer was not intimated to the Headmaster.

The onus of ensuring that the students submit necessary documents for registration in the portal and rectifying the technical issues faced by the institution rested with the Departmental authorities. Failure on the part of the Department and laxity on the part of the educational institutions in ensuring that applications of all eligible students were uploaded and successfully processed resulted in non-receipt of scholarship by 1394 students in four selected districts.

Government reply (June 2023) was silent on this aspect.

4.5.4.2. Non-payment of scholarship to ST students studying in Class IX - Central Pre-Matric scheme

Guidelines regarding the roles and responsibilities of ST promoters⁸⁰ was issued by GoK in January 2010. As per the Guidelines, it was the duty of the promoters to ensure that the ST students receive Pre-Matric scholarship in time.

Scheduled Tribes Development Department started disbursing the Centrally sponsored Pre-Matric scholarship for ST students studying in Classes IX and X through e-grantz portal from the academic year 2019-20.

The registration of ST students was done by the institutions through the “Student Registration” menu in the e-grantz portal. As a basic step, name and Aadhaar number was to be entered for student registration for subsequent approval and payment of scholarship. The district office of the STDD should verify the fee structure/ amount in the disbursement list with the Government approved fee structure using the comparison/ check facility available in the e-grantz portal before issuing the sanction order.

On verifying the e-grantz data, Audit noticed that in the selected districts during the academic years 2019-20 and 2020-21, 413 ST students of Class IX did not receive the scholarship even though they received the scholarship in Class X.

On verifying the above issue at the selected institutions⁸¹, institutions stated that 171 applications were not forwarded due to non-production of sufficient data by the students, 162 applications, due to non-submission of documents by students in time, three cases due to technical error, four cases due to lack of awareness about the scheme/ delay in communication from ST Department, and two cases were shown as approved in the portal.

Thus, Audit observed that the ST promoters and authorities in the institutions did not fulfil the responsibility to ensure that all ST students were getting the scholarship every year without fail.

Government replied (June 2023) that validation check for the mentioned issue was not available and on switching to online mode, which was proposed to be implemented shortly, these issues could be monitored and prevented in future. However, the reply fails to explain how students who did not receive the scholarship in the previous years would be compensated for.

4.5.4.3. Students who received Books and Adhoc Grant not paid stipend under Centrally sponsored Pre-Matric scheme

The Centrally sponsored Pre-Matric scholarship for students belonging to ST category, studying in Classes IX and X included scholarship (stipend) of ₹150 per month for 10 months and Books and Adhoc grant of ₹750 per annum for day scholars and stipend of ₹350 per month for 10 months and Books and Adhoc grant of ₹1000 per annum for hostellers. The rate of scholarship (stipend) was

⁸⁰ Tribal promoters are selected and appointed to function as facilitators in tribal areas for channelising and extending the benefits of tribal development schemes to the STs. They will also act as a link between the scheduled tribe beneficiaries and the local bodies / line departments.

⁸¹ 342 cases were seen in nine selected institutions in one selected district (Wayanad).

increased to ₹225 per month for hostellers and ₹525 per month for day scholars from 01 December 2019.

On analysis of e-grantz data of the selected districts, Audit noticed that 30 students in two selected districts⁸² were not paid stipend even though they were paid Books and Adhoc grant.

On verifying the above issue at the selected institutions⁸³, the institutions stated that stipend was not received by 15 beneficiaries, even though they had received Books and Adhoc grant.

Thus, Audit observed that the ST promoters and authorities in the institutions did not fulfil the responsibility to ensure that all ST students were getting all the components of scholarship every year without fail.

Government replied (June 2023) that report would be collected from the district offices concerned and final reply furnished to Audit at the earliest.

4.5.4.4. Centrally sponsored scholarship for students studying in Classes IX and X - scholarship not given despite availability of funds - TDO Kozhikode

The Director sanctioned (February 2019) ₹11.65 lakh to the TDO, Kozhikode for implementing the scheme in the year 2018-19. Since the Treasury was accepting bills only in respect of beneficiaries with bank account, the TDO sanctioned scholarship to 167 students who possessed bank accounts (out of 199 applications received from 30 institutions) by expending ₹4.32 lakh⁸⁴ and surrendered ₹7.33 lakh. Out of the above 167, four students were included in two sanction orders and hence only 163 out of 199 applicants were sanctioned scholarship. Audit noticed that out of the 36 students who were not sanctioned scholarship, 28 students⁸⁵ had furnished bank details and there were only eight students whose bank details were not available. Thus, 36 eligible students did not receive scholarship in 2018-19, despite availability of funds.

Government replied (June 2023) that report would be collected from the Tribal Development Officer, Kozhikode and final reply furnished to Audit at the earliest.

4.6. State Pre-Matric scholarship scheme

State Pre-Matric scholarship to ST students of Classes I to X, studying in Government/ Aided schools included lumpsum grant and monthly stipend. Students studying in recognised unaided schools were eligible for lumpsum grant and reimbursement of tuition fee/ special fee as approved by Government. The scheme was implemented through the PO/ TDO. The Director allotted the funds required for the scheme to the PO/ TDO who disbursed the scholarship to

⁸² Wayanad (2020-21): 26, (2021-22): two and Ernakulam (2021-22): two

⁸³ Fifteen cases were seen in three selected institutions in one selected district (Wayanad)

⁸⁴ ₹4.32 lakh from the allotment for 2018-19

⁸⁵ GHSS Azhiyoor -two, GHSS Puduppadi – 19, GHS Perambra – five and St. John's HS Nellipoyil – two

the eligible students through the heads of institutions in two instalments – first instalment comprising lumpsum grant and stipend for the period June to October and second instalment comprising stipend for the period November to March. The second instalment was being released only to those students whose receipts in token of disbursement of the first instalment were furnished by the heads of institutions. Audit noticed the following deficiencies in the implementation of the scheme:

4.6.1. Low coverage of beneficiaries

The POs/ TDOs of selected districts disbursed scholarships based on the students' list provided by the heads of institutions. To ensure cent *per cent* coverage of beneficiaries, the implementing officer should have the data of all eligible students in the institutions under his jurisdictional area. In order to verify whether all the eligible students were covered under the scheme, audit obtained the number of ST students studying in Classes I to X in Government/ Aided/ recognised unaided schools from the Deputy Directors of Education (DDE) of four selected districts. On comparison of this data with the number of students to whom scholarship was sanctioned by the POs/ TDOs, it was noticed that all the students as per the DDE data were not sanctioned scholarship. The percentage of students who were sanctioned first instalment of scholarship in Ernakulam, Wayanad and Kollam were 91, 98 and 85 respectively. However, the percentage of coverage under second instalment was only 61, 89 and 71. In respect of Kozhikode district, data for the years 2017-18 and 2019-20 were not available. The percentage of coverage of students under first and second instalments during the remaining years were 98 and 59 (2018-19), 80 and 44 (2020-21), 79 and 72 (2021-22) respectively, as shown in **Table 4.7** below.

Table 4.7: Comparison of DDE data on ST students with actual beneficiaries

Year	Ernakulam			Kozhikode*			Wayanad**			Kollam		
	DDE figure	No. of students to whom scholarship sanctioned and percentage of coverage wrt DDE figure		DDE figure	No. of students to whom scholarship sanctioned and percentage of coverage wrt DDE figure		DDE figure	No. of students to whom scholarship sanctioned and percentage of coverage wrt DDE figure		DDE figure	No. of students to whom scholarship sanctioned and percentage of coverage wrt DDE figure	
		I	II		I	II		I	II		I	II
2017-18	1930	1837	1474	1918	NA	NA	26852	25463	24688	1058	862	660
2018-19	1813	1881	1522	1777	1749	1054	27012	26828	23307	1019	870	660
2019-20	1733	1705	946	1716	NA	NA	26364	28570	22632	957	834	649
2020-21	2230	1456	513	1641	1307	718	26019	24431	23431	961	773	755
2021-22	1546	1501	1216	1580	1255	1178	26039	24601	23884	879	775	740
Total	9252	8380 (91)	5671 (61)	8632	4311	2950	132286	129893 (98)	117942 (89)	4874	4114 (85)	3464 (71)

* figures for the years 2017-18 and 2019-20 were not available in Tribal Development Office Kozhikode

** there were two TDOs and one ITDPO in Wayanad district

(Source: Data compiled from Departmental orders)

It was also noticed that only 89 *per cent* of the students who were sanctioned first instalment of scholarship were sanctioned second instalment in the districts

of Ernakulam, Wayanad and Kollam. The coverage in respect of Kozhikode district was only 82 *per cent*. Since the second instalment could be disbursed only on submission of the receipt for the first instalment, there was no assurance that the first instalment itself was disbursed to the remaining 11 *per cent* in the three districts and 18 *per cent* in Kozhikode district.

Government reply (June 2023) was silent on this aspect.

4.7. Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation is an integral part of any scheme as it helps the Administrative Department to identify the problems in implementation, so that the Department can take necessary corrective steps to rectify the same. With regard to Pre-Matric ST schemes, the State Government⁸⁶ had not issued any Guidelines/ circulars/ directions till date to the implementing agencies⁸⁷ to ensure that the data for processing in the e-grantz were genuine, complete, not previously processed, properly authorised and were entered accurately without duplication. Similarly, as the Central scholarship schemes were being implemented by the State Government, Scheme Guidelines envisaged the State Government to ensure effective monitoring and evaluation of the schemes. Audit examined whether effective control mechanisms and robust IT systems existed for monitoring and evaluation. The observations are summarised as follows:

There existed no effective mechanism for periodic review of progress of the schemes at the State and Regional level, as a result of which instances of delayed payments and non-payments could not be identified and prevented at various levels⁸⁸. Full coverage of beneficiaries could also not be ensured.

The Central Guidelines suggest that social audit⁸⁹ was to be conducted by the social audit units⁹⁰ of the State Governments, by meeting the cost from the administrative cost of the scheme. The Department had not taken measures to conduct social audit till date, and consequently the Department failed to identify the issues faced by the stakeholders, the majority of which being marginalised/ under privileged groups.

Audit scrutiny revealed instances of double payment, rejection of payment, non-processing of scholarship applications at institutional levels, etc. The above instances pointed to the lack of a robust IT enabled monitoring system.

⁸⁶ SCSTD Department, GoK

⁸⁷ SCSTD Department, C-DIT, respective State level Directorates, district level offices, educational institutions, etc

⁸⁸ Detailed in paragraphs 4.5.1, 4.5.2 and 4.5.4.2 of this Report

⁸⁹ Social Audit is a way of measuring, understanding, reporting, improving an organisation's social and ethical performance. It helps to narrow gaps between vision/ goal and reality, between efficiency and effectiveness.

⁹⁰ under MGNREGA

The Central Guidelines suggests that the State Government shall set up a robust monitoring mechanism for monitoring the academic progress of the students enrolled in the scheme, which was not implemented till date.

The Central Guidelines further insisted that to ensure proper accountability, physical verifications at various levels, viz., block/ district/ state shall be done by the State Government covering at least 10 *per cent* of the institutions/ students, chosen randomly through an algorithm. All private institutions offering courses at the level of graduation or above shall, however, be mandatorily inspected annually. However, Audit noticed that no target was set by the Departments and no inspections were conducted.

Government accepted (June 2023) the findings relating to monitoring and evaluation and stated that the lapses pointed out by Audit will be rectified when the new Government order (January 2023) regarding SC/ ST scholarship was enforced. Government further stated that taking a cue from the audit observations, C-DIT will be directed to make necessary control measures in the software and that the Department was also contemplating inclusion of a chat box in e-grantz portal to address the issues faced by students.

4.7.1. Non-obtaining of Audit certificate - ST scholarships - Central Pre-Matric scheme

The Guidelines prescribed that the claim of the State Government has to be accompanied with a Utilisation Certificate (UC) along with audited statements for the previous year's Central assistance. Audit observed that for Centrally sponsored Pre-Matric scholarship scheme, statement of expenditure was not got audited and no Audit certificate obtained from the Office of the Principal Accountant General (Audit I) during the period 2017-18 to 2021-22.

Director, STDD replied (May 2023) that UC was being sent to the Central Government every year and that the report from the Government auditor would be obtained from this year onwards.

CHAPTER V SCHOLARSHIP SCHEMES FOR SCHEDULED TRIBE STUDENTS - POST-MATRIC

Recommendations of Public Accounts Committee with regard to conduct of a survey or study to identify the potential beneficiaries were not complied with. Non-processing of scholarship applications at institutions and Directorate was noticed. There was delay of one to four years in disbursement of various components of the scholarship to students. Non-implementation of book bank scheme resulted in non-receipt of benefits by eligible students. Inadequate input control in e-grantz software resulted in payment of accommodation charges for institutional hostel and private hostel to the same student. Instances of multiple payments of components of scholarship and granting of State funded scholarship to students pursuing unaided courses in unaided colleges were noticed by Audit. Reconciliation of expenditure figures was not carried out by the Department in respect of Centrally sponsored ST Post-Matric scholarships.

5.1. Eligibility for claiming scholarship

The conditions of eligibility for claiming scholarship under Centrally sponsored Post-Matric schemes for ST students are given in **Table 5.1**.

Table 5.1: Conditions of Eligibility for claiming Centrally sponsored Post-Matric Scholarship for ST students

Eligibility	All students who belong to Scheduled Tribes whose parents/ guardians' income from all sources does not exceed ₹2.5 lakh per annum.			
For study in	Institutions of national importance, State/ Central Universities, Autonomous colleges recognised by UGC and Universities/ Colleges recognised under Section 2(f) and 12(b) of UGC Act, Deemed Universities, Private Universities recognised by State/ Centre with A Level or equivalent accreditation by NAAC/ NBA, Private professional institutions affiliated to recognised Central/ State Universities and covered by Fee Fixation Committee, recognised schools/ colleges for Class XI and XII, Diploma granting institutions, Vocational Training institutes affiliated to NCVT, Institutions affiliated/ approved by MCI/ AICTE etc.			
Scholarship Components⁹¹	Item		Day Scholars	Hostellers
	Maintenance Allowance	Group I – Degree and P.G level courses, Engineering/ Medical/ CA/ ICWA/ M Phil/ PhD/ LLM etc.	₹550	₹1200
		Group II – Professional courses leading to Degree (BFS, other para-medical courses, etc.)	₹530	₹820
		Group III – All other courses leading to Graduate degree (BA, BSc etc.)	₹300	₹570
		Group IV – All post matriculation level non-degree courses, XI and XII,	₹230	₹380

⁹¹ Rates applicable from 01 July 2010. No revision thereafter

		ITI, three-year Diploma courses in Polytechnics		
	Tuition Fee	All compulsory fees payable by the scholar to the University/ Board		
	Study Tour	₹1600 per annum		
	Thesis Typing/ Printing charges	Maximum of ₹1600		
	Book Bank	Varies from ₹2400 to ₹7500. One set for two students		

The conditions of eligibility for claiming scholarship under State Post-Matric schemes for ST students are given in **Table 5.2**.

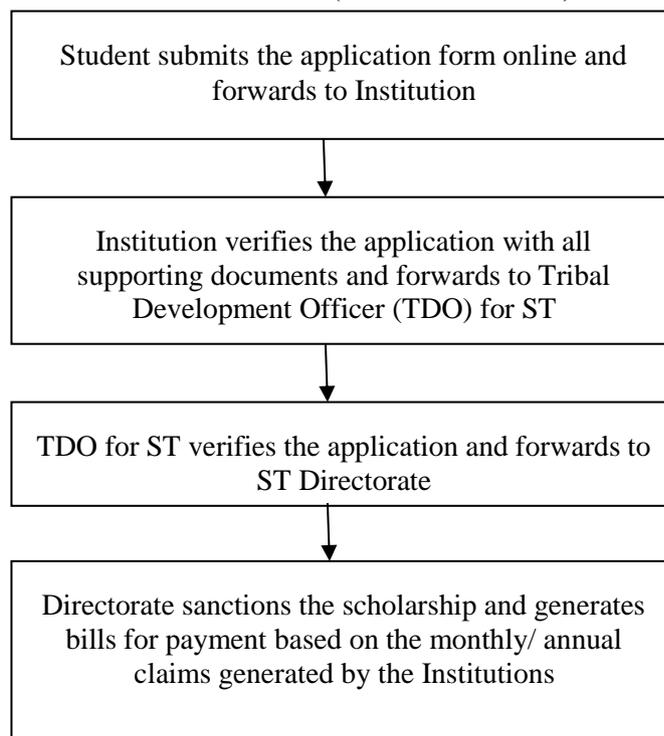
Table 5.2: Conditions of Eligibility for claiming State Post-Matric scholarship for ST students

Eligibility	All students who belong to Scheduled Tribes without any income limit	
For study in	Plus 1 and 2, VHSE, KV, Sainik School, Technical Schools, GV Raja School, Polytechnic colleges, IHRD schools, Diploma/ Degree/ PG/ Professional courses approved by Universities, ITI/ ITC Matric trade, courses offered by Government regulated Co-operative institutions, Central/ State Government institutions, LBS, C-DIT, CDAC, ER&DC, unaided courses of University/ aided institutions (rates fixed by University/ Government), M Phil, M Tech, M Lit, Off-campus courses of State Universities/ IGNOU, Evening courses, Distance Education courses, etc.	
Scholarship Components⁹²	Item	Amount
	State provides all components provided in Post-Matric scholarship for ST (Central Scheme) for students whose annual family income is more than ₹2.5 lakh. In addition, State Government provides Lumpsum Grant, Actual Boarding and Lodging Charges (ABLC), Private Accommodation Charges, Pocket Money (for Hostellers), Fellowship, Stipend (for Day Scholars) up to 2020.	<u>Lumpsum Grant (depending upon the course)</u> up to 2019-20 – ₹440 to ₹3130 from 2020-21 – ₹500 to ₹3800 <u>ABLC: Actuals/</u> ₹4500 <u>Private Accommodation:</u> ₹1500 per month (10 months) <u>Pocket Money:</u> ₹200 per month <u>Stipend:</u> up to 2019-20 – ₹500 to ₹750 from 2020-21 – ₹600 to ₹900

5.2. Procedure/ Process flow

In Post-Matric schemes the scholarship applications were to be submitted online by the student. The process flow in e-grantz portal was as shown in **Figure 5.1**.

⁹² The last rate revision of Central scheme on Post-Matric scholarship for ST was done in July 2010. However, there was revision in the rate of Post-Matric scholarship for SC in 2017 and 2020. In order to compensate for the difference in rates, State Government provided additional allowance to ST students at par with SC students.

Figure 5.1: Process flow in e-grantz**Post-Matric ST (Central and State)****5.3. Coverage of beneficiaries (Post-Matric Central)****5.3.1. Non-identification of potential beneficiaries****5.3.1.1. Central and State Post -Matric scholarships to students belonging to ST category**

Audit noticed that for the period 2017-22, Directorate did not maintain the data pertaining to the eligible beneficiaries, based on a survey or study to identify the potential beneficiaries. Further, as detailed in paragraph 4.3.1.1 of this Report, the recommendations of the 15th Report of PAC (2016-19) were not complied with.

Government replied (June 2023) that a detailed survey was conducted in 2018 covering all ST households but the Department had not made use of the data and since the data was old, they were in the process of updating it.

5.3.2. Inadequate publicity to ST Post-Matric scholarship schemes

The scheme Guidelines stipulated that adequate publicity was to be given to the scholarship schemes. Similar to Pre-Matric scholarship schemes, from the details furnished by the Directorate regarding administrative expenses incurred for Post-Matric scheme during 2017-22, it was noticed that no expenditure was incurred by the ST Directorate towards advertising in newspaper or through other media.

During the Exit Conference (May 2023), Special Secretary, SCSTDD assured that separate SNA would be operated for claiming administrative expenses and for its utilisation.

5.4. Planning and financial management

5.4.1. Centrally sponsored Post-Matric ST scholarship schemes

According to the Guidelines of Centrally sponsored Post-Matric scholarship schemes for ST students, Central Government was to provide 100 *per cent* financial assistance for expenditure under the scheme, over and above the Committed liability of the State. From the year 2014-15, the funds for the Post-Matric ST scholarship schemes were shared in the ratio 75:25 between Central and State Government. Each year, the expenditure under the scheme was first met by the State and then the State availed the Central share (75 *per cent*) of the expenditure on reimbursement basis. Central Government released its share as arrear grant which was credited to the Finance Department, GoK.

Fund availability and disbursement for the period 2017-22 for Post-Matric scholarship was as given in **Table 5.3**.

Table 5.3: Details of availability and disbursement of funds under Centrally sponsored Post-Matric ST scholarship for the period 2017-22

(₹ in lakh)

Year	State release				Central reimbursement		
	Demand	State budget allocation	Total expenditure	Closing balance and surrendered amount	OB (unspent balance available)	Reimbursement and adjustment in further release	Central Government share pending
2017-18	2910.46	3000	3506.31	-506.31	165.27	2629.73	Nil
2018-19	3603.43	5333	3309.90	2023.10	Nil	2482.43*	Nil
2019-20	3519.89	4500	3505.33	994.67	Nil	2629	Nil
2020-21	3499.98	3500	2489.11	1010.89	Nil	1866.83	Nil
2021-22	3482.41	3500	3481.42	18.58	Nil	1305.91**	-

(Source: Annual proposals and Central fund releasing orders)

* Central fund balance of ₹165.27 lakh was adjusted in total release for the year 2018-19

** 50 *per cent* of admissible Central release

The total savings of ₹4047.24 lakh which was 24.04 *per cent* of total budget allocation during the period 2018-22 was indicative of improper budget estimation and allocation. In 2017-18, the expenditure reported by the Department was ₹506.31 lakh higher than the allocation. However, as per Voucher Level Computerisation (VLC) data, the expenditure was only ₹2903.87 lakh which was within the allocation. There was difference between expenditure figures as per the records of the Office of the AG (A&E), Kerala with that reported by the Department each year as given in **Table 5.3**.

Table 5.4: Budget allocation and expenditure for the period 2017-22 (Centrally sponsored Post-Matric ST)*(₹ in lakh)*

Year (1)	Budget allocation (2)	Departmental figure of expenditure (3)	Expenditure as per VLC (4)	Difference (5)=(3)-(4)
2017-18	3000	3506.31	2903.87	602.44
2018-19	5333	3309.90	3309.75	0.15
2019-20	4500	3505.33	3556.17	-50.84
2020-21	3500	2489.11	2488.55	0.56
2021-22	3500	3481.42	3481.41	0.01
Total		16292.07	15739.75	552.32

(Source: VLC data of AG (A&E) Kerala and Annual proposals prepared by the Department)

There was a net difference of ₹552.32 lakh between the expenditure statement of the Department and that of the Office of the AG (A&E) Kerala, and the reconciliation of the figures was not carried out by the Department. On this being pointed out, GoK replied (June 2023) that the expenditure incurred during 2017-18 was ₹2905.10 lakh against ₹3506.31 lakh reported to Central Government in the proforma for claiming Central assistance. Audit observed that there was a difference of ₹601.21 lakh between the two, which resulted in excess receipt of ₹450.91 lakh as Central assistance for the implementation of the scheme for the year 2017-18. As the Central release was based on the expenditure reported by the State in a particular year, the correctness of expenditure reported by the State needs to be ensured.

During the Exit Conference (May 2023), Special Secretary, SCSTDD assured that the pending issues will be resolved.

5.4.2. State funded Post-Matric ST scholarship schemes

In addition to the Centrally sponsored Post-Matric scholarship schemes, State Government implemented State Post-Matric schemes fully funded by the State, intended to cover all students, regardless of whether they received central scholarship or not. During the period 2017-18 to 2021-22, these State schemes were implemented through the 17 ITDPOs/ TDOs under the Directorate. It was noticed that on getting allocation from the State Government, Directorate distributed the fund among the 17 ITDPOs/ TDOs for onward transmission to beneficiary accounts. The budget allocation and expenditure during the period of Audit were as shown in **Table 5.5**.

Table 5.5: Budget allocation and expenditure for the period 2017-22 in Post-Matric ST State scheme*(₹ in lakh)*

Post-Matric scheme (2225-02-277-98-12 (Non-Plan))				
Year	Budget allocation (re-appropriation)	Amount surrendered	Net amount available	Expenditure
2017-18	630.00	28.77	601.23	597.62
2018-19	630.00 (-385.34)	Nil	244.66	243.43
2019-20	630.00 (-392.14)	Nil	237.86	236.89
2020-21	630.00	347.96	282.04	281.78
2021-22	630.00	259.79	370.21	370.21

(Source: VLC data of AG (A&E), Kerala)

It was noticed that each year, ₹630 lakh was allotted for Post-Matric schemes without any proposal, based on estimated number of beneficiaries. There were savings ranging from ₹28.77 lakh to ₹392.14 lakh (re-appropriated amount shown as savings) from 2017-18 to 2021-22. Funds were transferred to TDOs in instalments. However, utilisation certificates indicating the amount utilised under each component of the scheme with details of beneficiaries were not submitted by the TDOs. This indicated lapse on the part of the implementing agency in effectively monitoring the implementation and coverage of beneficiaries in the State funded scholarship schemes. Director, STDD, replied (May 2023) that the utilisation certificate with details of beneficiaries would be obtained from the sub offices.

5.4.3. Non reconciliation of expenditure figures (ST State schemes)

In the case of Post-Matric scholarship for ST (State), there were differences ranging from ₹0.01 lakh to ₹3.60 lakh between the expenditure figures booked by the AG (A&E) and that of the Department, for the period 2017-22. This was not reconciled by the Department.

The reasons for non-reconciliation were not included in the Government reply received in June 2023.

5.5. Implementation of Post-Matric ST scholarship schemes

5.5.1. Non-Processing of Post-Matric ST scholarship applications at institutions -Central and State schemes

On verification of the applications of ST students in the selected districts for the period 2018-19 to 2021-22, Audit noticed that processing of 336 applications⁹³ at Post-Matric level was pending (June 2022) with the institutions without any action as detailed in **Table 5.6**.

⁹³ Total applications received for ST Post-Matric schemes during 2018-22 was 23,755

Table 5.6: Non-Processing of scholarship applications at institutions

District	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Ernakulam	5	6	19	82
Kollam	1	4	0	7
Kozhikode	9	12	5	52
Wayanad	18	12	18	86
Total	33	34	42	227

(Source: e-grantz data)

Retaining the application at institution level without processing, resulted in non-receipt of scholarship by 336 ST students in the selected districts.

On verifying the above issue at the selected institutions⁹⁴, the institutional authorities stated that 18 applications were not approved due to students discontinuing studies, shortage of attendance, TC issued, students not eligible for the allowances, in four cases applications were not forwarded due to non-submission of documents by the students, in four cases due to shortage of staff, in four cases due to non-submission of application by the students on time, in three cases payment was received, in three cases student was not part of the institution, in two cases due to non-receipt of complaint from the students, in one case due to delay in commencement of course and in one case application was being processed at the district office.

Government replied (June 2023) that the Director's login received the details of applications only after verification at the institution level and that strict instructions would be issued to all institutions to be vigilant in verifying the applications received in e-grantz portal and that C-DIT would also be directed to generate reports on pending list for effective monitoring in future.

The reply is not acceptable as once a student submits the application through e-grantz, the Directorate had the provision to monitor the pendency at the institutional level through e-grantz. Further, Government should have monitored the pendency in processing of applications at each level and evolved a mechanism to ensure that all the eligible ST students were benefitted through the scheme.

5.5.2. Non-Processing of Post-Matric ST scholarship applications at Directorate -Central and State schemes

On verification of e-grantz data pertaining to the selected districts for the period 2018-22, Audit noticed that 198 Post-Matric scholarship applications were pending (June 2022) at the Directorate without any payment, after approval by the institution and district office.

Government replied (June 2023) that the delay in forwarding the applications by the institutions to the district offices resulted in late receipt of the same in Directorate from district offices.

⁹⁴ 36 cases were seen in 12 selected institutions in two selected districts (Kozhikode and Wayanad).

The reply is not acceptable as Government should have monitored the pendency in processing of applications at each level and evolved a mechanism to ensure that all the eligible ST students were benefitted through the scheme.

5.5.3. Delay in disbursement of various components of Central and State Post-Matric schemes

An important task of the ST Development Department was the timely disbursement of educational assistance to students. One of the objectives of implementing the e-grantz software was to avoid delay in the disbursement of scholarship. However, on verification of e-grantz data relating to Central and State Post-Matric schemes for the period 2018-22 in the selected districts, it was noticed that in both the schemes, there was delay ranging from one to four years in the disbursement of various components of scholarship to the students. In Central and State Post-Matric ST scholarship schemes, the number of cases in which there was delay in disbursement of various components⁹⁵ of scholarship was as follows - one to two years in 8189 cases, two to three years in 1000 cases and three to four years in 47 cases.

The delay noticed in the disbursement of various components of Central and State Post-Matric scholarship schemes is shown in **Appendix 5.1**.

During beneficiary survey, 146 out of 230 ST students stated that they had not received Pre and Post-matric scholarship at the beginning of the academic year.

Further, components like pocket money, private accommodation charges (for Post-Matric scholarship), etc. are intended for daily expenses and boarding charges for students staying in private hostels. Delay in disbursement of these components of the scholarship necessitates the students to identify alternate sources to pay hostel fees, which is against the objectives of the scheme.

Government replied (June 2023) that the delay occurred due to factors like incomplete application, invalid bank account details, lack of funds, etc. and that delay on the part of the Department would be avoided in future.

Government reply citing lack of funds as one of the reasons is not acceptable since there were savings under both the schemes during 2017-18 to 2021-22. Thus, Audit observed that the purpose of providing scholarship was defeated and one of the objectives of implementing e-grantz software was not achieved.

5.5.4. Non-implementation of Book Bank scheme for Post-Matric ST students under Central scheme

According to Chapter XIII of the Guidelines for 'Centrally sponsored Post-Matric scholarship scheme and Regulation governing the award of scholarship⁹⁶' issued by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA), Central Government, book banks were to be set up in all Medical, Engineering, Agriculture, Law and Veterinary degree colleges, institutions imparting

⁹⁵ Total number of transactions for the period 2018-22 was 1,97,263.

⁹⁶ Applicable from 01 July 2010.

Chartered Accountancy, MBA and similar Management courses and Polytechnics, where ST students received Post-Matric scholarship under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS). The total expenditure on the scheme was to be shared between the Central and State Governments on matching grant basis (50:50). The Directorate of Scheduled Tribes Development, GoK was the Nodal office for implementing the Post-Matric scholarship schemes for the eligible ST beneficiaries in the State. Audit observed that 1251 eligible ST students who were fresh applicants and had received Post-Matric scholarship during 2018-19 to 2021-22 as per e-grantz portal, did not receive the benefit of this scheme as the Directorate did not forward any proposal to GoK for implementing the scheme in the State.

Government replied (June 2023) that almost all institutions offering the above-mentioned courses had good library facilities and hence no demand or complaints were received from the students in this regard. It was informed that steps would be initiated to commence the scheme in the institutions from the academic year 2023-24. The reply is not acceptable, since the objective of the scheme was to provide prescribed text books for the entire course to poor and needy students among the Scheduled Tribes, and non-commencement of the scheme had led to non-receipt of the facility by the eligible ST students.

5.5.5. Non-receipt of scholarship on account of invalid bank account

The detailed procedure to be followed when payment was rejected by e-kuber portal of RBI is given in paragraph 2.5.3 of this Report. On verifying the e-grantz data⁹⁷ relating to the selected districts, it was revealed that as regards Post-Matric (Central and State) scholarship schemes, 681 transactions involving an amount of ₹3.68 lakh were rejected during the period 2018-21 due to invalid bank account / IFS code and the amount was returned to Government account due to inaction by the Drawing and Disbursing Officer at the Directorate.

Government replied (June 2023) that the rejection occurred due to the entry of invalid bank account details despite earnest efforts taken by the institutions to help children in providing accurate details in the portal. It was also stated that due to the ignorance of the parents, the alert messages regarding the rejection of scholarship payment sent to the registered mobile numbers remained unnoticed and that rejected/ returned payments were being cleared as soon as accurate details were received.

Audit observed that since institutions functioned as the linking factor between the students and the Department, there has to be a provision in the e-grantz for the institutions to know the status of the applications approved by them.

⁹⁷ Post-Matric data relating to the period 2018-19 to 2020-21

5.5.6. Dual / ineligible payment of scholarships

5.5.6.1. Multiple payment of components of Post-Matric ST scholarship - Central and State schemes

The different components of Centrally sponsored and State Post-Matric scholarships given to ST students are detailed in **Tables 5.1 and 5.2.**

As a recurring process, the Principals of the educational institutions should ensure that the current month's attendance statement of the student, actual boarding and lodging charges (ABLC) of the current month and any other additional fee like examination fee, tuition fee etc. which were payable for the succeeding months were entered in e-grantz without fail within the fifth working day of the succeeding month for claims in respect of stipend, academic allowances, pocket money etc. which required sufficient attendance for each month (75 per cent every month). The ITDPO/ TDO shall verify the claims from the educational institutions (monthly fund statement) and sanction the same, subject to eligibility. The Directorate approves the claim and the Superintendent/ Uploader at the Directorate generates the bill using the SBI Internet Banking Module/ e-treasury for crediting of funds to the students' accounts.

On verifying the Bill Status module of the e-grantz portal, it was seen that multiple payments of the same component of scholarship were made by the DDO at the Directorate.

It was seen that in Post-Matric scholarship for ST students, 430 transactions involving an amount of ₹1.52 lakh were made in excess by multiple payment during the period 2018-19 to 2019-20. Details are given in **Appendix 5.2.**

In the Government reply (June 2023), it was stated that since approximately 15,000 applications per academic year were dealt with at the Directorate, it was quite impossible to check each transaction for possible errors. It was informed that directions would be given to C-DIT to activate separate validation checks in the portal so that the system could identify such errors and block multiple payments.

Thus, lack of diligence on the part of officials at the Directorate and shortcomings in the software resulted in multiple payment to beneficiaries.

5.5.6.2. Granting of State Post-Matric scholarship to students pursuing unaided courses in unaided colleges

As per Government order (02 July 2009), students studying in unaided colleges and pursuing unaided courses⁹⁸ were not eligible for the State Post-Matric scholarship. On verification of e-grantz data, it was seen that scholarships worth ₹30,900 involving 44 transactions were disbursed to students pursuing unaided courses in four unaided colleges in the State as given in **Table 5.7.**

⁹⁸ except professional courses and job-oriented courses

Table 5.7: Scholarship disbursed to students pursuing unaided courses in unaided colleges

Name of the Institution	District	Academic Year	Name of the course	No. of transactions	Amount (₹)
Arts and Science College, Thaliparamba	Kannur	2019-20	B.A. English	4	1650
		2020-21		2	1200
D.B. College, Keezhoor	Kottayam	2018-19	B.A. Malayalam	11	8250
		2019-20		7	5250
JPM College of Arts and Science, Labakkada, Kattappana	Idukki	2018-19	B.A. English	5	3750
Jai Bharath Arts and Science College	Ernakulam	2018-19	B.Com.	4	2700
		2019-20		11	8100
Total				44	30900

(Source: Data from e-grantz)

Since scholarship was not admissible for pursuing unaided non-professional courses in unaided institutions, such courses should not have been mapped in the e-grantz portal for submission of application and there should have been no provision for processing of the application. The fact that payment was effected in above unaided non-professional courses pointed to lapse of the Directorate which mapped the unaided non-professional courses in the e-grantz portal and laxity of the verifying/ approving officials at the institution/ district level.

Government replied (June 2023) that explanation was sought from the Project Officers/ Tribal Development Officers concerned.

5.5.6.3. Irregular payment of both ABLC and Private Accommodation charges to same students - State Post-Matric scholarship scheme

Under the State Post-Matric scholarship scheme, ST students studying in Government/ Aided/ Self-financing institutions and staying in private hostels due to non-availability of accommodation in the institutional hostels were eligible for private accommodation charges and students staying in the hostels of educational institutions were eligible for actual boarding and lodging charges (ABLC). Thus, a hosteller was either eligible for ABLC (actuals /maximum ₹4500/ month) or private accommodation charges (₹1500/ month).

On verification of e-grantz data in the selected districts for the period 2018-22, it was seen that in 14 transactions, the claims for both ABLC and private accommodation were generated by the institution for the same student. Since the data did not contain details as to whether the student was eligible for ABLC or private accommodation charges, Audit calculated the excess amount by assuming that the students were eligible for ABLC. Audit noticed that the inadequate input controls in e-grantz resulted in generation of ABLC and private accommodation charges for the same students resulting in excess payment of at least ₹42,000.

On verifying the above issue at the selected institutions, it was admitted by the institutions that both ABLC and private accommodation charges were granted to seven students and that the institutions came to know about the issue only when Audit pointed out the same.

5.5.6.4. Irregular payment of both ABLC and Stipend to same students - State Post-Matric scheme

As per GoK Notification (May 1982), monthly stipend (for meeting travel expenses) was given to Post-Matric ST students who were day scholars. Pocket money (to meet the cost of soaps, hair cutting and washing charges) was given to boarders in the Government / Institutional hostels. Both stipend and pocket money were fixed by the Government from time to time. In addition, hostellers were given ABLC. Thus, the students who were entitled to get stipend were not entitled to get pocket money or ABLC and *vice-versa*.

However, on verification of e-grantz data pertaining to State Post-Matric scholarship scheme for ST students in the selected districts for the period 2018-22, Audit observed that claims were generated by the institutions for ABLC and stipend to the same students in 36 transactions. Since details to ascertain whether the beneficiaries were entitled to ABLC or stipend were not available in the portal, ABLC being the higher amount, Audit quantified the excess amount paid based on the stipend paid in these 36 transactions. Thus, the inadequate input controls in e-grantz resulted in excess payment of at least ₹26,460.

On verifying the above issue at the selected institutions⁹⁹, it was admitted by institutions that both ABLC and stipend was granted to nine students and that the institutions came to know about the issue only when Audit pointed out the same.

Government replied (June 2023) to the above two paragraphs that, presently e-grantz did not have the provision for validation check facility to identify the double transactions pointed out by Audit. It was informed that C-DIT will be given direction to update the e-grantz portal with validation check facility to avoid such double payments in future.

5.5.7. Exclusion from the scholarship

5.5.7.1. Part Payment of Centrally sponsored and State Post-Matric scholarship to ST students due to non-processing of different components of scholarship

The process of payment of different components of the Post-Matric scholarship to ST students was as shown below:

- Institution (authorised personnel and Principal) will initiate different claims (components) such as stipend, lumpsum grant, ABLC, pocket money, fees etc. prepare attendance statement and forward to the TDO.
- The TDO shall verify the claims from the educational institutions (monthly fund statement) and sanction the same subject to eligibility.
- Processing at the Directorate for approval and sanction for payment.

⁹⁹ Nine cases were seen in two selected institutions in two selected districts (Ernakulam, Wayanad).

- The Superintendent/ Uploader at the Directorate will upload to the SBI Internet Banking Module/ treasury by generation of bill for crediting of funds to the accounts of the students.

In the selected districts, during 2018-19 to 2021-22 it was seen that in 16,262 instances, different components of the scheme involving an amount of ₹115.63 lakh were not transferred to the students due to non-marking of attendance and non-processing of claim at institutions/ TDO/ Directorate etc. as detailed in **Appendix 5.3**.

On verifying the above issue at the selected institutions¹⁰⁰, institutional authorities stated that 872 transactions were pending due to technical error, 732 transactions due to clerical mistakes, 544 cases were pending due to reasons such as course discontinued, shortage of attendance, TC issued, not eligible for the allowances etc., 323 cases were pending / not processed at Directorate and in 647 cases payment was made post June 2022 i.e., after handing over dump data to Audit.

The Director replied (March 2023) that non-processing of claims occurred due to the non-marking of attendance by the institutions and non-processing of claims at institution/ Departmental offices including Directorate. The technical issues could be monitored and remedial steps taken only with IT based real time monitoring system which was not available now. It was further stated that action would be taken to evolve an IT Control mechanism with the help of C-DIT.

Government replied (June 2023) that validation checks for the issue were not available in e-grantz portal. However, on switching over to the online mode which was proposed to be implemented shortly, the issue would be monitored and prevented.

5.6. Monitoring and evaluation

The deficiencies in monitoring and evaluation in Post-Matric ST scholarship schemes were similar to those in Pre-Matric ST scholarship schemes as detailed in paragraph 4.7 of this Report.

Recommendations (Pre and Post-Matric scholarship schemes for ST students)

In addition to the following recommendation, Recommendations 1 to 9 mentioned in Section A, are also applicable to Section B.

Recommendation 12: The Directorate should forward to Government a detailed proposal for implementation of the book bank scheme for Post-Matric ST students.

¹⁰⁰ 3,118 cases were seen in 57 selected institutions in four selected districts.



SECTION C - Pre and Post-Matric scholarship schemes for Minority students

CHAPTER VI SCHOLARSHIP SCHEMES FOR MINORITY STUDENTS - PRE AND POST-MATRIC

In the case of Minority Pre-Matric scheme, unspent scholarship fund was diverted for other purposes such as purchase of cars, iPads etc. Administrative expenses were not claimed during the period of audit. Instances of non-processing of applications at institutions were noticed. There was no mechanism in the portal to identify the students registered as fresh applicants in the previous years, based on their registration ID and to deny further registration as fresh applicants in the subsequent years. Instances of more than two members in a family availing minority scholarship and students availing more than one scholarship were noticed. In violation of CH Muhammed Koya Scheme Guidelines, payment of scholarship to male students instead of female students was also noticed.

6.1. Eligibility for claiming scholarship

The conditions of eligibility for claiming scholarship under Centrally sponsored Pre-Matric schemes for Minority students are given in **Table 6.1**.

Table 6.1: Conditions of eligibility for claiming Centrally sponsored Pre-Matric scholarship for Minority students

Eligibility	<p>Minority students belonging to Muslim, Sikh, Christian, Buddhist, Jain and Zoroastrian (Parsis) who secure marks not less than 50 <i>per cent</i> in the previous final examination. The number of scholarships for fresh applicants was fixed by the Ministry of Minority Affairs (MoMA) for each State, based on the population of minorities in the State.</p> <p>Students whose parents/ guardians' income from all sources does not exceed ₹ one lakh.</p> <p>Thirty <i>per cent</i> of the scholarship was earmarked for girl students of each minority community.</p>		
For study in	1 to X Classes in Government or private schools including such residential government institutes selected and notified in a transparent manner by the State Government		
Scholarship Components	Item	Rate	
	Admission + Tuition fee	For classes VI to X (both Hosteller and Day Scholar) Admission fee: ₹500 per annum subject to actuals Tuition fee: ₹350 per month subject to actuals	
	Maintenance Allowance (for 10 months in an academic year)	For classes I to V: ₹100 per month for Day Scholar For classes VI to X: ₹600 per month for Hosteller ₹100 per month for Day Scholar	

The conditions of eligibility for claiming scholarship under Centrally sponsored Post-Matric schemes for Minority students are given in **Table 6.2**.

Table 6.2: Conditions of eligibility for claiming Centrally sponsored Post-Matric scholarship for Minorities

Eligibility	Minority students belonging to Muslim, Sikh, Christian, Buddhist, Jain and Zoroastrian (Parsis) who secure marks not less than 50 <i>per cent</i> in the previous final examination. The number of scholarships for fresh applicants was fixed by MoMA for each State based on the population of minorities in the State. Students whose parents/ guardians' income from all sources does not exceed ₹two lakh. Thirty <i>per cent</i> of the scholarship was earmarked for girl students of each minority community.	
For study in	Government or private Higher Secondary Schools/ Colleges/ Universities, except courses which are of duration less than one year or certificate courses.	
Scholarship Components	Item	Rate
	Admission + Tuition Fee	For Classes XI and XII (both Hosteller and Day Scholar) Admission and Tuition Fee: ₹7000 per annum subject to actuals
		Admission and Course/Tuition Fee for technical and vocational courses of XI and XII level (one year or more duration) – ₹10,000 per annum subject to actuals (both Hosteller and Day Scholar)
		Admission and Tuition Fee for UG and PG level ₹3000 per annum subject to actuals (both Hosteller and Day Scholar)
Maintenance Allowance (for 10 months in an academic year)	For classes XI to XII including Technical and Vocational Course: ₹380 per month for Hosteller and ₹230 per month for Day Scholar	
	For courses other than Technical and Professional at UG and PG level: ₹570 per month for Hosteller and ₹300 per month for Day Scholar	
	For M.Phil and Ph.D: ₹1200 per month for Hosteller and ₹550 per month for Day Scholar	

The conditions of eligibility for claiming scholarship under State scholarship for Minority students are given in **Table 6.3**.

Table 6.3: Conditions of eligibility for claiming State Post-Matric scholarship for Minority students

Eligibility: Minority students belonging to Muslim, Sikh, Christian, Buddhist, Jain and Zoroastrian (Parsi); Annual family income should be less than ₹ eight lakh.

Name of Scholarship	Beneficiary group	Amount of scholarship
Prof. Joseph Mundassery scholarship for talented minority students	SSLC/ Plus Two/ VHSE/ THSLC Full A+ grade	₹10000
	Undergraduate – 80 <i>per cent</i> marks	₹15000
	Post Graduate – 75 <i>per cent</i> marks	
Scholarship for students studying abroad	For study in selected foreign universities for UG/ PG/ Ph.D courses; Age limit 45 years; Not below 60 <i>per cent</i> marks; preference for BPL category students	Maximum amount ₹10 lakh
CH Muhammed Koya scholarship	Under graduate – 3000 Nos.	₹5000 p.a
	Post graduate – 1000 Nos.	₹6000 p.a
	Professional courses – 1000 Nos.	₹7000 p.a
	Hostellers- 2000 Nos.	₹13000
Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam scholarship	Three-year Diploma courses in Government/ Aided/ Government approved self-financing Polytechnics and students of self-financing polytechnic colleges who got admission on merit basis	Maximum ₹6000
Mother Teresa scholarship	Nursing Diploma/ Paramedical courses in Government/ Aided colleges and merit quota in Self-financing colleges	Maximum ₹15000

6.2. Procedure/ Process flow

The Centrally sponsored Pre and Post-Matric scholarship schemes for students belonging to Minority communities were implemented through the State Government and State Government was responsible for inviting applications from students, checking eligibility, verifying and transferring of scholarship to eligible minority students directly to their bank accounts. Audit scrutiny aimed to examine whether the schemes were implemented effectively to ensure timely disbursement of scholarship to eligible beneficiaries. The responsibility for implementation of the Centrally sponsored Pre-Matric scheme for Minorities at State level was vested with the Director of General Education (DGE) and that of Post-Matric scheme with the Director of Collegiate Education (DCE). In Pre-Matric scheme, DGE, the State Nodal Office and Nodal Officer in the Institution were responsible for the implementation of the scheme. Audit observations in respect of the implementation of the schemes are as follows:

6.3. Planning and financial management

Pre-Matric and Post-Matric Central scholarship schemes for Minority communities were fully funded by Central Government. Central Government disbursed the scholarship directly to the bank accounts of the eligible minority students. Hence, no release was made from Central to State except for Administrative fund¹⁰¹. In addition, GoK also provided State Post-Matric scholarship for Minorities, the details of which are discussed in subsequent paragraphs in this chapter.

6.3.1. Physical and Financial Progress in Minority scholarship schemes

Year-wise details of fresh scholarships and renewal of scholarships in the State from 2017-18 to 2021-22 in both Pre-Matric and Post-Matric scholarship schemes are shown in **Table 6.4**.

Table 6.4: Year-wise details of fresh applications and renewals in Central Pre/ Post-Matric scholarship schemes

Pre-Matric scholarships					
Year	Number of applications received (Fresh)	Number of students who actually received scholarship ¹⁰² (Fresh)	Renewal	Total expenditure (Fresh + renewal) (₹ in crore)	
2017-18	460646	273918	283360	66.87	
2018-19	466608	243935	329841	70.99	
2019-20	403915	256511	337020	74.80	
2020-21	503765	298050	301645	74.40	
2021-22	349701	266031	371819	78.84	

¹⁰¹ In the case of Post-Matric Central scheme only administrative expense was released to State as scholarship was disbursed directly to the bank accounts of the students.

¹⁰² More scholarships could be given under Pre/ Post-Matric schemes as the Guidelines stipulate that if the physical target of scholarship for a particular Minority community in a State was not achieved, excess fund would be distributed among the same Minority community in other States.

Post-Matric scholarships				
Year	Number of applications received (Fresh)	Number of students who actually received scholarship (Fresh)	Renewal	Total expenditure (Fresh + renewal) (₹ in crore)
2017-18	92853	40070	23014	30.38
2018-19	107981	41137	24738	30.36
2019-20	93455	42575	23060	32.68
2020-21	125362	44159	23425	31.80
2021-22	110125	45648	28649	37.57

(Source: Website of MoMA and information received from DGE and DCE)

The audit observations in respect of management of funds and implementation of the schemes have been discussed in the subsequent paragraphs.

6.3.2. Irregular management of Centrally sponsored Pre-Matric Minority scholarship fund

During the year 2014-15, the Ministry released ₹85.39 crore including administrative expenditure for that period to the State for Pre-Matric Minority scholarship scheme for disbursement among 8,45,465 beneficiaries. The DGE, stated that the scholarship for 3.52 lakh children amounting to ₹35.24 crore could not be disbursed in 2014-15 due to discrepancies in account details submitted by the applicants on shifting to Direct Beneficiary Transfer (DBT) mode. By June 2016, scholarship was disbursed to 2.65 lakh students and later in March 2022, 55,590 students were also given scholarship. As of March 2023, 31,908 beneficiaries were yet to be given the scholarship. Central Government directed (December 2020 and January 2022) DGE, to surrender the unspent balance amounts released up to 31 March 2019 for implementation of Pre-Matric scholarship scheme. However, DGE retained the unspent balance of the scheme sanctioned in 2014-15 and the interest thereon in the savings bank account with SBI. Audit noticed irregular management of the balance amount of Pre-Matric scheme as detailed in the succeeding paragraphs. Government stated (June 2023) that further 8,954 students were also sanctioned scholarship on 16 May 2023 and action was initiated to refund the balance amount to the Central Government.

6.3.2.1. Non-reconciliation of bank account with departmental account

There was a closing balance of ₹8.78 crore as on 31 March 2022 in the SB account of Director of General Education. The DGE maintained a cheque issue register for recording the withdrawals from the bank account. However, Audit noticed that neither the receipt of deposits, interest credited, refund received nor return of scholarship amount were recorded in the register. The closing balance was not seen worked out. As the Departmental account for bank transactions was not maintained, the reconciliation with bank account was not possible. In the absence of Departmental account and bank reconciliation statement, the correctness of the balance amount could not be ensured and chances of non-detection of missing credits/ fraudulent withdrawals could not be ruled out.

Government replied (June 2023) that action would be taken to reconcile the account.

6.3.2.2. *Diversion of scholarship fund for other purposes*

GoK accorded Administrative Sanction (August 2019) for the purchase of two new Toyota Innova Crysta cars for official use at the Office of the DGE for an amount of ₹40.28 lakh from the scholarship fund and the vehicles were purchased in September 2019. An amount of ₹10.58 lakh was incurred for fuel, maintenance, insurance and for accessories of these vehicles from September 2019 to March 2022. This was in addition to ₹40.14 lakh incurred on hire charges of three vehicles for the use of DGE's Office and Department of Education, GoK for the period from 2017-18 to 2021-22. Funds to the tune of ₹10.98 lakh were also diverted for conducting National Means-cum-Merit scholarship examination and purchase of AC, iPads, television and mobile phones. State Nodal Officer replied (January 2023) that the purchase of cars and other expenses was made from the scholarship fund invoking the provision of one *per cent* administrative and allied cost which could be utilised for administrative purposes.

Government replied (June 2023) that the amount required for distribution of scholarships was not utilised for administrative expenditure and that the amount was kept in the scholarship account. The cars were purchased after obtaining Government sanction and it was for the purpose of monitoring the scholarship schemes implemented in the State.

The reply of Government is contradictory to that furnished by the State Nodal Officer. The guideline of the Pre-Matric scheme stipulates that the provision for administrative expenses was specifically for expenditure of the States on office equipment including computers and accessories, furniture, printing of application forms, advertisement, engagement of qualified personnel, etc. Further, Audit observed that ₹84.54 lakh sanctioned by Central Government for administrative expenses in 2014-15 was already utilised¹⁰³ and no sanction/permission was obtained from Central Government for the utilisation of the fund and interest accrued in it for other purposes. Further, utilisation certificate with audited statement of expenditure was also not submitted to Central Government.

6.3.2.3. *Advances pending settlement*

Audit noticed that during the period 2017-18 to 2021-22, the DGE authorised sanction for drawing advance amounting to ₹347.04 lakh from the scholarship account for meeting other expenses¹⁰⁴. The DGE did not maintain Register of advances to record the details and watch the timely recoupment of advances. As per the details furnished (May 2023) by the Department, the advances made from the fund were recouped after one to 28 months, which resulted in temporary diversion and loss of interest. It was also noticed that an amount of ₹42.50 lakh given as advance for conducting National Means-cum-Merit scholarship examination in January 2021 was yet to be recouped (May 2023).

¹⁰³ for the payment to contract staff engaged in data entry, purchase of computers, providing internet facility for section dealing with scholarship and for advertisements.

¹⁰⁴ including State school athletic meet, aquatic and other zonal championships, State school games, mid-day meal scheme, conduct of workshops and training etc.

Advances were also made from the scholarship fund for meeting office expenses and an amount of ₹6.62 lakh was pending recovery from two officials who had retired. State Nodal Officer replied (May 2023) that the amount to be reimbursed to scholarship fund was recalculated as ₹4.06 lakh after adjusting the bills/ vouchers submitted to that office and action would be initiated to recover and adjust the amount from the Death cum Retirement Gratuity of the officials.

Government replied (June 2023) that amounts were sanctioned from the scholarship fund as loans for the conduct of important activities or projects of the Department and were remitted back to the scholarship fund when funds were available in the respective heads. It was also stated that subsequent to Audit observation on non-maintenance of Register of advances, the Department has started maintaining the register. It was stated that the amount utilised for conducting the examination was now received from the Central Education Ministry and would be credited to the account of Minority Pre-Matric scholarship. It was also stated that advance amount of ₹4.06 lakh was yet to be recovered.

6.3.2.4. Payment of special remuneration without Government Sanction

Centrally sponsored Pre-Matric scholarship for Minorities was dealt with by the Scholarship section of DGE's office under the monitoring of Additional Director (Academic). Audit noticed that DGE sanctioned and authorised the payment of ₹5.06 lakh from the scholarship account for providing special remuneration to the regular staff from clerks to DGE, in addition to their salary and other allowances on three occasions¹⁰⁵.

Government replied (June 2023), that such allowances were not given after 2019-20 and will not be granted in future. However, Audit observed that payment of special remuneration to the regular staff of DGE's office was made without obtaining approval or sanction from Central Government or GoK.

6.3.3. Non-claiming of administrative expenses by the State

In Centrally sponsored Pre-Matric minority scholarship scheme, an amount not exceeding one *per cent* of total Central expenditure towards the scheme could be utilised on administrative expenditure and allied costs *viz.*, office equipment, advertisement, engagement of personnel, etc. Similarly, in the case of Post-Matric Minority scheme, an amount not exceeding two *per cent* of the total Central expenditure could be utilised to meet the administrative and allied costs *viz.*, expenditure of the States/ Union Territories and the Ministry for office equipment including computers and accessories, furniture, printing of application forms, advertisements, engagement of personnel, etc. Audit noticed that,

- Under Pre-Matric Minority scholarship scheme, fund for administrative expenses due for the State during the period 2017-22

¹⁰⁵ in June 2017, June 2018 and April 2019.

was ₹365.90 lakh. The fund sanctioned for disbursement of scholarship for the year 2014-15 was not completely utilised due to shifting to DBT mode. DGE could not claim the amount for administrative expenses for the period 2017-22 from Central Government due to non-submission of utilisation certificate in respect of the fund released in 2014-15 for disbursement of scholarship.

In the case of Post-Matric Minority scholarship scheme, the State Nodal Authority (SNA) did not receive fund for administrative expenses for the years 2017-18 and 2018-19 since the State had an unspent balance of ₹17.31 lakh relating to the year 2016-17. The unspent balance of ₹17.31 lakh was adjusted against grants payable in 2017-18 and 2018-19. MoMA sanctioned (June 2019) administrative expense of ₹4.62 lakh for the year 2019-20, the utilisation certificate of which was to be furnished to Central Government within three months from the close of the financial year 2019-20. Audit observed that this amount was released to SNA by GoK only in March 2021¹⁰⁶ after a delay of 21 months from the date of receipt of the fund. Due to the delay in transfer of the amount to its account by GoK, SNA could not utilise the administrative expenses sanctioned for the year 2019-20 and the amount was surrendered to MoMA (August 2021) as per Central Government direction. Regarding the delay in transferring administrative fund, DCE replied in the Exit Conference (May 2023) that in spite of request and repeated reminders sent to Government Treasury, fund was not received in time due to Covid and other financial restrictions. However, the fact remains that the delay in transferring the fund for administrative expenses by the State Government to the account of the SNA resulted in surrender of Central assistance.

6.4. Implementation of schemes

6.4.1. Non-processing of scholarship applications at institutions - Central Pre/ Post-Matric scholarships for Minorities

Centrally sponsored Pre/ Post-Matric scholarships for Minorities were managed through the National Scholarship Portal (NSP) of NIC. As a first step, the student was to register and submit the application in the NSP. Thereafter the application was to be verified at the institutional level, after which further processing of application was to be done at the State level and submitted to Centre for granting and transferring of scholarship to the student. Director of General Education was the authority at the State level for processing the Pre-Matric scholarship applications and Director of Collegiate Education (DCE) was the State level authority for processing the Post-Matric applications.

¹⁰⁶ Central Government directed (November 2020) SNA to submit the UC and to inform the status of ₹4.62 lakh sanctioned in June 2019. On receipt of direction from Central Government, SNA requested GoK to transfer the amount to its bank account.

Audit verified the NSP data to check whether the applications submitted by the students were processed by authorities concerned in time. Audit observations in this regard are as follows:

On verification of the data pertaining to Pre/Post-Matric scholarship applications (2017-20), it was seen that in the selected districts, a total¹⁰⁷ of 8,464 registered fresh Pre-Matric applications and 7,817 registered fresh Post-Matric applications¹⁰⁸ were pending with the institutions concerned for verification and further processing as shown in **Table 6.5**.

Table 6.5: Registered fresh applications pending with institutions for verification

Pre-Matric scholarship				
District	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	Total
Ernakulam	508	904	794	2206
Kollam	489	530	760	1779
Kozhikode	911	1292	1427	3630
Wayanad	197	370	282	849
Total	2105	3096	3263	8464
Post-Matric scholarship				
District	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	Total
Ernakulam	708	924	1086	2718
Kollam	450	603	607	1660
Kozhikode	624	849	1169	2642
Wayanad	242	260	295	797
Total	2024	2636	3157	7817

(Source: NSP data for the period 2017-18 to 2019-20)

Students were to register in the portal and submit application as per the timeline fixed every year by MoMA. It was observed that in all the selected districts, the number of applications pending with the institutions generally showed an increasing trend.

Audit test-checked pending Pre-Matric applications in selected institutions¹⁰⁹ and institutional authorities stated that in 128 cases, applications were not approved due to non-submission of applications and documents in hard copies, in 25 cases, students were not part of the institution, in four cases, students received another scholarship and in one case, student was ineligible. In 57 cases which were not processed by the institutions, no specific reply was furnished to Audit.

Audit test-checked pending Post-Matric applications in selected institutions¹¹⁰ and institutional authorities stated that 336 applications were not approved due to non-submission of applications and documents in hard copies, 55 applications were submitted late by the students, 70 applications were processed later, seven applications were defective and one each related to clerical error, availing of another scholarship and student not part of the institution.

¹⁰⁷ Total Pre-Matric Minority (Central) applications in four selected districts was 3,66,647.

¹⁰⁸ Total Post-Matric Minority (Central) applications in four selected districts was 85,900.

¹⁰⁹ 215 cases were seen in 29 selected institutions in four selected districts.

¹¹⁰ 471 cases were seen in 32 selected institutions in four selected districts.

Further, the beneficiary survey revealed that 278 out of 313 Minority students have not received the scholarship at the beginning of the academic year. Delayed disbursement of scholarship would result in non-receipt of admission fee, maintenance allowance etc. at the beginning of the academic year, thus depriving the students from availing the benefits of the scheme.

Government stated (May, June 2023) that the applications submitted by students were available for verification at State level only on completion of verification at institutional level and that the institution could return the application without keeping it pending at their level, if the student had not fulfilled the eligibility criteria or had not submitted the required supporting documents. It was further stated that despite instructions/ notifications given by the MoMA/ State Level Nodal Office to ensure that no application remained unverified at the institutional level after the stipulated date, many such instances were noticed. It was also informed that from 2022-23, communication was initiated from NSP by sending an automated alert message to the registered mobile numbers of students and Nodal Officers of the institutions, informing the pendency of applications at student/ institutional level.

The reply of Government substantiates the audit point that lapses in processing of applications persist at institutional level. Audit observed that non-processing of application at institutional level resulted in non-receipt of scholarship by students.

6.4.2. Non-processing of scholarship applications at institutions - State Post-Matric scholarships for Minorities

The State scholarships such as Prof. Joseph Mundassery scholarship award, Mother Teresa scholarship (MTS), A. P. J. Abdul Kalam scholarship (APJAK), C. H Muhammed Koya scholarship (CHMS) and scholarship to Minority students for higher studies abroad were managed by the Directorate of Minority Welfare, GoK through the dcescholarship portal developed by NIC.

The application for scholarship was first approved by the institution and thereafter by the Directorate of Minority Welfare. The number of scholarships was fixed and the beneficiaries were selected on the basis of certain criteria (annual family income, marks etc.) enunciated in the Guidelines for scholarship. However, on scrutiny of data in the dcescholarship portal it was seen that the verification of scholarship applications was not done at the institutions for further processing and granting of scholarship. It was seen that 4151 scholarship applications¹¹¹ submitted by the students during 2017-18 to 2021-22 were pending without verification as shown in **Table 6.6**.

¹¹¹ Total of Post-Matric Minority (State) applications was 17,221.

Table 6.6: Scholarship applications pending due to non-verification at institutions (Minority State scheme)

District	Scholarship	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
Ernakulam	APJAK	0	53	80	96	122	351
	CHMS	126	205	111	330	233	1005
	MTS	0	6	8	24	8	46
Kollam	APJAK	0	18	8	27	20	73
	CHMS	39	97	47	160	95	438
	MTS	0	12	8	1	7	28
Kozhikode	APJAK	0	48	13	56	37	154
	CHMS	237	391	215	518	288	1649
	MTS	0	19	17	11	4	51
Wayanad	APJAK	0	47	42	21	23	133
	CHMS	21	45	53	83	19	221
	MTS	0	0	1	0	1	2

(Source: dcescholarship data provided by NIC)

Audit test-checked the pending Post-Matric applications in selected institutions¹¹² and the institutional authorities stated that 389 applications were not approved due to non-submission of applications and documents in hard copies, 56 students applied for scholarship in NSP and hence not verified¹¹³, 34 applicants received another scholarship, nine cases were not pertaining to the institution and one application was not seen in the portal.

Government replied (June 2023) that based on the audit findings, explanation was sought from delinquent officers and final reply would be submitted to Audit after verifying the Action Taken Report. Government has not furnished reply to Audit till date (February 2024).

Non-verification of application at institutional level pointed to the laxity of the institutions in processing the applications.

6.4.3. Students applying as fresh candidates more than once during the course period - Centrally sponsored Pre and Post-Matric schemes

The procedure stipulated in the Guidelines of both the schemes for selection of students applying for fresh and renewal of scholarship were as given below:

- Fresh applications- As the number of scholarships for minorities available in a year was fixed and limited, it was necessary to lay down preference for selection. *Inter-se* selection weightage was to be given to poverty rather than marks (the applicant was required to submit an income certificate). In the case of same income, age was used as the criteria for selection of students.
- Renewal applications- There was no merit list generation for renewal. Renewal applicant was entitled to scholarship on obtaining 50 per cent

¹¹² 489 cases were seen in 16 selected institutions in the four selected districts.

¹¹³ As the student was eligible for only one minority scholarship in an academic year, the institution should have accepted/ rejected the application instead of keeping it pending in the dcescholarship portal.

marks in the previous year's examination at the same institution and in same course, and the application was verified by all authorities (as designated by MoMA) and approved by State Government.

Thus, candidates who applied as fresh applicants during a course period in an institution were to renew the scholarship in the subsequent years. The number of fresh scholarships given in a year was limited and fixed. However, for renewal, the number of scholarships was not fixed and all candidates who received scholarship as fresh candidates in the previous year were eligible for getting scholarship in the subsequent years, subject to the condition stated in the previous paragraph. Thus, repeated applications by a student as a fresh applicant instead of renewal applicant during the course period, results in denial of opportunity to other eligible fresh applicants in availing the scholarship.

In the selected districts, Audit noticed 4,640 (2017-20) and 201 (2018-20) instances in Pre-Matric and Post-Matric schemes respectively, wherein students studying in the same institution and same course applied as fresh candidates more than once during the course period and were sanctioned scholarship as given in **Table 6.7** below.

Table 6.7: Details of Students who applied as fresh candidates more than once during the course period and obtained scholarship

Pre-Matric Schemes						
District	2017-18		2018-19		2019-20	
	No. of cases	Amount(₹)	No. of cases	Amount(₹)	No. of cases	Amount(₹)
Ernakulam	0	0	153	204559	1066	1788661
Kollam	0	0	202	273200	1066	1518751
Kozhikode	0	0	190	199800	1246	1310847
Wayanad	1	1000	61	70155	655	754833
Total	1	1000	606	747714	4033	5373092
Post-Matric schemes						
District	2018-19		2019-20			
	No. of cases	Amount(₹)	No. of cases	Amount(₹)	No. of cases	Amount(₹)
Ernakulam	11	30380	50	325325		
Kollam	10	35660	34	142255		
Kozhikode	30	149880	37	173490		
Wayanad	5	11500	24	115285		
Total	56	227420	145	756355		

(Source: NSP data)

Government replied (June 2023) that in the case of Centrally sponsored Pre-Matric scholarship, if a student applies fresh in the first year and does not apply for renewal in the second year, then he/she has to apply as fresh applicant in the third year.

Audit further analysed the above data and found that 2,846 students did not renew the scholarship in the second year and applied as fresh applicants in the third year. Further, 1,794 students applied as fresh applicants in the first year as well as in the second year.

In respect of Pre-Matric scholarship, Audit test-checked the above issue in selected institutions¹¹⁴ and the institutions accepted that 198 students had applied more than once as fresh applicants and received scholarship. In respect of Post-Matric scholarship in the selected institutions¹¹⁵, it was accepted by the institutions that 28 students had applied more than once as fresh applicants and received scholarship.

Regarding Post-Matric scholarship, Government replied (May 2023) that, while issuing notification inviting applications for Post-Matric scholarship, instructions were given to candidates to submit applications as renewal applications with their existing application ID, if they had availed the scholarship for the previous year and had obtained 50 *per cent* marks in the previous academic year's examination. It was further stated that the Department was entrusted with the scrutiny of applications verified at the institutional level and did not have any provision in the portal to check whether a candidate who had once applied afresh and availed scholarship was applying again as a fresh candidate. It was also stated that instructions were given to institutions to effectively monitor the process to prevent such instances.

Thus, Audit observed that in the case of Centrally sponsored Pre and Post-Matric minority schemes, the failure of educational institutions to guide the students to renew instead of applying afresh, may have resulted in non-receipt of opportunity to genuine fresh applicants, as the number of scholarships was limited for fresh applications whereas there was no such limit for renewal. Further, Audit noticed that there was no mechanism in the portal to identify the students (who were registered as fresh applicants in the previous years) based on their Registration ID and to deny further registration as fresh applicants in subsequent years.

6.4.4. Centrally sponsored Pre/ Post-Matric scholarships availed by more than two members in a family

According to the Scheme Guidelines of Centrally sponsored Pre/ Post-Matric scholarship for students belonging to the minority community, scholarship was not to be granted to more than two students in a family. In the absence of details like Aadhaar number of parents etc. in the portal to identify whether more than two children in a family were claiming scholarship, Audit extracted data pertaining to students with similar names of parents and IFS code of Bank account from NSP data, and checked for similar addresses/ phone numbers. The analysis revealed the following.

- In Pre-Matric scheme, in the selected districts, Audit detected 543¹¹⁶ cases where more than two children from the same family were drawing scholarship.

¹¹⁴ 198 cases were seen in 20 selected institutions in four selected districts.

¹¹⁵ 28 cases were seen in 14 selected institutions in three selected districts (Ernakulam, Wayanad, Kollam).

¹¹⁶ Ernakulam- 144, Kollam-123, Kozhikode- 179 and Wayanad -97

- In Post-Matric scheme, Audit identified 23 families from which more than two children availed scholarship, out of which seven were from the selected districts.

With regard to the Pre-Matric scheme, Government replied (June 2023) that it was difficult to identify whether more than two students in a family were availing the scholarship when the students were studying in different institutions. From 2021-22, provision was made in NSP for revalidating the applications in which similar family details were included. It was also added that strict directions will be given to Heads of institutions/ Institutional nodal officers to adhere to the scholarship Guidelines.

Regarding audit observation on Post-Matric scheme, Government replied (May 2023) that though the State level nodal officer was the authority to forward the final list of eligible students to MoMA through NSP, the present software in NSP did not have any provision to cross-check or identify students with similar names of parents from among more than one lakh applications received every year. The issue could be resolved by appropriately modifying the software by making the entry of Aadhaar details of both the parents mandatory when a student makes fresh registration to the scheme.

Audit observed that State Government should take up the matter of modifying the software with Central Government, so that the ineligible applicants could be removed.

6.4.5. Students availing more than one scholarship under Centrally sponsored Post-Matric scheme

As per the Centrally sponsored Post-Matric scheme Guidelines¹¹⁷ issued by MoMA, a scholarship holder under this scheme shall not hold any other scholarship/ stipend. If awarded any other scholarship, the student was to exercise his/ her option for either of the scholarship and inform the competent authority.

Audit analysed the e-grantz data (including details of SC, ST, OBC and General category students for the period 2018-22) and the data on minority students maintained by NSP (for the period 2017-20). Audit linked the data in e-grantz and NSP using the Bank Account Number and IFS Code as the common linking factor. On verification, it was found that in respect of the 1589 instances shown in **Table 6.8**, holder of Post-Matric scholarship for minority was availing another scholarship also, during the period 2018-20.

¹¹⁷ Guidelines for the period 2017-18 to 2019-20 and for the period 2021-22 to 2025-26

Table 6.8: Beneficiaries of Minority Post-Matric scholarship (Central) availing other scholarships

District	Academic Year	Post-Matric scholarship for General category students (e-grantz)		Post-Matric scholarship for OBC students (e-grantz)		Post-Matric scholarship for OBC(HSS) students (e-grantz)		Post-Matric scholarship for Other Eligible Community (OEC) students (e-grantz)		Post-Matric scholarship for SC students (e-grantz)		Post-Matric scholarship for ST students (e-grantz)	
		No. of Cases	Amount (₹)	No. of Cases	Amount (₹)	No. of Cases	Amount (₹)	No. of Cases	Amount (₹)	No. of Cases	Amount (₹)	No. of Cases	Amount (₹)
Ernakulam	2018-19	33	68866	54	116228	129	163578	17	117011	1	6482	1	6989
	2019-20	29	58899	59	113198	118	158602	18	119465	0	0	0	0
Kollam	2018-19	8	9793	25	46671	216	259234	4	13496	1	6590	0	0
	2019-20	9	18930	13	23076	174	249134	2	16960	0	0	0	0
Kozhikode	2018-19	15	37527	57	114070	150	184226	0	0	0	0	0	0
	2019-20	13	23975	76	163700	135	136924	1	3364	0	0	0	0
Wayanad	2018-19	7	17648	11	20217	109	132624	3	18635	0	0	0	0
	2019-20	6	15076	2	4600	89	125156	4	30743	0	0	0	0
Total		120	250714	297	601760	1120	1409478	49	319674	2	13072	1	6989

(Source: e-grantz data and NSP data)

In addition, Audit also noticed that 43 students who availed Central scholarship for Minorities had also availed State specific scholarship such as CH Muhammed Koya scholarship, APJ Abdul Kalam scholarship etc. Data in respect of the selected districts were as given in **Table 6.9**.

Table 6.9: Beneficiaries of Minority Post-Matric scholarship (Central) who availed other Minority scholarships of the State

District	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Ernakulam	8	1	2
Kollam	0	2	0
Kozhikode	5	9	10
Wayanad	4	2	0
Total	17	14	12

(Source: NSP data and dcescholarship data provided by NIC)

In respect of Post-Matric scholarship, Audit test-checked the above issue in selected institutions¹¹⁸ and in respect of 225 cases, it was admitted that multiple scholarships were availed by the students. However, there was no mechanism in the portal to monitor the payment of multiple scholarships. In respect of 37 cases, it was informed that due to uncertainty in approval of scholarship, students applied for more than one scholarship.

Government replied (May 2023) that all the verified cases were included in the merit list of beneficiaries of Post-Matric scholarship and that the status of their application was shown as 'Application sent to PFMS for payment' and 'Scholarship amount processed from NSP to PFMS'. It was further stated that

¹¹⁸ 262 cases were seen in 29 selected institutions in four selected districts.

since the Central and State scholarships were managed through different platforms, there was no means to cross-check whether a student was in receipt of more than one scholarship, and that instructions have been given to nodal officers in the institutions to detect whether any student was availing benefits of more than one scholarship.

Thus, Audit observed that as disbursement of different scholarships was done through different platforms (e-grantz, NSP, NIC (ebt) etc.), and the platforms were not integrated, the students were able to apply for different scholarships and receive them without the knowledge of the Departments concerned. Integration of various portals could reduce the possibility of students drawing multiple scholarships.

6.4.6. State Post-Matric scholarships rejected due to invalid account number

Bill Information and Management System (BiMS) was an e-Bill portal for settlement of claims by Drawing and Disbursing Officers (DDOs). The DDOs were able to prepare online contingent bills for e-submission to treasury through BiMS. During the period 2021-22, the disbursement of scholarships was carried out by the Director of Minority Welfare, a DDO, through BiMS portal from District Treasury, Thiruvananthapuram and the scholarship amount was credited to the beneficiary's bank account by Real Time Gross Settlement (RTGS) system.

Audit observed that the scholarships pertaining to 297 students in the State were rejected by the bank due to submission of invalid bank account details by the beneficiaries, dormant bank accounts, incorrect IFS code etc.

Directorate of Minority Welfare could not take remedial measures till date (March 2023) since the treasury had updated the BiMS software by allowing only one month for editing the e-submissions and the stipulated one month had already elapsed when the Directorate came to know about the rejection. Further, from April 2022, the disbursement of scholarship was delinked from the District Treasury, Thiruvananthapuram, and the Director of Minority Welfare as a DDO was denied permission to login to BiMS portal. The treasury authorities had expressed their inability to proceed further in this matter due to the control measures implemented in the BiMS software. Thus, failure to verify bank details of beneficiaries resulted in non-receipt of scholarship by 297 students.

Government replied (June 2023) that NIC would be requested to re-programme the treasury software allowing a time of six months to the eligible students who were denied scholarship to enable them to make necessary corrections in bank account details. However, the reply was silent on the course of action proposed by the Department to compensate the students for the scholarships denied to them in the previous years.

6.4.7. Granting of CH Muhammed Koya scholarship to boys instead of girls- State Post-Matric scheme

CH Muhammed Koya scholarship is granted by the Minority Welfare Department of GoK to girl students¹¹⁹ for pursuing Graduate, Post-Graduate and Professional courses in Government/ Aided institutions and who had secured admission under Government quota in unaided colleges. The annual family income is not to exceed ₹eight lakh. The scholarship is sanctioned by the Project Officer after verification of the applications.

On verifying the data from the dcescholarship portal, it was seen that in four cases, payment was made during the period 2017-22 to male students in violation of the Guidelines. It was also seen that the dcescholarship portal was accepting the applications of male students, which indicated lack of input control in the system.

Audit observed that the approving authority was not taking care to eliminate the applications of male students while sanctioning scholarship. In addition, the dcescholarship portal also failed to reject students who marked the gender column as “Male”.

Government replied (June 2023) that the presence of radio button for both male and female candidates due to lack of input control in the portal, led to the issue and that the matter was taken up with NIC. Further, it was stated that lack of scrutiny at the institutional level also contributed to this erroneous payment and steps would be taken to collect back the amount disbursed to male candidates.

6.5. Monitoring and evaluation

The Central scheme Guidelines recommend a provision not exceeding two *per cent* of the total budget to be made to meet administrative and allied costs including provision for monitoring and evaluation of the scheme, through reputed external institutions/ agencies engaged by the State Government. Audit observed that such a monitoring mechanism was not implemented in the State.

Further, the Guidelines recommend that the State/ Union territory shall maintain year-wise details of students receiving scholarships indicating school/ institution, location of school/ institution, Government or private, class, gender, new or renewal, permanent address and parents’ addresses. Such a database of students receiving minority scholarship was found lacking in the Department.

Though the DGE and the DCE had a dedicated internal audit team whose responsibilities included conducting inspection among Regional offices and educational institutions, the Director of Minority Welfare Department who distributes State Post-Matric minority scholarships did not conduct audit/ inspection among the educational institutions.

¹¹⁹ Among Muslims, Christians, Parsis etc.

Recommendations (Pre and Post-Matric scholarship schemes for Minority students)

Recommendation 13: Government should ensure that the time frame prescribed for processing of scholarship applications for minority community students is strictly adhered to and no students are deprived of the scholarship due to non-processing of applications.

Recommendation 14: Government should consider integration of different scholarship payment portals for cross-checking data available in different portals to prevent beneficiaries from drawing multiple scholarships.

Recommendation 15: State Government should bring to the notice of Central Government the changes to be made in the National Scholarship Portal to capture the identification details of parents of beneficiaries to ensure that more than two students from the same family do not draw the scholarship.

Recommendation 16: Government should forward the utilisation certificate of Minority scholarship fund to Central Government without delay and ensure that funds diverted for other purposes are returned to Central Government.



(S. SUNIL RAJ)

Principal Accountant General
(Audit I), Kerala

Thiruvananthapuram,
The 17 May 2024

Countersigned



(GIRISH CHANDRA MURMU)
Comptroller and Auditor General of India

New Delhi,
The 27 May 2024



APPENDICES

Appendix 1.1

Various scholarship schemes operated by Central Government and State Government

(Reference: Chapter I; Page: 1)

Name of Scholarship	Income Limit	Components of the scheme provided by Central Government	Components of the scheme provided by State Government	Managed Through
Post-Matric scholarship for SC, ST and Minority students				
Post-Matric Scholarship for SC (Central scheme) 2017-18 to 2019-20	Upto ₹2.5 lakh	maintenance allowance, all fees, study tour charges, book bank facility, etc.	Since it is a committed liability ¹²⁰ , State provides all fee (tuition fee, exam fee, special fee), lumpsum grant, stipend, etc. <i>in lieu</i> of the components provided by Central Government. In addition, it provides Actual Boarding and Lodging Charges (ABLC), private accommodation charges, pocket money etc. for hostellers.	e-grantz portal of GoK
Post-Matric Scholarship for SC (State scheme) 2017-18 to 2019-20	Without income limit for students not covered under Central scheme	Nil	All fees (tuition fee, exam fee, special fee), lumpsum grant ¹²¹ , stipend ¹²² , etc. for all students, and ABLC, private accommodation charges, pocket money ¹²³ etc. for hostellers.	e-grantz portal of GoK
Post-Matric Scholarship for SC (Central scheme) 2020-21 to 2024-25	Upto ₹2.5 lakh	All fees (tuition fee, exam fee etc), academic allowance (Central/ State share in the ratio of 60:40 with effect from AY 2020-21)	Additional State allowance (stipend), lumpsum grant, etc. for all students and ABLC, private accommodation charges, pocket money, etc. for hostellers.	e-grantz Portal of GoK
Post-Matric Scholarship for SC (State scheme) 2020-21 to 2024-25	Without income limit for students not covered under Central scheme	Nil	All fees (tuition fee, exam fee etc), academic allowance, additional State allowance (Stipend), lumpsum grant for all students and ABLC, private accommodation charges etc. for hostellers.	e-grantz Portal of GoK
Post-Matric Scholarship for ST (Central scheme) from 2010 onwards – upward revision in 2013	Upto ₹2.5 lakh	All fees (tuition fee, exam fee etc), maintenance allowance (academic allowance), study tour/ thesis/ typing charges, book bank	All fee (tuition fee, exam fee, special fee), lumpsum grant, stipend, etc. for all students and ABLC, private accommodation charges, pocket money, etc. for hostellers. These components are given <i>in lieu</i> of the components given in Central scheme and shared in the ratio of 75:25 between Centre and State (limited to the amount prescribed in the Central scheme).	e-Grantz Portal of GoK
Post-Matric Scholarship for ST (State scheme)	Without income limit for students not covered under Central scheme	Nil	All fees (tuition fee, exam fee etc), maintenance allowance (academic allowance), stipend, lumpsum grant, ABLC. Entire expenditure borne by the State Government.	e-grantz Portal of GoK

¹²⁰ The level of committed liability of a State Government for a year is equivalent to the highest demand made in any of the financial years of the previous Plan period by the State under the scheme.

¹²¹ For meeting initial expenses (book, uniform etc).

¹²² Given only to day scholars for travelling.

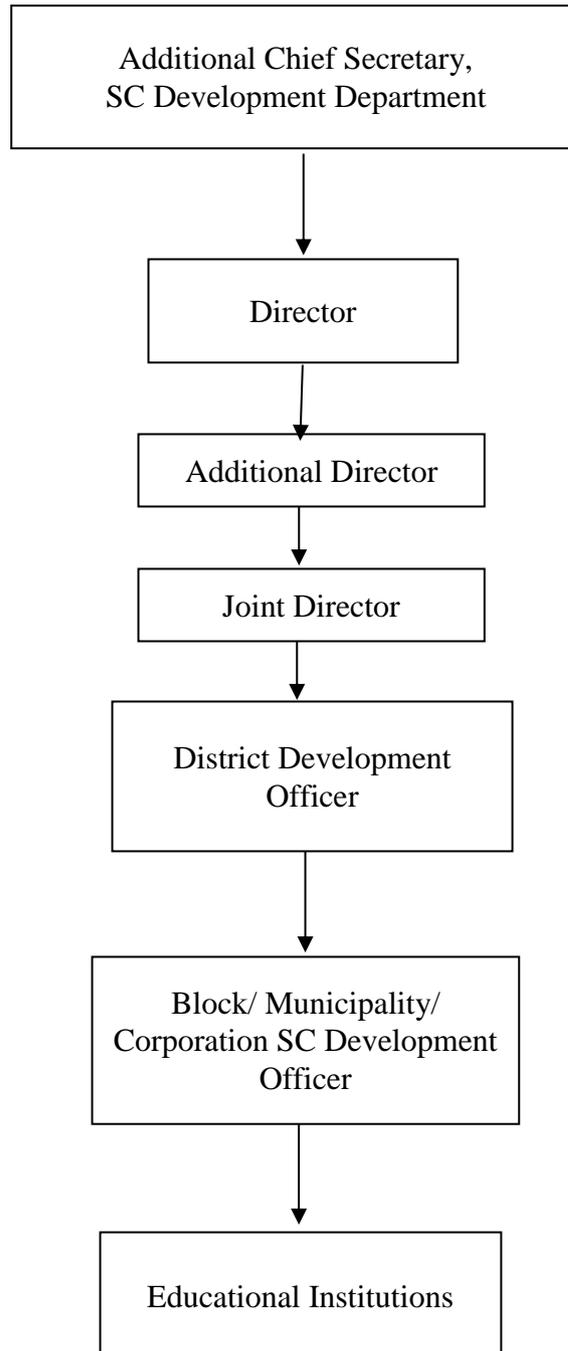
¹²³ Institutional hostellers are given ABLC and pocket money. However, private hostellers are given only private accommodation charges.

Name of Scholarship	Income Limit	Components of the scheme provided by Central Government	Components of the scheme provided by State Government	Managed Through
Scholarship for SC/ ST students studying abroad (State scheme)	No Limit ¹²⁴	-	All fees, Travel, Accommodation subject to a maximum of ₹25 lakh per course	Manual
Post-Matric Scholarship for Minorities (Central scheme)	Upto ₹2 lakh	Admission Fee, Tuition fee and Maintenance Allowance	Nil	National Scholarship Portal
Post-Matric Scholarship for Minorities (State scheme)				
1. Prof. Joseph Mundasseri Scholarship (Scholarship Award for Talented Minority ¹²⁵ Students studying in SSLC/ +2,VHSC,THSLC)			One-time payment	NIC portal developed by State Government
2. C H Muhammad Koya Scholarship (given to girl students studying in Higher Education Sector)				
3. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Scholarship (Polytechnic students)				
4. Mother Teresa Scholarship (Nursing students)				
5. Scholarship for students studying abroad				
6. ITC Scholarship (ITI Students)				
7. Chartered Accountancy Scholarship				
Pre-Matric Scholarship for SC, ST and Minority students				
Pre-Matric Scholarship for SC/ ST students studying in IX and X (Central scheme)	Upto ₹2.5 lakh	Scholarship and Book Grant	Nil (Committed liability ¹²⁶ for SC/ ST Scholarship)	ebt portal of NIC for SC students. For ST students, manual up to 2018-19 and thereafter through e-grantz
Pre-Matric Scholarship for SC/ ST (State scheme) Classes I to X	No Limit	Nil	Lumpsum Grant for SC/ ST and Stipend for vulnerable communities of SC and all ST students	e-grantz Portal of GoK for SC and Manual method for ST up to 2018-19. e-grantz from 2019-20 onwards
Primary and Secondary Education Aid (State scheme) for students from Classes I to VIII for SC students only	No limit	-	Education Aid	e-grantz Portal of GoK from 2019-20 onwards
Pre-Matric Scholarship for Minorities (Central scheme) for Classes I to X	Upto ₹one lakh	Scholarship and Maintenance allowance	Nil	National Scholarship Portal

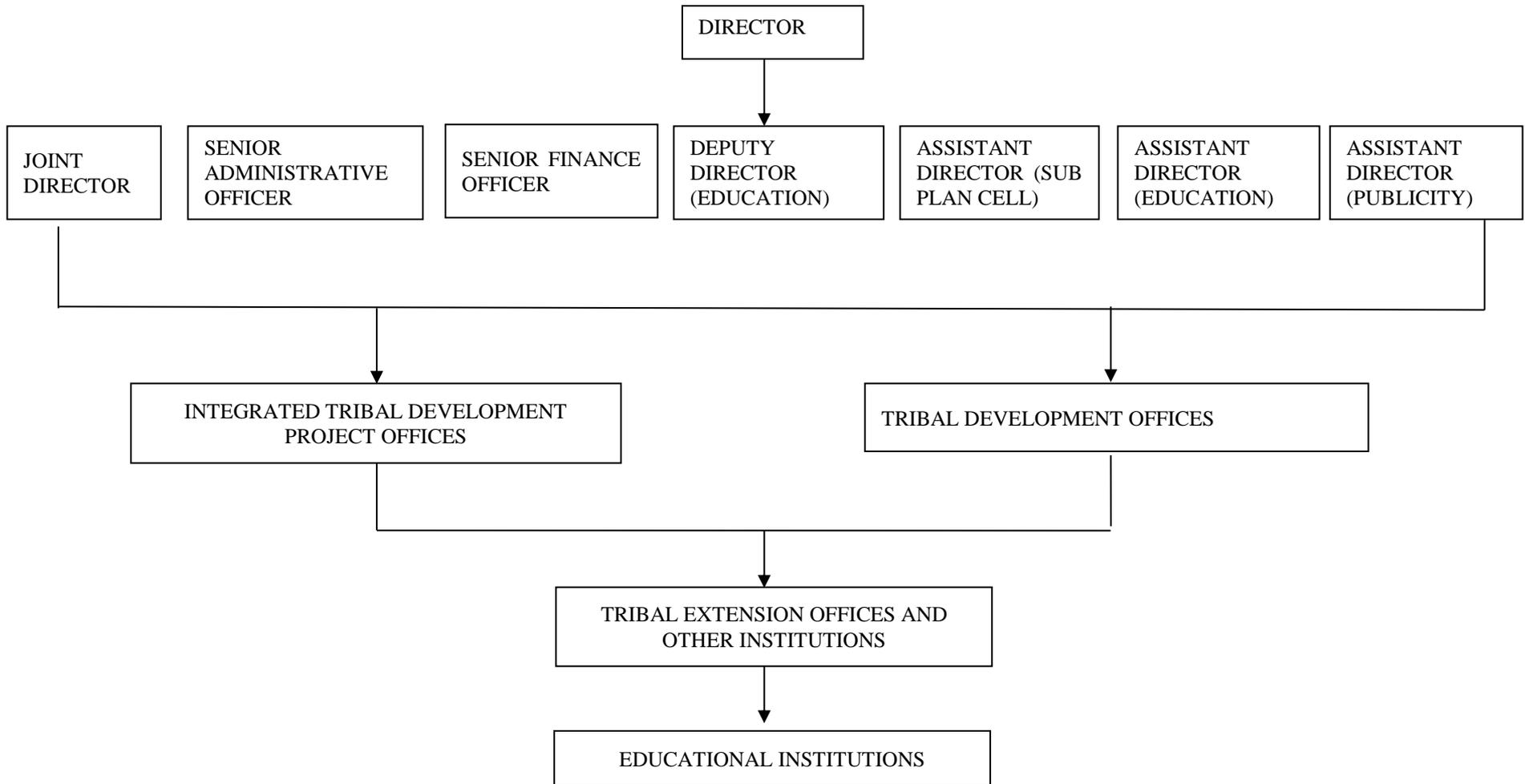
¹²⁴ Subject to certain criteria (slab system).

¹²⁵ Minority Community in Kerala includes Muslims (59.06 per cent), Christian (40.87 per cent), Sikh (0.01 per cent), Buddhist (0.01 per cent), Jain (0.01 per cent).

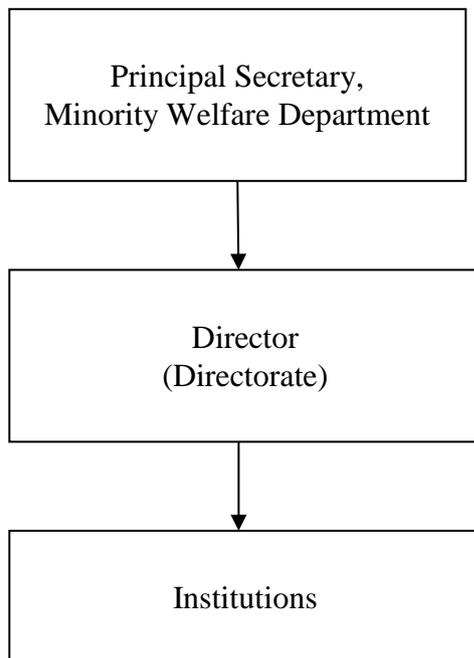
¹²⁶ Committed Liability of the State/ UT was defined as the highest demand for any of the years of the previous Plan period/ Finance Commission Cycle. The highest demand during the previous Plan period (in 2012-13), ₹19.84 crore, was taken and fixed by Central Government as committed liability for the years 2017-18 and 2018-19.

Appendix 1.2**Organisational setup in SC Development, ST Development and Minority Welfare Departments***(Reference: Paragraph 1.1; Page: 3)***1) SC Development Department**

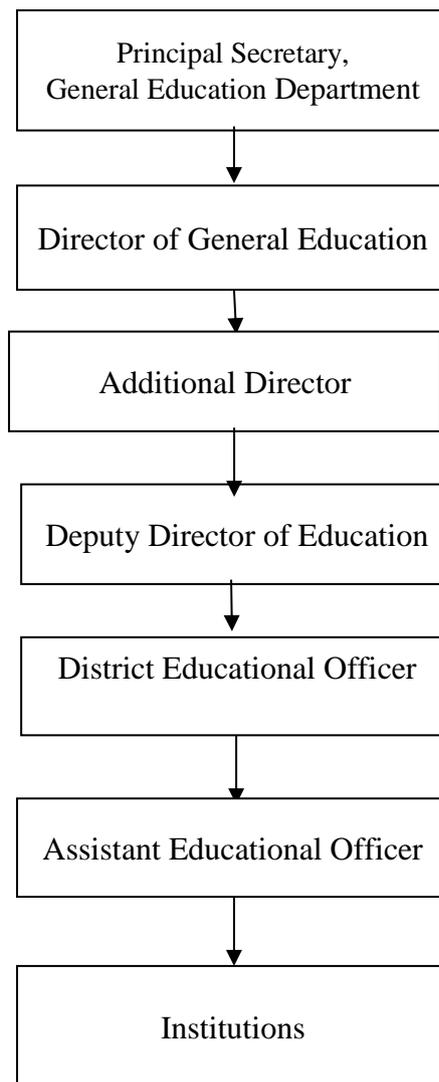
2) Scheduled Tribes Development Department



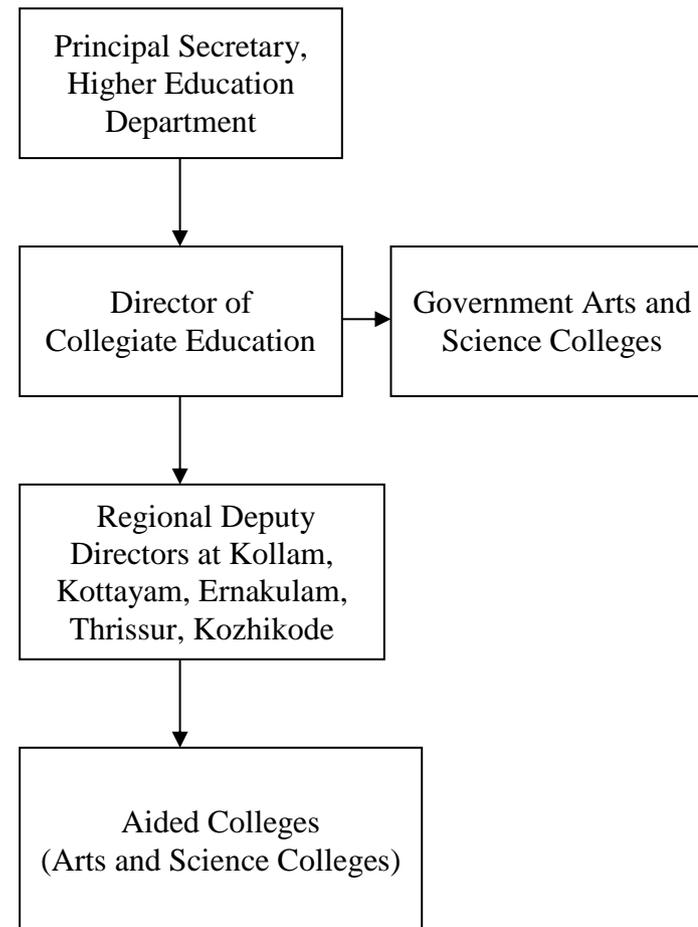
3) Minority Welfare Department



Director of General Education



Directorate of Collegiate Education



Appendix 1.3

List of test-checked institutions in the selected districts

(Reference: Paragraph 1.5; Page: 4)

Sl. No	District	Name of Institution
Pre-Matric SC Scholarship		
1	Ernakulam	Govt. H.S.S. for Girls, Ernakulam Govt. High School, Nochima Pius Girls H.S, Edapally St. Mary's L.P.S Thripoonithura Assissi Vidyanikethan Public School, Perumpilly St. Vincent De Paul E.M.U.P.S, Palarivattom
2	Kollam	Govt UPS Kadakkal Govt HS, Nedumgolam Balika Mariyam LPS, Pattathanam SC LPS Valakom St. Gregorious Central School Thazhava St. Mary's E.M H S Kundara
3	Kozhikode	Kendriya Vidyalaya No.1 Calicut GHSS, Avitanallur Janatha A.U.P.S, Palath A.L.P.S, Gurudevavilasam Sacred Heart U P School, Payyoli St. Michael's EMLPS school, Westhill
4	Wayanad	GHS Kuppadi GLPS, Kaithakolly CMSHS Arappatta Vijaya ALPS Pulpally NSSEHSS Kalpetta Mount Tabore, Meppady
Pre-Matric ST Scholarship		
5	Ernakulam	Govt. HSS, Kadayirippu Govt. V.HSS, Thirumarady St. George's HS, Vennikulam Sacred Heart Orphanage H. S, Mookkanoor Mary Matha. HSS, Thrikkakara Hail Mary E.M.R. HSS, Perumpilly
6	Kollam	Govt HSS, Kulathupuzha Govt VHSS, Achenkovil HS for Girls, Punalur Edamon, VHSS Sree Buddha Central School, Karunagappally Sree Narayana Central School, Karunagappally
7	Kozhikode	GGHSS, Balussery GHSS, Easthill Memunda, HSS St. George's HS, Vilangad KMO HSS, Koduvally
8	Wayanad	GHSS, Thalapuzha GHS, Kalloor St. Joseph's H S S, Kallody Vijaya HSS, Pulpally N.S.S.E HSS, Kalpetta M.G.M HSS, Mananthavady St. Joseph's E H S, S. Bathery

Pre-Matric Minority Scholarship		
9	Ernakulam	St. John De Britto's A.I.H.S, Fort Kochi Assisi Public School, Kakkanad Vimala Matha HSS, Kadalikkad St. Augustine's GHSS, Kuzhuppilly GLPS, Pulluvazhy CKCGHS, Ponnurunny
10	Kollam	Little Flower E.M. High School, Thrippilazhikom NSS HSS, Prakkulam Anuvelil G.U.P.S, Panmana St. Agnes G.H.S, Neendakara Kistranj HSS, Kollam G.L.P.S, Ayyankoickal
11	Kozhikode	KRHS, Purameri S.P.H Vilasam J.B S Punnassery South AMLPS Avilora MMAUPS St. Mary's HS, Koodathai Edachery North UPS
12	Wayanad	HIMUPS, Kalpetta RCLPS, Chundale St. Mary's E.M.L.P.S, Chethalayam GHS, Vaduvanchal GHSS, Kartikulam AUPS, Vellamunda
Post-Matric SC Scholarship		
13	Ernakulam	Govt Boys H.S.S Aluva Department of Computer Science- CUSAT MA College Kothamangalam Sree Sankara College Kalady Indira Gandhi Institute of Engineering and Technology Jai Bharat College of Management and Engineering Technology
14	Kollam	LBS Center for Science and Technology, Sasthamcottta Govt HSS, Anchalummoodu SNSM HSS, Elampalloor Jaya Jyothy VHSS, Ambalathumbhagom KNNM ITE, Pavithreswaram HKM TTI, Umayanalloor
15	Kozhikode	N.I.T. Calicut Government Dental College, Kozhikode (BDS/ MDS) Farook College, Feroke St. Joseph's Boys H.S.S, Kozhikode Sree Anjaneya Institute of Dental Sciences Bhavans Ramakrishna Institute of Teacher Education
16	Wayanad	Co-operative Training Centre, Karani G.H.S.S, Meenangadi Vijaya HSS, Pulpally SKMJ HSS, Kalpetta St. Gregorious B.Ed College Meenangadi Cannore University B.Ed Centre, Mananthavady

Sl. No	District	Name of Institution
Post-Matric ST Scholarship		
17	Ernakulam	School of Engineering CUSAT Model Engineering College, Ernakulam St. Stephens H.S.S, Keerampara Union Christian College, Aluva H M Training College, Muvattupuzha MOSC Medical College, Kolenchery
18	Kollam	GHSS, Kulathupuzha Govt HSS Punalur N S S College Nilamel St John's College Anchal NGPM Institute of Teacher Education, Venchempu , Punalur Azeezia College of Dental Sciences and Research, Meeyannoor, Kollam
19	Kozhikode	Government College, Madappally Government College, Mokery Farook College, Feroke Zamorins Guruvayurappan College KMCT Ayurveda College, Manassery AWH Polytechnic College
20	Wayanad	G.H.S.S. Koleri G.H.S.S. Valad SKMJ HSS, Kalpetta Sacred Heart H.S.S. Dwaraka Cannore University B.Ed Centre, Mananthavady Valummel TTI, S.Bathery
Post-Matric Minority Scholarship		
21	Ernakulam	Maharajas College, Ernakulam Government School of Nursing Ernakulam St. Augustines GHSS Kothamangalam Nirmala College, Muvattupuzha, Ernakulam Lourdes College of Nursing Sidhi Sadan Cochin Balanagar Technical Institute ITC Mookkannur, Ernakulam
22	Kollam	Sree Narayana Polytechnic College Kottiyam Government BHSS, Chavara, Kollam Thangal Kunju Musaliar College of Arts and Science, Kollam St. Stephen's HSS, Pathanapuram, Kollam Marthoma ITC, Anchal Azeezia College of Dental Science and Research, Diamond Hills Meeyannoor, Kollam.
23	Kozhikode	Govt. Medical College Kozhikode Womens Polytechnic College, Kozhikode Fathimabi Memorial Higher Secondary School, Koombara, Kozhikode Farook College, Feroke, Kozhikode Mukkam Muslim Orphanage Private ITI Ideal Industrial Training Centre (ITC), Perambra, Kozhikode
24	Wayanad	Govt. School of Nursing Panamaram Govt. VHSS Ambalavayal Plus Two Section W.M.O. Arts and Science College, Muttill, Wayanad The Green Hills Public School Sulthan Bathery, Wayanad Eldorado ITC, Dwaraka Nalloomadu P.O, Wayanad Deccan Computer ITC, EK Building, Kalpetta

Appendix 1.4

Details of portals for processing various scholarships

(Reference: Paragraph 1.5; Page: 4)

Name of the Scheme	Managed through	Period
SC Pre-Matric (State, Classes I-X)	Manual	Upto 2018-19
	e-grantz	From 2019-20
SC Post-Matric (State)	e-grantz	From 2009 (data available to Audit from 2018-19 only)
SC Pre-Matric (Central, Classes IX and X)	ebt portal	Upto 2021-22
SC Post-Matric (Central)	e-grantz	From 2009 (data available to Audit from 2018-19 only)
ST Pre-Matric (State, Classes I-X)	e-grantz	Upto 2021-22
ST Post-Matric (State)	e-grantz	Upto 2021-22
ST Pre-Matric (Central, Classes IX and X)	Manual	Upto 2018-19
	e-grantz	From 2019-20
ST Post-Matric (Central)	e-grantz	From 2009 (data available to Audit from 2018-19 only)
Minority Pre and Post-Matric (Central)	NSP	Upto 2021-22
Minority Post-Matric (State)	dcescholarship	Upto 2021-22

Appendix 3.1

Delay in disbursement of various components of Post-Matric scholarship to SC students - Central and State schemes

(Reference: Paragraph 3.5.3; Page: 39)

District	Academic year	Component of Scholarship	One to two years		Two to three years		Three to four years		Four to five years		Total		
			No. of Transactions	Amount	No. of Transactions	Amount	No. of Transactions	Amount	No. of Transactions	Amount	No. of Transactions	Amount	
Ernakulam	2018-19	Contingent Grant + Fellowship	126	2454935	23	398550	7	162750	0	0	156	3016235	
		LSG	916	1223260	184	259860	48	64750	0	0	1148	1547870	
		Pocket Money	1312	246195	517	97175	94	17243	0	0	1923	360613	
		Private Accommodation	185	266213	72	107186	10	12600	0	0	267	385999	
		Stipend < 8 km	1563	913752	470	285264	74	44877	0	0	2107	1243893	
	Stipend > 8 km	2783	1973675	1033	756450	193	137925	0	0	4009	2868050		
	2019-20	Contingent Grant + Fellowship	280	6602599	50	1237225	0	0	0	0	330	7839824	
		Lockdown Allowance	2351	2351000	0	0	0	0	0	0	2351	2351000	
		LSG	568	778710	181	240670	1	3130	0	0	750	1022510	
		Pocket Money	2019	379815	253	47305	2	274	0	0	2274	427394	
		Private Accommodation	688	754389	41	54529	0	0	0	0	729	808918	
		Stipend < 8 km	1681	1041457	371	228165	0	0	0	0	2052	1269622	
	Stipend > 8 km	3920	2880960	795	575650	0	0	0	0	4715	3456610		
	2020-21	Contingent Grant + Fellowship	197	4422492	15	351750	0	0	0	0	212	4774242	
		Lockdown Allowance	3617	3617000	0	0	0	0	0	0	3617	3617000	
		LSG	858	1469060	5	9280	0	0	0	0	863	1478340	
		Pocket Money	1142	220691	8	1414	0	0	0	0	1150	222105	
		Private Accommodation	196	211756	0	0	0	0	0	0	196	211756	
		Stipend < 8 km	1380	1067362	0	0	0	0	0	0	1380	1067362	
	Stipend > 8 km	3460	2950806	1	675	0	0	0	0	3461	2951481		
	2021-22	Contingent Grant + Fellowship	14	361500	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	361500	
		LSG	20	29340	2	2380	0	0	0	0	22	31720	
	Kollam	2018-19	Contingent Grant + Fellowship	12	223490	11	112210	5	64950	0	0	28	400650
			Lockdown Allowance	20	20000	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	20000
LSG			1082	1249380	65	78670	24	29280	0	0	1171	1357330	
Pocket Money			259	48783	180	33960	3	570	0	0	442	83313	
Private Accommodation			49	71500	19	28500	12	18000	0	0	80	118000	
Stipend < 8 km			3770	2210781	798	493122	100	61698	0	0	4668	2765601	
Stipend > 8 km		2747	1976875	773	566100	93	69675	0	0	3613	2612650		
2019-20		Contingent Grant + Fellowship	33	678650	18	429800	0	0	0	0	51	1108450	
		Lockdown Allowance	1522	1522000	0	0	0	0	0	0	1522	1522000	
		LSG	740	946510	110	135510	1	1190	0	0	851	1083210	
		Pocket Money	1423	268789	28	5242	0	0	0	0	1451	274031	
		Private Accommodation	106	123361	11	15098	0	0	0	0	117	138459	
		Stipend < 8 km	3446	2141089	221	135135	0	0	0	0	3667	2276224	
Stipend > 8 km		3104	2271945	369	268925	0	0	0	0	3473	2540870		
2020-21		Contingent Grant + Fellowship	3	27900	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	27900	
	Lockdown Allowance	1071	1071000	0	0	0	0	0	0	1071	1071000		

District	Academic year	Component of Scholarship	One to two years		Two to three years		Three to four years		Four to five years		Total		
			No. of Transactions	Amount	No. of Transactions	Amount	No. of Transactions	Amount	No. of Transactions	Amount	No. of Transactions	Amount	
		LSG	618	876240	3	3330	0	0	0	0	621	879570	
		Pocket Money	278	53247	1	190	0	0	0	0	279	53437	
		Private Accommodation	143	158350	0	0	0	0	0	0	143	158350	
		Stipend < 8 km	1876	1401878	1	630	0	0	0	0	1877	1402508	
		Stipend > 8 km	2546	2211071	0	0	0	0	0	0	2546	2211071	
	2021-22	LSG	51	79720	1	1190	0	0	0	0	52	80910	
	Kozhikode	2018-19	Contingent Grant + Fellowship	17	395250	11	242250	0	0	0	0	28	637500
			Lockdown Allowance	14	14000	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	14000
			LSG	483	588750	39	53380	4	5330	1	3130	527	650590
			Pocket Money	575	108209	427	80380	0	0	0	0	1002	188589
Private Accommodation			99	135317	47	68578	0	0	0	0	146	203895	
Stipend < 8 km			1043	601860	256	156051	19	11718	0	0	1318	769629	
Stipend > 8 km		980	667425	713	524075	11	8250	0	0	1704	1199750		
2019-20		Contingent Grant + Fellowship	37	800400	8	189000	0	0	0	0	45	989400	
		Lockdown Allowance	2266	2266000	0	0	0	0	0	0	2266	2266000	
		LSG	463	579910	53	78610	0	0	0	0	516	658520	
		Pocket Money	1873	346530	64	12160	0	0	0	0	1937	358690	
		Private Accommodation	361	388895	27	35400	0	0	0	0	388	424295	
		Stipend < 8 km	1935	1193961	97	59199	0	0	0	0	2032	1253160	
Stipend > 8 km		2821	2043145	204	144750	2	1500	0	0	3027	2189395		
2020-21		Contingent Grant + Fellowship	38	876450	0	0	0	0	0	0	38	876450	
		Lockdown Allowance	2274	2274000	0	0	0	0	0	0	2274	2274000	
		LSG	522	904360	3	6270	0	0	0	0	525	910630	
		Pocket Money	1474	288485	4	760	0	0	0	0	1478	289245	
		Private Accommodation	357	355579	0	0	0	0	0	0	357	355579	
		Stipend < 8 km	1553	1178788	18	11340	0	0	0	0	1571	1190128	
Stipend > 8 km		2045	1783234	3	2000	0	0	0	0	2048	1785234		
2021-22		LSG	74	138200	0	0	0	0	0	0	74	138200	
		Pocket Money	10	1900	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	1900	
Wayanad		2018-19	Contingent Grant + Fellowship	1	24000	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	24000
	LSG		57	62830	6	5410	5	11650	0	0	68	79890	
	Pocket Money		39	7128	97	18430	11	2090	0	0	147	27648	
	Private Accommodation		35	49448	61	84215	6	9000	0	0	102	142663	
	Stipend < 8 km		246	150423	33	20013	0	0	0	0	279	170436	
	Stipend > 8 km	114	79900	66	47475	4	2300	0	0	184	129675		
	2019-20	Contingent Grant + Fellowship	7	171750	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	171750	
		Lockdown Allowance	501	501000	0	0	0	0	0	0	501	501000	
		LSG	63	84970	17	27770	0	0	0	0	80	112740	
		Pocket Money	454	84793	51	9690	0	0	0	0	505	94483	
		Private Accommodation	65	68934	9	13500	0	0	0	0	74	82434	
		Stipend < 8 km	153	93261	6	3612	0	0	0	0	159	96873	
	Stipend > 8 km	213	153687	50	36250	0	0	0	0	263	189937		
	2020-21	Contingent Grant + Fellowship	3	97500	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	97500	
		Lockdown Allowance	674	674000	0	0	0	0	0	0	674	674000	
		LSG	92	154330	3	2640	0	0	0	0	95	156970	
		Pocket Money	118	23229	0	0	0	0	0	0	118	23229	

District	Academic year	Component of Scholarship	One to two years		Two to three years		Three to four years		Four to five years		Total	
			No. of Transactions	Amount	No. of Transactions	Amount	No. of Transactions	Amount	No. of Transactions	Amount	No. of Transactions	Amount
		Private Accommodation	207	216000	0	0	0	0	0	0	207	216000
		Stipend < 8 km	209	159484	0	0	0	0	0	0	209	159484
		Stipend > 8 km	328	283860	3	2250	0	0	0	0	331	286110
	2021-22	LSG	2	3800	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3800
Total			79070	76924501	9006	8896598	729	740750	1	3130	88806	86564979

Appendix 3.2

Savings in Book Bank scheme in selected districts

(Reference: Paragraph 3.5.6.1; Page: 43)

(in ₹)

Year	Amount received	Expenditure	Surrender
Kozhikode			
2017-18	920900	895700	25200
2018-19	954400	923400	31000
2019-20	852900	214000	638900
2020-21	225000	221500	3500
2021-22	633300	207000	426300
Kollam			
2017-18	651500	474000	177500
2018-19	651500	562300	89200
2019-20	725800	575200	150600
2020-21	580000	572000	8000
2021-22	580000	526100	53900
Ernakulam			
2017-18	648600	648600	Nil
2018-19	725300	667800	57500
2019-20	714500	558900	155600
2020-21	262000	253200	8800
2021-22	262000	260900	1100
Wayanad			
2017-18	120600	120600	Nil
2018-19	205400	205400	Nil
2019-20	127500	87000	40500
2020-21	210000	149100	60900
2021-22	210000	194300	15700

Appendix 3.3

Multiple payment of components of Post-Matric scholarship to SC students -
Central and State schemes

(Reference: Paragraph 3.5.7.1; Page: 45)

District	Components	No of Excess Transactions	Excess Payment (₹)
Ernakulam	Pocket Money	4	760
	Stipend < 8 km	23	14490
	Stipend > 8 km	37	27750
Kollam	Pocket Money	2	380
	Stipend < 8 km	30	18900
	Stipend > 8 km	42	30900
Kozhikode	Pocket Money	26	4940
	Pvt Accommodation	1	200
	Stipend < 8 km	45	27468
	Stipend > 8 km	50	36300
Wayanad	Pocket Money	16	3040
	Pvt Accommodation	88	132000
	Stipend < 8 km	5	3129
	Stipend > 8 km	91	68250
Total		460	368507

Appendix 3.4

Part payment of Post-Matric scholarship to SC students due to non-processing of different components of Central and State schemes

(Reference: Paragraph 3.5.8.3; Page: 49)

District	Component of scholarship	2018-19		2019-20		2020-21		Total	
		No of Transactions	Amount (₹)	No of Transactions	Amount (₹)	No of Transactions	Amount (₹)	No of Transactions	Amount (₹)
Ernakulam	ABLC	309	882291	64	225475	97	335317	470	1443083
	Pocket Money	1120	212458	1855	350872	1718	340279	4693	903609
	Private Accommodation	179	259729	270	358736	187	261724	636	880189
	Stipend < 8 km	1182	740964	1899	1194316	1039	814283	4120	2749563
	Stipend > 8 km	1681	1250625	2952	2205220	2654	2318525	7287	5774370
Kollam	ABLC	69	217488	15	54495	63	188200	147	460183
	Pocket Money	500	94128	886	167820	1020	199006	2406	460954
	Private Accommodation	96	143701	31	42043	59	71264	186	257008
	Stipend < 8 km	1129	711719	2501	1564041	1527	1162587	5157	3438347
	Stipend > 8 km	1180	882391	2398	1776390	2172	1808690	5750	4467471
Kozhikode	ABLC	126	308525	94	291635	247	965512	467	1565672
	Pocket Money	748	140558	1170	214321	1171	212133	3089	567012
	Private Accommodation	265	393008	257	348843	172	238694	694	980545
	Stipend < 8 km	1230	772086	1702	1070139	1254	940827	4186	2783052
	Stipend > 8 km	1154	861775	2095	1561800	1487	1281708	4736	3705283
Wayanad	ABLC	44	125367	7	22560	91	337066	142	484993
	Pocket Money	288	53825	443	83842	210	40172	941	177839
	Private Accommodation	126	182096	194	278149	52	74470	372	534715
	Stipend < 8 km	164	102060	250	156790	259	202926	673	461776
	Stipend > 8 km	263	191825	309	230500	411	360455	983	782780
Total		11853	8526619	19392	12197987	15890	12153838	47135	32878444

Appendix 4.1

Delay in disbursement of various components of Pre-Matric scholarship to ST students - Central scheme

(Reference: Paragraph 4.5.2; Page: 62)

Delay of more than one year and upto two years							
District	Component of scholarship	2019-2020		2020-2021		Total	
		No of Transactions	Amount (₹)	No of Transactions	Amount (₹)	No of Transactions	Amount (₹)
Ernakulam	Books and Ad hoc Grant Day Scholars	49	36750	21	15750	70	52500
	Books and Ad hoc Grant Hostellers	10	10000	6	6000	16	16000
	Stipend Day Scholar	195	29850	161	36225	356	66075
	Stipend Hosteller	34	11900	34	8850	68	20750
Kollam	Books and Ad hoc Grant Day Scholars	15	11250	4	3000	19	14250
	Books and Ad hoc Grant Hostellers	5	5000	-	-	5	5000
	Stipend Day Scholar	71	10950	11	2475	82	13425
	Stipend Hosteller	30	10500	-	-	30	10500
Kozhikode	Books and Ad hoc Grant Day Scholars	36	27000	29	21750	65	48750
	Books and Ad hoc Grant Hostellers	12	12000	8	8000	20	20000
	Stipend Day Scholar	130	19500	141	31725	271	51225
	Stipend Hosteller	44	15400	22	5550	66	20950
Wayanad	Books and Ad hoc Grant Day Scholars	849	635625	664	498000	1513	1133625
	Books and Ad hoc Grant Hostellers	136	136000	69	69000	205	205000
	Stipend Day Scholar	2973	450600	2340	526500	5313	977100
	Stipend Hosteller	470	168700	237	60525	707	229225
TOTAL		5059	1591025	3747	1293350	8806	2884375

Appendix 5.1

Delay in disbursement of various components of Post-Matric scholarship schemes to ST students - Central and State schemes

(Reference: Paragraph 5.5.3; Page: 78)

District	Academic Year	Component of scholarship	One to two years		Two to three years		Three to four years		Total	
			No of transactions	Amount (₹)	No of transactions	Amount (₹)	No of transactions	Amount (₹)	No of transactions	Amount (₹)
Ernakulam	2018-19	Contingent Grant + Fellowship	2	18600	0	0	0	0	2	18600
		LSG	52	77290	12	20250	4	10580	68	108120
		Pocket Money	152	28711	85	16098	10	1900	247	46709
		Private Accommodation	32	67799	5	9000	1	1500	38	78299
		Stipend < 8 km	94	57498	38	23058	0	0	132	80556
		Stipend > 8 km	130	93000	65	47850	6	4400	201	145250
	2019-20	Contingent Grant + Fellowship	10	255000	1	30750	0	0	11	285750
		LSG	79	114200	19	33440	1	1190	99	148830
		Pocket Money	415	77903	37	6886	0	0	452	84789
		Private Accommodation	125	342661	12	35813	0	0	137	378474
		Stipend < 8 km	166	102648	41	25389	0	0	207	128037
		Stipend > 8 km	358	262382	59	42275	0	0	417	304657
	2020-21	Contingent Grant + Fellowship	10	232500	0	0	0	0	10	232500
		LSG	114	201670	1	1130	0	0	115	202800
		Pocket Money	258	49874	0	0	0	0	258	49874
		Private Accommodation	16	43216	0	0	0	0	16	43216
		Stipend < 8 km	131	102949	0	0	0	0	131	102949
		Stipend > 8 km	361	300490	8	5750	0	0	369	306240
	2021-22	LSG	3	4200	0	0	0	0	3	4200
		Private Accommodation	1	3000	0	0	0	0	1	3000
		Stipend > 8 km	1	690	0	0	0	0	1	690
Kollam	2018-19	LSG	6	7340	2	4320	0	0	8	11660
		Pocket Money	10	1900	30	5700	0	0	40	7600
		Stipend < 8 km	34	21294	13	8190	0	0	47	29484
		Stipend > 8 km	33	24750	27	19750	6	4500	66	49000
	2019-20	LSG	11	19550	1	2250	0	0	12	21800
		Pocket Money	97	18316	4	760	0	0	101	19076
		Private Accommodation	10	28940	0	0	0	0	10	28940
		Stipend < 8 km	61	37674	0	0	0	0	61	37674
		Stipend > 8 km	43	32175	0	0	0	0	43	32175

District	Academic Year	Component of scholarship	One to two years		Two to three years		Three to four years		Total		
			No of transactions	Amount (₹)	No of transactions	Amount (₹)	No of transactions	Amount (₹)	No of transactions	Amount (₹)	
	2020-21	LSG	20	29300	0	0	0	0	20	29300	
		Pocket Money	36	7098	0	0	0	0	36	7098	
		Stipend < 8 km	10	7183	0	0	0	0	10	7183	
		Stipend > 8 km	149	133620	0	0	0	0	149	133620	
Kozhikode	2018-19	LSG	23	32900	3	5080	0	0	26	37980	
		Pocket Money	116	21325	45	8451	1	190	162	29966	
		Private Accommodation	12	24300	21	46500	2	4500	35	75300	
		Stipend < 8 km	33	19194	6	3780	5	3150	44	26124	
		Stipend > 8 km	37	27200	16	11275	0	0	53	38475	
	2019-20	LSG	35	55150	11	12240	0	0	46	67390	
		Pocket Money	396	72522	38	7156	0	0	434	79678	
		Private Accommodation	79	218100	1	3000	1	3000	81	224100	
		Stipend < 8 km	89	54810	8	5040	0	0	97	59850	
	2020-21	Stipend > 8 km	71	51550	3	2000	0	0	74	53550	
		LSG	130	236730	0	0	0	0	130	236730	
		Pocket Money	447	88200	0	0	0	0	447	88200	
		Private Accommodation	41	122484	0	0	0	0	41	122484	
	2021-22	Stipend < 8 km	189	148729	0	0	0	0	189	148729	
		Stipend > 8 km	386	340650	0	0	0	0	386	340650	
		LSG	9	12990	0	0	0	0	9	12990	
		Pocket Money	2	305	0	0	0	0	2	305	
		Private Accommodation	2	6000	0	0	0	0	2	6000	
	Wayanad	2018-19	Stipend < 8 km	2	1556	0	0	0	0	2	1556
			Stipend > 8 km	5	4380	0	0	0	0	5	4380
LSG			51	54760	4	4520	1	1130	56	60410	
Pocket Money			11	1737	76	13567	5	950	92	16254	
Private Accommodation			0	0	4	7470	0	0	4	7470	
2019-20		Stipend < 8 km	154	94941	51	32058	1	630	206	127629	
		Stipend > 8 km	266	193050	130	96150	3	2250	399	291450	
		LSG	75	82450	7	9030	0	0	82	91480	
		Pocket Money	155	28884	38	7051	0	0	193	35935	
		Private Accommodation	10	30000	0	0	0	0	10	30000	
2020-21		Stipend < 8 km	611	382531	29	17304	0	0	640	399835	
		Stipend > 8 km	450	327175	45	33175	0	0	495	360350	
		LSG	122	177900	0	0	0	0	122	177900	
	Pocket Money	104	20655	0	0	0	0	104	20655		
		Private Accommodation	1	2400	0	0	0	0	1	2400	
		Stipend < 8 km	444	351560	0	0	0	0	444	351560	

District	Academic Year	Component of scholarship	One to two years		Two to three years		Three to four years		Total	
			No of transactions	Amount (₹)	No of transactions	Amount (₹)	No of transactions	Amount (₹)	No of transactions	Amount (₹)
		Stipend > 8 km	498	443515	0	0	0	0	498	443515
	2021-22	LSG	34	46600	2	2260	0	0	36	48860
		Pocket Money	1	200	0	0	0	0	1	200
		Stipend < 8 km	34	25227	0	0	0	0	34	25227
		Stipend > 8 km	34	29070	2	1250	0	0	36	30320
TOTAL			8189	6637151	1000	667016	47	39870	9236	7344037

Appendix 5.2

Multiple payment of components of Post-Matric scholarship to ST students -
Central and State schemes

(Reference: Paragraph 5.5.6.1; Page: 80)

District	Fee	2018-19		2019-20		Total	
		No. of Multiple Transactions	Excess Amount (₹)	No. of Multiple Transactions	Excess Amount (₹)	No. of Multiple Transactions	Excess Amount (₹)
Ernakulam	Pocket Money	20	3800	2	133	22	3933
	Stipend < 8 km	0	0	11	6584	11	6584
	Stipend > 8 km	18	12516	5	3750	23	16266
Kozhikode	LSG	7	8330	0	0	7	8330
	Pocket Money	41	7323	0	0	41	7323
	Stipend > 8 km	34	24600	2	1500	36	26100
Wayanad	Pocket Money	21	4032	192	33302	213	37334
	Stipend < 8 km	6	3738	35	19636	41	23374
	Stipend > 8 km	17	12750	19	9988	36	22738
Total		164	77089	266	74893	430	151982

Appendix 5.3

Part payment of Post-Matric scholarship to ST students due to non-processing of different components of scholarship - Central and State schemes

(Reference: Paragraph 5.5.7.1; Page: 83)

District	Academic Year	ABLC		Pocket Money		Private Accommodation		Stipend < 8 km		Stipend > 8 km	
		No of Transactions	Amount (₹)	No of Transactions	Amount (₹)	No of Transactions	Amount (₹)	No of Transactions	Amount (₹)	No of Transactions	Amount (₹)
Ernakulam	2018-19	4	10603	151	28252	40	86500	89	56070	177	131775
	2019-20	13	45700	377	71424	58	167082	150	94166	177	133350
	2020-21	1	1633	327	64835	38	81000	117	91870	277	238314
	2021-22	12	23118	699	137713	81	232565	253	199577	742	658260
Kollam	2018-19	5	11550	26	4940	5	15000	24	15120	65	48750
	2019-20	3	13500	57	10830	10	30000	52	32760	65	48750
	2020-21	-	-	89	17680	-	-	35	28000	143	126900
	2021-22	36	116973	304	60624	24	69007	87	69600	215	193500
Kozhikode	2018-19	17	44216	241	44942	60	153925	89	55692	123	92150
	2019-20	1	4500	314	58998	95	255902	94	58800	193	144750
	2020-21	16	50290	353	67326	9	25500	169	134046	262	230940
	2021-22	76	289083	1236	243892	142	391697	355	281511	743	667470
Wayanad	2018-19	1	3500	397	75015	26	46500	314	196964	389	283675
	2019-20	-	-	387	72750	21	60000	304	190394	459	338343
	2020-21	25	112500	137	26621	1	3000	320	254116	598	525330
	2021-22	39	133823	552	109511	45	129600	1213	968623	1418	1269290
Total		249	860989	5647	1095353	655	1747278	3665	2727309	6046	5131547



**© CONTROLLER AND
AUDITOR GENERAL OF INDIA**

<https://cag.gov.in>

SCHOLARSHIP

<https://cag.gov.in/ag1/kerala/en>