BACKGROUNDERS
Press Information Bureau
Government of India

National Overseas Scholarship Scheme for Scheduled Tribe Students

Empowering Aspirations Beyond Borders

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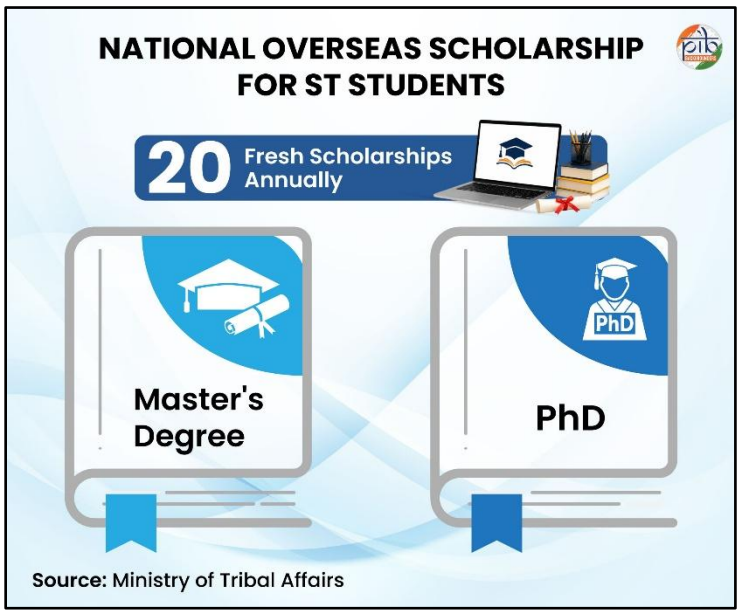
*The National Overseas Scholarship Scheme expands access to international higher education for Scheduled Tribe students through **20 scholarships annually**. With **30% of scholarships earmarked for female candidates**, the scheme promotes inclusive access to global learning opportunities. From 2026-27, it supports Master's and PhD (Doctor of Philosophy) study at universities in the top 1,000 of the QS (Quacquarelli Symonds) World University Rankings. The share of women among beneficiaries rose from 20% in 2015-16, when 3 of the 15 selected candidates were women, to 47.8% in 2024-25, when women accounted for 11 of the 23 selections. Reflecting the Government's continued support, financial disbursements increased from ₹0.39 crore in 2015-16 to ₹8.00 crore in 2025-26.*

Opening Doors to Global Education

Higher education opens avenues for knowledge, opportunity and professional advancement. According to the **All-India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2023-24, 28,83,218 Scheduled Tribe (ST) students** were enrolled in higher education, up from 21,56,109 in 2019-20. For ST students, international education offers access to specialised knowledge, advanced research opportunities and global academic exposure. Studying at reputed institutions abroad broadens academic horizons, strengthens professional capabilities and opens pathways to diverse career opportunities. Such opportunities help ST students pursue their aspirations while contributing to the development of their communities and the nation.

Recognising the importance of expanding access to global education, the **National Overseas Scholarship (NOS) Scheme for ST Students** seeks to support meritorious tribal students in pursuing higher education abroad. It is a **Central Sector Scheme of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs**, operational since **1954-55**. The scheme offers **20 fresh scholarships** annually for Master's and PhD studies at reputed institutions. It is implemented through Indian Embassies/ Missions abroad under the Ministry of External Affairs.

Over the years, the scheme has undergone significant expansion, reflecting a growing emphasis on widening access to international higher education. From 15 annual scholarships covering engineering, technology and science in 2010-11, the scheme now offers 20 scholarships a year across four fields of study. The wider scope gives ST students more routes to higher study abroad.



Broadening Horizons: The NOS Scheme at a Glance

The National Overseas Scholarship Scheme opens avenues for ST students to pursue advanced education at reputed institutions worldwide. It supports Master's and PhD studies at **universities and institutions ranked among the top 1,000 in the QS World University Rankings**. It covers four broad fields of study, each with a set number of slots.

Subjects and Slots covered under the scheme

FIELD OF STUDY	NUMBER OF SLOTS
Pure/Applied Science/ Engineering/Technology/ Mathematics (STEM)	10
Management, Economics, Finance, Law	04
Agriculture/Medicine	04
Humanities/Social Science/Fine Arts	02

Of the 20 scholarships awarded annually, **17 are allocated to Scheduled Tribe candidates**, while **three are reserved for Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)**. This allocation seeks to ensure educational opportunities for students from particularly disadvantaged tribal communities.

The scheme places particular emphasis on promoting women's participation in international higher education, with **30% of scholarships** earmarked for female candidates. Women made up 20% of the scheme's beneficiaries in 2015-16 (3 of 15 selections) and 47.8% in 2024-25 (11 of 23 selections). Where the earmarked slots remain unfilled, they are opened to eligible male candidates.



Financial assistance will be provided till completion of the course/research or the prescribed duration of the course, whichever is earlier:

SL NO	COURSE	MAXIMUM DURATION
1	Ph.D.	4 years (four years)
2	Master's Degree	1 or 2 years (One/Two years) depending upon the type and duration of the Course

Pathways to Opportunity: Eligibility and Selection Criteria

The National Overseas Scholarship Scheme provides a structured eligibility framework to facilitate access to international higher education for deserving ST students. These criteria seek to ensure equitable access to educational opportunities.

Qualification

SL NO	COURSE	MARKS AND EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION	MAXIMUM AGE AS ON 1ST JULY OF SELECTION YEAR
1	Ph.D.	55% marks or equivalent grade in relevant Master's Degree	35 years
2	Master's Degree	55% marks or equivalent grade in relevant Bachelor's Degree	32 years

Students apply directly to foreign universities and seek the scholarship to fund their studies there. First priority will be given to the candidates who have offer of admission from the top 1,000 ranked foreign Institutes/Universities (as per the latest QS world ranking) and yet to join the Institute as on the date of application. The merit list will be drawn based on the ranking of the Institute. In case of a tie between the QS rankings of two or more candidates, merit will be decided on the basis of marks/grades secured by the candidate in the qualifying examination for higher studies for which the scholarship has been applied for.

One child in a family and one time assistance

Only one child from the same family is eligible for the scholarship, subject to self-certification by the applicant. Each candidate can avail of the scholarship only once and cannot receive another award at the same or higher level under the scheme.

Income Criteria

The applicant's annual family income from all sources must not exceed **₹6 lakh** to be eligible for the scholarship.

Selection

From 2026-27, first priority goes to candidates who hold an offer of admission from a foreign university or institute ranked among the top 1,000 in the latest QS World University Rankings and have yet to join. They are ranked by the QS rank of the institution, and where ranks tie, by marks in the qualifying examination. Any slots left are filled through a personal interview by an expert committee constituted by the Ministry, with preference to candidates who have cleared tests such as the GRE (Graduate Record Examinations), GMAT (Graduate

Management Admission Test) or TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language). Selected candidates must secure admission and join an eligible institution within two years of the award letter.

National Overseas Scholarship [NOS] Portal
Applications under the National Overseas Scholarship Scheme are invited online through the dedicated National Overseas Scholarship Portal. The portal provides information on scheme guidelines, application procedures and documentation requirements, facilitating a streamlined application process. Integrated with DigiLocker, it enables applicants to retrieve existing documents digitally and upload additional documents wherever required. Registered students can also submit queries and grievances directly through the portal. An automated notification system facilitates timely communication through SMS and email alerts, while an integrated dashboard supports effective monitoring of the scheme.

Investing in Aspirations: Financial Assistance under NOS

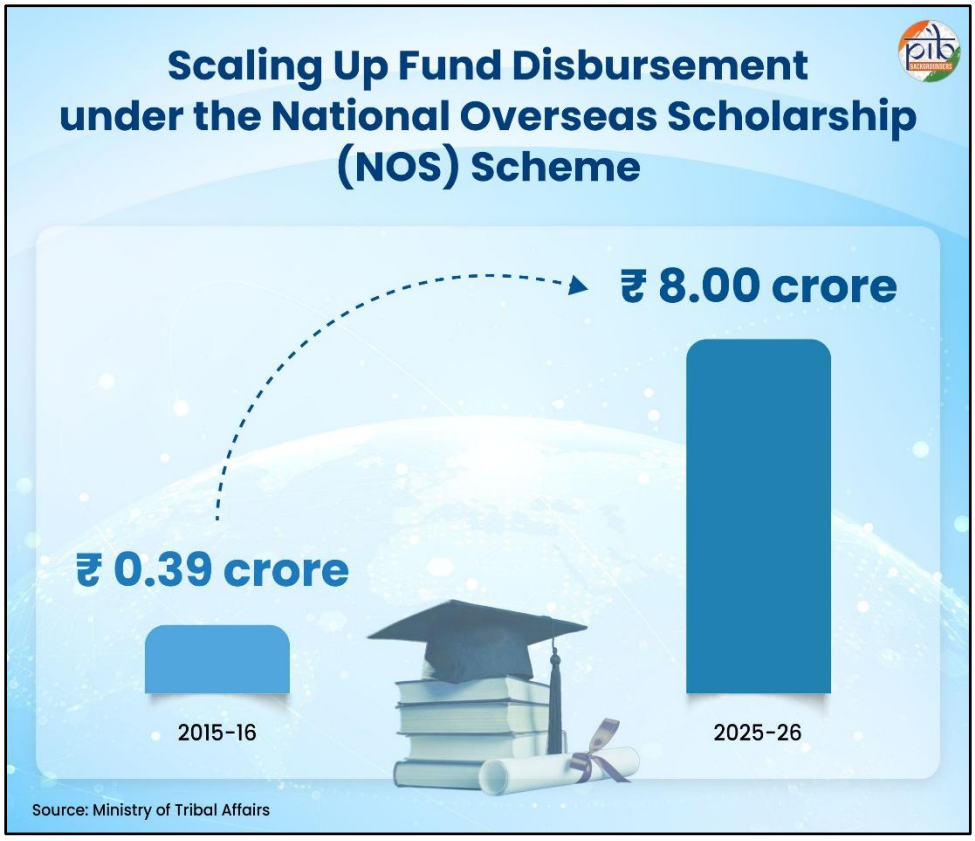
The National Overseas Scholarship Scheme provides financial assistance to ST students throughout their studies abroad. The scheme offers an annual maintenance allowance of USD 15,400 (US Dollars) or GBP 9,900 (British Pounds Sterling) for students pursuing courses in the United States and United Kingdom, respectively. For other countries, the applicable allowance is provided in US dollars or at equivalent rates. An annual contingency and equipment allowance of USD 1,532 or GBP 1,116 is provided for expenses such as books, essential apparatus, study tours, typing and thesis binding.

The scholarship also covers tuition fees and other compulsory, non-refundable fees charged by educational institutions, along with actual visa fees and applicable poll taxes. Medical insurance premiums are reimbursed at actual rates, subject to assessment by the respective Indian Embassy or Mission. Incidental journey expenses of up to USD 20 or its equivalent in Indian rupees are permissible.

To facilitate international travel, the scheme provides economy-class airfare from India to the nearest destination serving the educational institution and back. The airfare is reimbursed at actual cost, subject to the shortest route and best available fare. Provision is also made for local travel between the arrival point and the place of study, including second-class rail fares. Where rail connectivity is unavailable, admissible bus, ferry or connecting air travel expenses are covered under the prescribed provisions.

The Government's financial disbursements under the National Overseas Scholarship Scheme have increased substantially over the years. The amount disbursed rose from **₹0.39 crore in 2015-16 to ₹8.00 crore in 2025-26**, reflecting the Government's continued efforts to strengthen financial support for ST students pursuing higher education abroad. The number of students supported in a year, new and continuing, rose from 8 in 2013-14 to 64 in 2025-26, and 400 students in all received support over the period. Since 2014-15, the Ministry has released

₹46.46 crore to help eligible Scheduled Tribe students pursue higher education abroad under the scheme.



Expanding Reach

The National Overseas Scholarship Scheme has extended international higher education opportunities to Scheduled Tribe students across India. As a Central Sector Scheme with pan-India coverage, it offers 20 fresh scholarships every year, open to eligible ST students from all States and Union Territories, with no State-wise or district-wise allocation of seats or funds. This reflects the Government's continued efforts to widen access to overseas education for tribal students.

Beyond Borders: Empowering Tribal Aspirations

The National Overseas Scholarship Scheme reflects the Government's commitment to expanding international higher education opportunities for Scheduled Tribe students. By reducing financial barriers, the scheme can enable deserving tribal youth to pursue advanced academic and research opportunities at reputed institutions abroad. Exposure to global learning environments can strengthen specialised knowledge, enhance professional capabilities and open new avenues for career advancement. These opportunities can also

promote socio-economic mobility and inspire future generations of tribal students to pursue higher educational aspirations.

Each selection round is announced on the dedicated National Overseas Scholarship Portal, where eligible ST students can check application dates and apply. By widening access to global education, the scheme supports inclusive educational development for tribal communities and contributes to the vision of a Viksit Bharat.

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Ministry of Tribal Affairs:

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