

# **CENTRAL SECTOR SCHEME OF 'RAJIV GANDHI NATIONAL FELLOWSHIP' FOR PROVIDING SCHOLARSHIPS TO SCHEDULED CASTE STUDENTS TO PURSUE PROGRAMMES IN HIGHER EDUCATION SUCH AS M.Phil. AND Ph.D.**

## **Background**

To increase opportunities available to Scheduled Castes for pursuing higher education leading to degrees such as M.Phil. and Ph.D., Government of India has decided to start from current year, i.e., 2005-06, a Central Sector scheme namely, Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship. The scheme will cater to the requirements of the Scheduled Caste students for pursuing research studies leading to M.Phil., Ph.D. and equivalent research degree in universities, research institutions, and scientific institutions. This will not only enable them to be eligible for employment to the posts of Lecturers lying vacant in various colleges and universities but will equip them to effectively take advantage of the growing opportunities at the national and international level in the context of the new economic order.

## **Scope of the scheme**

2. The scheme will be launched during the financial year 2005-06 and will award a total of 1333 Research Fellowships (Junior Research Fellows) per year to Scheduled Caste students. The scheme will cover all universities/institutions recognized by the University Grants Commission (UGC) and shall be implemented by the UGC itself on the pattern of existing scheme of UGC Fellowships being awarded to Research students pursuing M.Phil. and Ph.D.

## **Implementing agency**

3 UGC will be nodal agency for implementing the scheme. UGC will notify the scheme by releasing suitable advertisements in the Press.

## **Eligibility**

4 Any student belonging to Scheduled Caste category who has been admitted to M. Phil / Ph. D degree in a University or academic institution by completing the required formalities for admission at that University or academic institution will be eligible for the award of the Fellowship subject to provision of the scheme as per the advertisement of UGC.

5 After two years, if the progress in the research work of the awardee is found satisfactory, his/her tenure will be extended for a further period of three years as Senior Research Fellowship (SRF). The Research work will be assessed by a three member committee set up by the University. The committee will

consist of the Supervisor, Head of the Department and one outside expert in the subject. Junior Research Fellowship may be terminated in case the progress of the candidate is not found satisfactory by the committee. The Senior Research Fellowship (SRF) shall be sanctioned on year-to-year basis on the recommendation of the Supervisor of the candidate duly accepted/rejected by the Head of the Department and finally approved by the Vice Chancellor. The total period of award of JRF and SRF shall not exceed a period of 5 years. The fellowship shall be paid from the date of registration of the students in Ph.D./M.Phil. course.

6. During the first year of the implementation of the scheme, all the Scheduled Caste students already registered in a notified university/institution shall also be eligible for the award of the fellowship. In such cases, where the student is doing M.Phil., he shall be eligible for JRF upto maximum of 2 years from the date of registration. In case he is already pursuing Ph.D. course, he will be entitled for JRF/SRF upto a maximum of 5 years from the date of registration. The payments of fellowships in such cases shall be effective from 1.4.2005.

7. The students belonging to Scheduled Caste category once considered eligible for the fellowship shall not be entitled to any other benefits from the Central or State Government or any other body like UGC offering similar benefit to avoid duplication and increase coverage. Only those, doing regular and full time M. Phil/Ph D course of a University /Research Institution shall be eligible for the fellowship. Employees of any University/College/Educational Institution/Central/State/UT Government shall be excluded from availing Fellowship, even if they are on Study Leave or EOL to pursue the M. Phil/PhD course.

### **Number of Fellowships**

8. The total number of fellowships to be awarded to the Scheduled Caste students under the scheme would be 1333. In case of non-availability of adequate number of Scheduled Caste candidates, the number of fellowships not availed during a year will be carried forward to the next academic session.

9. In case, the number of candidates exceeds the number of available awards, the UGC will select the candidates based on the percentage of marks obtained by the candidates in their Post Graduation examination.

## Duration of Fellowship

Name of the Course	Maximum duration	Admissibility of JRF and SRF	
		JRF	SRF
M. Phil	2 years	2 Years	Nil
Ph.D	5 years	2 years	Remaining 3 years
M.Phil + Ph.D	5 years	2 years	Remaining 3 years

## Rate of fellowships

10. The rate of fellowship for JRF and SRF will be at par with the UGC Fellowships. Presently these rates are as follows:-

Fellowship	@ Rs.8,000/- p.m. for initial two years (JRF) @ Rs.9,000/- p.m. for remaining tenure (SRF)
Contingency for Humanities and Social Sciences	@ Rs.10,000 p.a. for initial two years @ Rs.20,500/- p.a. for remaining tenure
Contingency for Sciences	@ Rs.12,000/- p.a. for initial two years @ Rs.25,000/- p.a. for remaining tenure
Departmental assistance	@ Rs.3,000/- p.a. per student to the host institution for providing infrastructure
Escorts/Reader Assistance	@ Rs.1,000/- p.m. in cases of physically and visually handicapped candidates

The House Rent Allowance (HRA) will be on the UGC pattern and will be payable to those students who are not provided with hostel accommodation. In case hostel accommodation offered by the university/institution is refused, the student will forfeit his claim of HRA. The other facilities such as medical facilities, leave including maternity leave will be governed as per the guidelines of the UGC in case of their fellowship programme.

## Eligibility for Senior Research Fellowship

11. In order to qualify for the award of Senior Research Fellowship the UGC norms would be applicable.

## Procedure for applying for RGNF

- (i) UGC will be the nodal agency for implementing the RGNF scheme for SC students.
- (ii) UGC will notify the scheme by inserting suitable advertisement in the press.
- (iii) UGC will be implementing the scheme from the current academic year i.e. 2005-06
- (iv) There will be no restrictions as regards to the minimum marks in the Post Graduation Examination.
- (v) It would be sufficient for a SC candidate to have passed the Post Graduation Examination for being eligible for the RGNF.
- (vi) There would be no restriction to the effect that a SC candidate should have cleared NET/SLET examination for being eligible for receiving the RGNF
- (vii) UGC will give one month's time to the candidates for applying for the RGNF
- (viii) UGC will select the candidates for award of RGNF.
- (ix) The distribution of fellowships amongst different States/UTs would primarily be in the proportion of SC population in the respective States/UTs.
- (x) In case the number of fellowships so allocated to a State/UT are not fully utilized, due to non-availability to eligible candidates, the UGC will allocate the slots amongst the other States/UTs where the number of eligible candidates is much more than the slots allocated to that State/UT. A Committee consisting of the representatives of UGC and Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment will take this decision.
- (xi) UGC shall disburse the scholarship amount to the candidates through Bank Smart Cards.
- (xii) UGC will also issue a booklet containing all the details about the scheme, for the benefit of prospective candidates.
- (xiii) UGC will evolve its own mechanism for verifying the genuineness of the SC certificates furnished by the candidates in order to eliminate the possibility of students availing of the RGNF on fake certificates.
- (xiv) The decision of the UGC in regard to awarding the RGNF shall be final and no appeal would lie against any decision by UGC in regard thereof.

### **Evaluation and Monitoring**

12. The expenditure on evaluation/Monitoring of the fellowship programme shall be met out of the funds provided for this scheme. Award of SRF done after appropriate evaluation of performance in carrying out the research work by the candidate in the Junior Fellowship phase.