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Awareness and source of awareness regarding national talent scholarship

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Abstract

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) established the National Talent Scholarship (NTS) for students enrolled in a Bachelor's program at an agricultural university recognized by the ICAR that is located outside of their state of residence and is adequately funded under the planning scheme "Strengthening and Development of Higher Agricultural Education in India" of the Education Division of the ICAR. For undergraduate bachelor's degree candidates, the scholarship is worth ₹ 2,000 per month. The scholarship will be given out initially for a year starting on the day the student actually enrolls, and it will then be renewed for the duration of the undergraduate program provided the student continues to maintain good academic standing and behavior as required by the relevant university. In 2020, the current study was carried out with the aim of assessing the level of awareness among the university students regarding National Talent scholarship and exploring the number of students availing. Additionally, the study aimed to figure out what problems respondents had in obtaining the scholarship. Using a stratified random sample technique, 240 undergraduate students from Assam Agricultural University (AAU), Jorhat were included in the study. A "Google Forms" questionnaire was created, and data was gathered online by sharing the URL to the Google form. Frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, and chi-square test were the statistical analyses performed on the data. The results show that 53.33 per cent respondents of Assam Agricultural University had awareness about National Talent Scholarship, 'Delay in receiving scholarship' and 'Irregular disbursement of scholarship' were some of the problems reported by the respondents.

Keywords: Awareness, agricultural, problems, scholarship, university

Introduction

One of the biggest obstacles for many individuals pursuing higher education is paying for their academic endeavors. Fortunately, scholarships show up as rays of light that shine on the way toward attaining academic goals. Mae (2016) ^[6] defined Scholarships are a type of government assistance provided to students who are struggling to pay for their educational expenses or who are experiencing economic hardship. For any student who experiencing financial difficulties, this support is crucial. In order to assist students in completing their studies and becoming successful adults in the future, scholarship programs have been established. A scholarship is a type of support given to students so they can pursue higher education. Generally, scholarships are awarded based on a set of criteria such as academic merit, diversity and inclusion, athletic skill, and financial need, research experience or specific professional experience. In this regard the Indian Council of Agricultural Research launched the National Talent Scholarship (NTS) for students registered in a Bachelor's program at an agricultural university recognized by the ICAR who are outside of their state of residence and is appropriately funded under the planning scheme "Strengthening and Development of Higher Agricultural Education in India" administered by the Education Department of the ICAR. For a Bachelor's degree

(undergraduate), the scholarship is worth ₹ 2,000 per month. In the case where the student maintains excellent academic performance and conduct as required by the relevant university, the scholarship will be renewed for the remaining period of the undergraduate degree program.

There are several scholarships for which students of agricultural universities are eligible including the National Talent Scholarship (NTS) as a number of students registered through the ICAR in this university from various states of India. However, obtaining such scholarships mainly depends on the awareness and knowledge among the students about the scholarships and problems they experience in availing the scholarships. Results of several studies from India and abroad reflect that there is a lack of awareness and knowledge about scholarships among the students who encounter various problems in availing scholarships. On the one hand, students struggle to pay for their education and on the other, there is evidence that Rs 387.27 crore for Post-Matric Scholarship have been released in 2023 as reported by The Times of India Deccan chronicle (January, 2024) ^[8]. The scenario reflects that somewhere there is some gap in availing the scholarships.

Assam Agriculture University, Jorhat accommodates students from other states of India and abroad too, so that percentage of ICAR students in the university who are

eligible for National Talent Scholarship are measurable. Having all of this in mind, the present study was conducted in AAU, Jorhat for studying the level of awareness regarding Ishan National Talent Scholarship, exploring the number of students Obtaining the scholarship and problems faced by students in obtaining the National Talent Scholarship. It may help to realize the status in terms of availing scholarship and also may help planners and policy makers in making the procedure user-friendly.

Review of literature

Krishnan (1999) [4] observed that nearly 59.00 per cent students got information about the scholarship scheme from school, 14.00 per cent from extension office, social works, friends and neighbors. Newspaper was the hardly source. Fahimuddin (2012) [1] found that teachers were the main source of information and awareness to students (35.30%), followed by classmate students (22.45%), TV (17.01%) and Gram Panchayat/ urban bodies and newspaper (9.52%). According to Long (2010) [4] in a study on “Financial Aid: A key To Community College Students' Success” found that a low level of awareness and misinformation about financial aid has serious side effects on students. Guimba *et al.* (2015) [2] researched on “Problems Experienced by College Student Scholars” in Southern Philippines and found that scholars had experienced delayed allowances from the University when they need. Mae *et al.* (2016) [6] conducted research at the University of the East Caloocan Campus on “The impact of Scholarship Program to the Grade 11 students of University of The East – Caloocan” and observed that 18.00 per cent of the grade 11 student respondents were not aware about scholarship scheme. Radhakrishnan *et al.* (2018) [7] found that 77.50 per cent respondents reported teacher were main source of awareness regarding scholarship.

Materials and Methods

Location of the study: The present study was conducted in the Assam Agricultural University, Jorhat campus.
Selection of respondents: 30 students from each class of B.Sc. degree programme were selected as respondents using stratified random sample method. The strata were 1st year, 2nd year, 3rd year and 4th year from both the colleges. Equal number (120) of respondents was selected from each college. Thus, the total numbers of respondents were 240.

Research instruments: One questionnaire was prepared for collection of the information regarding study. The questionnaire was composed of statements and then questionnaire was converted into Google Form for final online data collection.

Measurement of variable

Level of Awareness regarding scholarships: In this study it is operationally defined as the consciousness of respondents about the National Talent Scholarship. Respondents were asked whether they were aware of National Talent scholarship and responses were recorded as “Yes” and “No” with scores 1 and 0 respectively. Further level of awareness was asked on a three-point scale i.e.

“fully aware”, “partially aware” and “not aware” with assigned scores 2, 1 and 0. The total score of each individual respondent was calculated. Based on the mean (\bar{x}) and standard deviation (SD) of the obtained scores, the respondents were categorized into three categories as below:

Category	Score range
Low	$< \bar{x} - SD$
Moderate	$\bar{x} - SD \text{ - } \bar{x} + SD$
High	$> \bar{x} + SD$

Statistical analysis

To analysis the data the following statistical techniques were used.

- a) Frequency
- b) Percentage
- c) Mean
- d) Standard deviation

Statistical formulae

Formula used for calculating mean

$$\text{Mean } (\bar{x}) = \frac{\sum fx}{N}$$

Where $\sum fx$ = Total scores

N= Total number of respondents

Standard deviation was calculated by the formula

$$SD = \sqrt{\frac{\sum a (Xi - \bar{X})^2}{N}}$$

Where,

X_i = Raw score

\bar{X} = Mean

N = Total respondents

Result and Discussion

Awareness regarding National Talent Scholarship

As depicted in Table 1 that highest 46.67 per cent of respondents had low level of awareness regarding National Talent Scholarship followed by high level with 30.42 per cent and 22.91 per cent with medium level of awareness. These findings can be supported with the results of Fahimuddin (2012) [1] where he found 80.00 per cent respondents felt that they had lack of awareness about the pre-matric scholarship.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents according to level of awareness on National Talent Scholarship

Category	Score range	Frequency (N= 240)	Percentage (%)	Mean	Standard deviation
Low	<0.28	112	46.67		
Medium	0.28 to 14.68	55	22.91	7.48	7.2
High	>14.68	73	30.42		

The level of awareness regarding National Talent Scholarship is presented in the table 2. The data reflects that a significant percentage of the respondents i.e. 48.33 per cent were fully aware about the qualifying exam for the scholarship followed by 25.83 per cent were fully aware about the Ministry providing the particular scholarship. Almost 19.58 per cent were fully aware about amount of

scholarship whereas 46.64 per cent were partially aware about the grade. Moreover 44.96 per cent were partially aware about that bank account number with IFSC code are required for applying scholarship.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents according to the level of awareness regarding National Talent Scholarship

Sl.no	National Talent Scholarships (NTS) under ICAR	Fully Aware		Partially Aware		Not Aware	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Is there any qualifying exam for the scholarship	116	48.33	95	39.59	29	12.08
2	Ministry providing the particular scholarship	62	25.83	64	26.47	114	47.50
Eligibility criteria of scholarship							
3	1. Grade	26	10.83	112	46.64	102	42.50
	2. Students should join an agricultural university in a state outside his/her Domicile state	33	13.75	94	39.08	113	47.08
	3. Maintain good conduct	37	15.42	91	37.82	112	46.66
	4. No F- grade in any course during the period of study	38	15.83	39	36.97	163	67.91
4	Amount of scholarship	47	19.58	104	43.28	89	37.08
Documents required for scholarship							
5	Bank account number with IFSC code	20	8.33	107	44.96	113	47.08

Availing the National Talent Scholarship by the respondents:

The results show that around 19.00 per cent of respondents

from the college of agriculture followed by 16.67 per cent from the College of Community Science were getting National Talent Scholarship.

Table 3: College wise distribution of respondents according to type of scholarship availed

Scholarship availing by respondents	(n=128)			
	College of Agriculture (n= 74)		College of Community Science (n=54)	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
National Talent Scholarship	14	18.91	9	16.67

Source of awareness

Data regarding source of awareness presented in Table 4 The results reflected that large majority (90.00%) of respondents has senior as source of awareness followed by Internet/Educational websites (88.34%), Teachers (87.91%), Orientation (73.34%), social media (61.25%), Parents (56.67%), Gram Panchayat/ Urban bodies (8.75%), Television (2.08%) and only 0.83 per cent respondents used radio. This type of information also observed by Ministry of minority affairs (2013) [5] found that 100 per cent respondents told teacher and friends were the main source of information of scholarship, 36.70 per cent told radio/TV, 28.90 per cent told that newspaper and parents.

Table 4: Distribution of respondents according to use source of awareness

Source of awareness	Frequency (N= 240)	Percentage (%)
Gram Panchayat/ Urban bodies	21	8.75
Television	5	2.08
Radio	2	0.83
Newspaper	3	1.25
Internet (Search engine)	212	88.34
Parents	136	56.67
Teachers	211	87.91
Senior	216	90.00
Social media (Whatsapp, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube)	147	61.25
Orientation	176	73.34

Multiple responses were recorded*

Conclusion

The result shows that highest 46.67 per cent of respondents had low level of awareness regarding National Talent Scholarship this may be because not much students getting that scholarship. majority (90.00%) of respondents has senior as source of awareness followed by Internet/Educational websites (88.34%) and Teachers (87.91%). So that it can be concluded that Awareness among the students regarding scholarship varies considerably and there is need for increasing awareness on scholarship among the students. raising awareness about National Talent Scholarships is essential for nurturing talent, fostering academic excellence and ensuring that talented individuals receive the support they need to pursue their education and fulfill their potential. By implementing targeted awareness campaigns, leveraging diverse communication channels, and fostering collaborations with relevant stakeholders, efforts can be made to reach and empower deserving candidates from all backgrounds. There is need for formulating strategies for providing necessary information at right time to the students regarding scholarship. Students may be properly oriented during the counseling as well as in orientation sessions regarding the availability of such scholarship.

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