



JEET KI AOR

जीत की ओर

Writing on Scholarships in India: What Gets Counted, What Doesn't, Where JEET stands

Why the topic matters - Numbers game

There are two problems with writing about scholarships in India. One is that people usually speak about them in broad terms; how many students benefited, which scheme was announced, how much was allocated; and stop there. The other, more serious problem is that once you actually try to trace the money, the numbers become messy very quickly.

That is where this piece began for us. We wanted to understand how much money really goes into scholarships for students in India, from school to college and beyond. The honest answer is that there is no single neat figure. Not from the Centre, not from the states, and not even from the usual policy dashboards people like to cite. That is not a flaw in the topic. It is the topic.

Why scholarships matter - Money trail

Scholarships matter because they are one of the few forms of public support that reach a student directly. A fee paid on time can keep a first-generation learner in college for one more semester. A small grant can keep a girl from dropping out. But having secured a scholarship how did it change the student's life? Where did the student end up in his/ her education ladder? Was it an equalizing force? What we could verify and couldn't

The difficulty is that scholarship money is scattered across ministries, departments, and schemes. The Union Government has some centrally funded scholarship lines. States have their own scholarship schemes, often spread across education, social welfare, tribal welfare, minority welfare, and backward classes departments. Corporate CSR also plays a role, but usually as part of a wider education budget rather than as a clean scholarship-only line. So if you ask a simple question, how much does India spend on scholarships? The answer depends on what exactly you count.

What we could verify is more useful than a sweeping estimate. At the Centre, the Ministry of Education budget for 2025-26 includes a student aid / scholarship / interest subsidy bucket of Rs 2,160 crore. The National Means-cum-Merit Scholarship Scheme is listed at Rs 374 crore in budget reporting, though the detailed grants document shows a smaller line in the school education head. These are real numbers, but they are only part of the picture.

The state side is even more fragmented. Maharashtra's budget, for example, shows scholarship-related line items inside higher and technical education rather than one single scholarship total. Gujarat has separate scholarship and student support schemes such as Gyan Sadhana Merit Scholarship, Gyan Setu Merit Scholarship, and other assistance lines, again spread across the broader education budget. Tamil Nadu, like many states, needs a deeper read of the detailed grants to extract the scholarship lines properly.

Inside:

- **Writing on Scholarships in India:** Tracing where scholarship funding begins, where it disappears, and why transparency matters as much as scale.
- **The Invisible Curriculum:** The most important lessons children learn are often the ones that never appear in a textbook.
- **The Teacher Multiplier:** Every education reform succeeds or fails in the classroom, making teachers the true force behind lasting change.

In most state budgets scholarships or direct support to students gets hidden in minority, social welfare, OBC/ SC/ ST budgets. This is why broad comparisons are difficult: the same word, scholarship, can sit in very different budget heads.

What we also found is that a partial table is often more honest than a grand total that cannot be defended. It is better to say, clearly, what we could verify than to force an impressive-looking figure that would not survive scrutiny. In a field like scholarships, where the purpose is to support students rather than impress readers, that honesty matters.

JEET & What is the larger story

This is also where JEET fits into the larger conversation. Our own Golden Stars Fellowship is much smaller in scale, but it is clear in design and easy to trace. For the 2026-27 academic year, 40 scholars are selected for a long-term fellowship model that includes a cash award, a tablet, connectivity support, mentoring, and periodic review, to begin with. The point is not scale. The point is that the money is visible, the expectations are clear, and the support is tied to measurable progress and how it moulds a student's education and career.

JEET's Golden Star Fellowship will not move any national statistic. But it is one of the few scholarship structures we have looked at closely enough, to say with some confidence exactly where the money goes and what is expected in return.

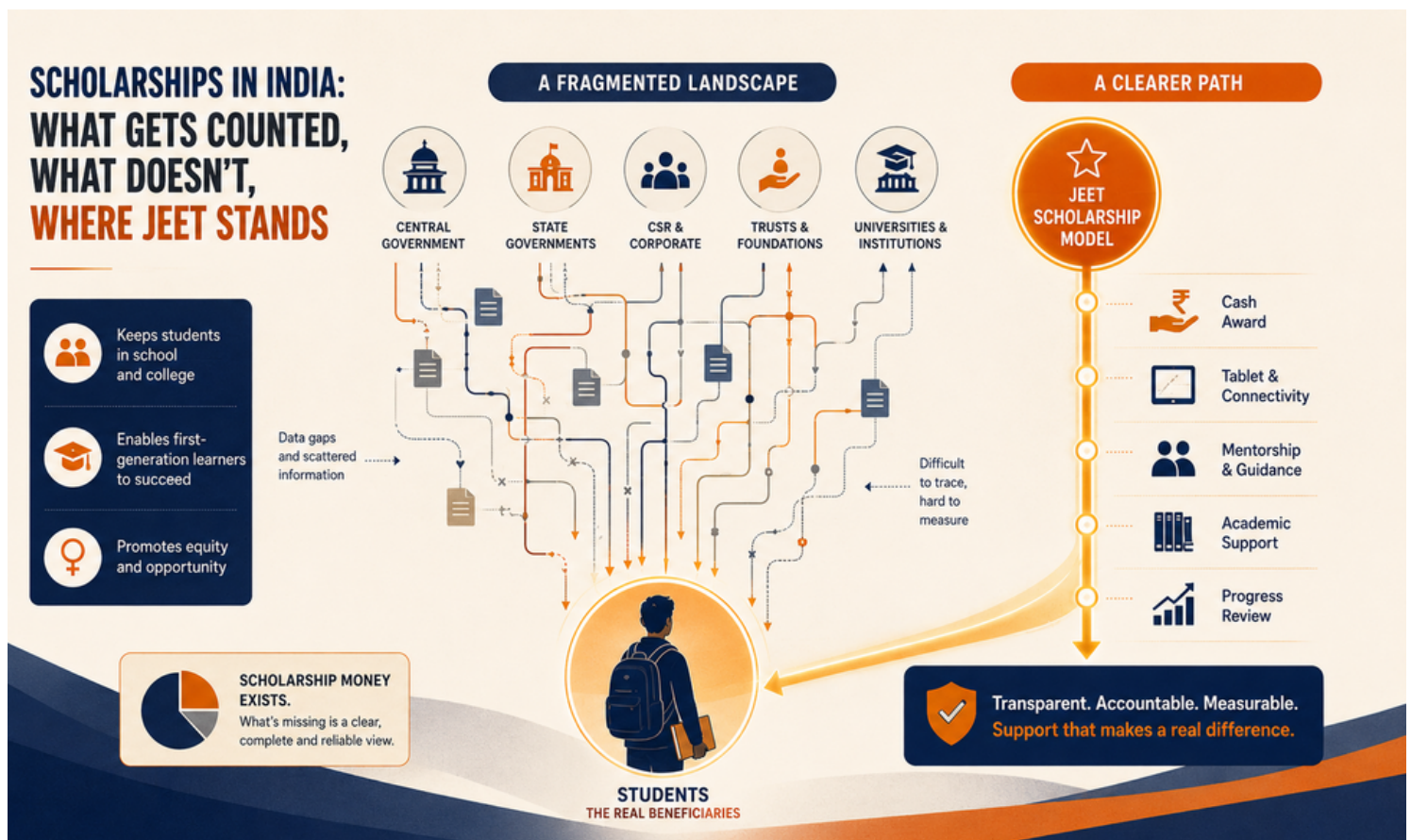
Why this is still worth writing

Scholarships are among the most direct forms of educational support, but they are also among the most poorly consolidated in public accounting. The money is given to beneficiaries, schemes exist. What is missing is a simple way of seeing it all together. So yes, it is worth writing about. Not because the numbers are neatly consolidated but because the ends justify means, not because we have all numbers at National, State, and CSR-Level in an open way but because they are not and they need to be. Once you accept that, the real story emerges.



THE EDUCATION WHICH DOES NOT HELP THE COMMON MASS OF PEOPLE TO EQUIP THEMSELVES FOR THE STRUGGLE FOR LIFE, WHICH DOES NOT BRING OUT STRENGTH OF CHARACTER, A SPIRIT OF PHILANTHROPY, AND THE COURAGE OF A LION, IS IT WORTH THE NAME?

— SWAMI VIVEKANANDA



The Invisible Curriculum: What Students Learn Without Being Taught

Every school follows a curriculum. Mathematics is taught through textbooks, science through experiments, and languages through reading and writing. Yet, after three years of speaking with educators, school leaders, and grassroots organisations across India, one lesson has repeatedly emerged: some of the most important things children learn are never written in a textbook.

Education is constantly measured through marks, attendance, board results, and learning assessments. These indicators are essential, but they capture only a part of what happens inside a school. Long before students learn algebra or grammar, they begin learning something else. They observe how adults resolve disagreements. They notice whether questions are welcomed or dismissed. They understand whether mistakes are treated as failures or opportunities to improve. Every interaction quietly shapes their understanding of confidence, curiosity, empathy, and responsibility.

What surprised us through our conversations was how frequently educators returned to these themes without explicitly calling them a curriculum. Some spoke about beginning each morning by greeting every child individually. Others described creating classrooms where students felt comfortable admitting they did not understand a concept. A few reflected on the importance of giving children small responsibilities, believing that ownership develops long before leadership does. None of these practices appear in examination papers, yet each one influences how children approach learning.

Several organisations we documented arrived at the same conclusion through different pathways. Some focused on community engagement, recognising that children learn consistency when parents participate in schooling. Others invested heavily in teacher development, understanding that students imitate the attitudes of their teachers as much as they absorb their lessons. Programmes centred around sports, art, libraries, or storytelling were rarely viewed as extracurricular activities. They were seen as opportunities to build confidence, collaboration, and resilience alongside academic learning.

This may explain why schools with similar infrastructure and identical syllabi often produce very different learning environments. Buildings, textbooks, and technology create opportunities for education, but culture determines whether those opportunities become meaningful. A classroom where children feel respected will almost always encourage greater participation than one where they fear making mistakes. Likewise, a teacher who listens carefully often teaches lessons that extend far beyond the subject they were appointed to teach.

As digital tools, artificial intelligence, and curriculum reforms continue to reshape education, this quieter dimension deserves equal attention. Technology can improve access to knowledge. Better assessments can identify learning gaps. New policies can strengthen governance. But none of these can replace the values students absorb every day through observation and experience.

Perhaps this is education's greatest paradox. The lessons that shape a child's future most profoundly are often the ones nobody formally teaches. The question, then, is not only whether our children are learning mathematics, science, or language well. **It is whether our schools are consciously teaching the values, habits, and confidence that no textbook can ever fully contain.**

The Visible Curriculum



What schools
intentionally teach.

The Invisible Curriculum



What students
learn every day.

The Teacher Multiplier: Why Every Education Reform Begins With One Classroom

Across three years of conversations with grassroots organisations, school leaders, and teachers, one observation has quietly repeated itself regardless of geography, budget, or organisational model. The most successful education programmes are rarely defined by a curriculum, a building, or even a technology platform. They are defined by the teacher who chooses to make those resources meaningful. This may seem obvious, yet it is surprisingly absent from many discussions on education reform. Public debates often revolve around infrastructure, learning outcomes, digital platforms, or examination results. While each of these is important, they all share one common characteristic: they reach students only through teachers. Every policy, textbook, assessment, and technological intervention eventually passes through a classroom before it reaches a child. The quality of that translation often determines whether an initiative succeeds or quietly disappears.

Our interactions over the past three years consistently reinforced this idea. Teachers who embraced new approaches were not necessarily those working in the best-equipped schools. Many taught in government or tribal residential schools with limited resources, unreliable internet, or overcrowded classrooms. Yet they continued experimenting with different methods, adapting lessons to suit their students, and looking beyond the textbook whenever they believed it would improve understanding. Their willingness to innovate was rarely driven by external incentives; it emerged from a desire to teach better.

An equally important observation was that effective teachers did not see technology as a substitute for teaching. They viewed it as another resource that could help explain a difficult concept, provide structured revision, or save valuable preparation time. The lesson repeated itself across multiple interviews: digital platforms become meaningful only when they strengthen the teacher's role rather than diminish it. The classroom remains centred on conversation, questioning, and guidance, while technology quietly supports those processes in the background.

What also became evident was that teachers need the same support we expect them to provide their students. Continuous professional development, opportunities to collaborate with peers, access to high-quality teaching resources, and encouragement from school leadership all influence classroom practice. Many of the organisations featured in Jeet Ki Aor invested heavily in building teacher confidence before expecting improvements in student learning. Their experience suggests that educational quality cannot be separated from teacher development; the two are inseparable.

Perhaps this explains why schools with similar infrastructure often produce very different outcomes. The difference frequently lies not in the resources available, but in how confidently those resources are used. A projector, a library, or a digital platform has little educational value on its own. It becomes transformative only when a teacher integrates it thoughtfully into the learning process. In that sense, teachers do not simply deliver education - they multiply the impact of every investment made in education.

As JEET has continued working alongside government schools, this has become one of our strongest convictions. Whether through free digital content, structured assessments, or classroom resources, the objective has never been to replace teachers, but to strengthen their ability to teach with greater confidence and consistency. Every conversation with educators has reaffirmed that meaningful reform begins not with the introduction of another programme, but with empowering the person standing in front of the classroom.

Over three years, across three volumes and over 70 grassroots conversations while building JEET, we've observed India's education landscape from the ground up. This series distills what works, what sustains, and what continues to challenge meaningful education at scale.

300+ Hrs

Teacher Preparation

Annual lesson-planning time that structured digital support can significantly reduce.

60%

Platform Adoption

Teaching staff voluntarily using structured digital learning where classroom support was available.

The question, therefore, is not whether India needs better educational interventions. It is whether we are investing enough in the people who determine whether those interventions succeed. Because every lasting improvement in education ultimately begins with one teacher, one classroom, and one decision to teach differently.