

Fund crunch at NITs deprives 2k JEE toppers of scholarship

Ram.sundaram
@timesgroup.com

Chennai: The scholarship scheme for the top 2,000 JEE rank-holders studying in National Institutes of Technology (NITs) has been scrapped citing funds crunch.

Under the scheme run by the Council of NITs, the toppers who pursue engineering (undergraduate level) in NITs are entitled to a scholarship of Rs 2.8 lakh each during the duration of the course. Launched in 2010-11 academic year, the scheme also envisaged a fee waiver of Rs 35,000 per annum to these meritorious students. Documents available

with TOI reveal that the standing committee of the Council of NITs, the top decision-making body governing the premier technical institutes, has recommended scrapping the scheme as it would save a total of Rs 56 crore.

Consequently, the top 2,000 rank-holders doing their courses at NITs have neither received funds under the 'merit scholarship scheme', nor have the institutes been asked to send the list of potential beneficiaries this year. NITs receive more than Rs 3,600 crore annually for development.

Revenue through sale of application forms for JEE was

the main source of revenue for the Central Seat Allocation Board (CSAB), which coordinates undergraduate engineering admissions in NITs. Funds, left over after conducting JEE, were utilised to award scholarships to the rankers. "Of late, CSAB realised that not much funds were left over after conducting the exams and proposal seeking support from the ministry is pending for a long time," a former standing committee member who participated in the meeting told TOI.

The scheme was reviewed after directors of NITs expressed difficulty in continuing it,

as there was a "huge gap" between funds dispersed by the Centre and the requirements of the institutions.

NITs claimed that their interest rate generation (IRG) took a massive hit because of the exemptions related to fee payment. Unable to find a solution, the committee decided that it would be appropriate to scrap the scheme and receipts from CSAB could be utilised for development of the institutes. Though the recommendations were sent to the ministry in November 2016, CSAB chairman Udaykumar Yaragatti refused to comment on its current status.