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# Scholarships to be directly linked to bank accounts

## UGC to transfer study grants under DBT scheme

Prakash Kumar

**NEW DELHI: All scholarships and fellowships are set to be credited directly into the bank accounts of the students of higher education from March 1.**

The University Grants Commission (UGC) is in the last leg of its efforts to completely move from the manual processing of the students' claims to online processing.

It is also going to implement the transfer of study grants into the bank accounts of the

beneficiaries under the direct benefit transfer (DBT) programme, nearly two years after the government created a public finance monitoring system (PFMS) seeking the UGC to get data of all beneficiaries uploaded on it.

With the uploading of the existing beneficiaries of the scholarships and fellowships at the PFMS, the commission is now in the process of moving it to a portal created with the partner bank, for direct transfer of the study grants to the students' bank accounts.

The higher education regulator has been working to make the transfer of all study grants through DBT since the Centre decided to bring all universities, colleges and other higher educational institutions under the PFMS from April 1, 2015, for the timely release of funds to beneficiaries of scholarships and fellowships.

The UGC had also earmarked about 20% of its budget to the PFMS for the direct payment of students' study grants as well as development

grants to higher educational institutions.

However, the directive to the educational institutions for uploading data of the beneficiary students drew a cold response

As a large number of universities and colleges neither register themselves at the PFMS portal nor furnish beneficiaries' data for more than a year, the commission went tough and stopped the release of funds earmarked for study grants to such institutions.

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The CBSE's move to exercise absolute control over the appointment of principals in schools affiliated to it is wrong and ill-conceived. The CBSE has been working on it for some time. It had first decided on a plan with two elements in it. One was that all candidates who wanted to be appointed principals had to pass an eligibility test. Apart from teachers, even those who were already principals had to clear the test, called the Principal Eligibility Test (PET). But principals of government schools were exempted. The idea of a PET is reported to have been dropped now. But the second part of the proposal remains, and that is enough for the board to gain full say in the appointment of principals.

An amendment to the CBSE's affiliation bye-laws proposes the inclusion of representatives of the board and the state government in the committee for selection of the principal of a school. Earlier, this committee consisted of the president of the society, the chairperson of the managing committee and a person nominated by the committee. According to the new rule, the selection committee's recommendations "shall invariably have concurrence" of the two new members. This means the CBSE's and the government's representatives will have veto power over the appointment of any person as the principal. This is unfair, and amounts to gross interference in the affairs of the school by the CBSE



**"It is unfair for govt to interfere in appointment of principals."**

and the government. In effect, the government will decide who is to become the principal of a private school, as the CBSE, being controlled by the government, will have no independent view. Control of education is high on the agenda of this government, and appointment of principals offers a good platform for that. This seems to be the motive behind the move.

There are about 10,000 private schools affiliated to the CBSE. Affiliation is an academic process and does not give the CBSE any administrative and management control over the school. The managements of schools which have invested in them have the right to appoint the teachers and the principals. The government, through the CBSE, is trying to rob the management of their rights and their responsibility to the students and their parents. The schools will also be deprived of their autonomy. It is for the managements to run and administer the schools efficiently. They should have the freedom to choose principals who can best do this. The CBSE's move does not make sense administratively and academically. It will also be found lacking in legal merit. The board should drop the move altogether.