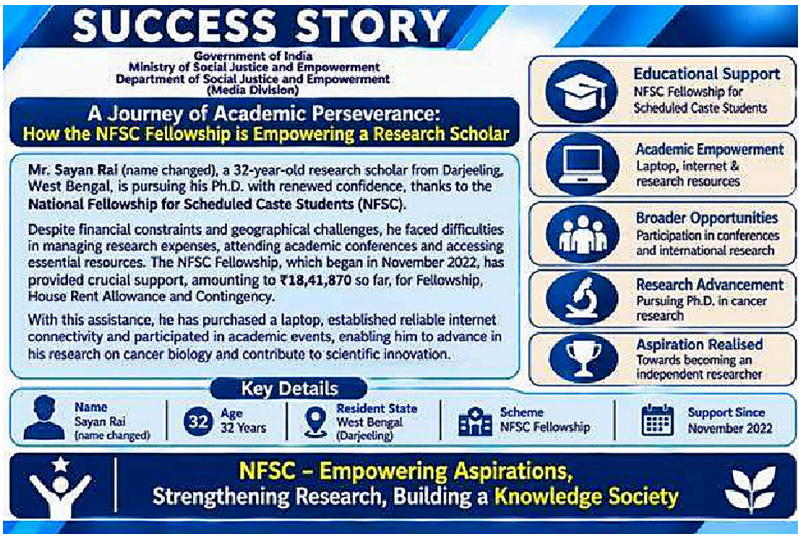
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From Financial Constraints to Academic Progress



CHENNAI – 11 Nov, 2026 The journey of Sayan Rai (name changed) demonstrates how timely educational assistance can help students overcome financial and geographical barriers, access essential research resources and pursue their academic aspirations. It highlights the role of the NFSC Scheme in supporting higher education and empowering aspiring scholars to contribute meaningfully to the academic community.

At 32, Sayan Rai, a Scheduled Caste research scholar from Darjeeling, West Bengal, is pursuing his Ph.D. with determination and a strong commitment to academic research. His aspiration to undertake quality doctoral research, however, was accompanied by considerable financial challenges. As a full-time research scholar with limited sources of income, meeting academic and everyday living expenses placed a significant burden on him and his family.

Coming from a family where his parents were also supporting the education of his sibling, he faced difficulties in managing expenses related to rent, electricity, accommodation, books, stationery, fieldwork and travel. Limited resources also prevented him from purchasing a personal laptop, often requiring him to depend on borrowed devices and university facilities.

Inconsistent internet connectivity in the Darjeeling Hills further affected his access to online academic resources. Financial constraints also made it difficult to participate in conferences, workshops and seminars.

The National Fellowship for Scheduled Caste Students (NFSC) Scheme has played an important role in supporting his academic journey. Since November 2022, he has been receiving assistance in the form of Fellowship, House Rent Allowance (HRA) and Contingency.

The financial assistance received so far amounts to Rs 18,41,870, helping him meet essential academic and living expenses and continue his doctoral studies with greater confidence and stability.

The support has enabled him to purchase a laptop, obtain a reliable internet connection and acquire books, stationery and other essential research materials. It has also helped him meet conference and seminar registration fees, travel expenses and fieldwork costs. In particular, the assistance has made it possible for him to undertake intensive fieldwork, an important component of his research, while participating more actively in academic activities.

Today, Sayan Rai is able to devote greater attention to his Ph.D. research with reduced financial uncertainty. The fellowship has strengthened his academic productivity and confidence as a researcher while reducing his dependence on his family for educational and living expenses.