State Scholarship Portal Maturity Assessment

Summary -

While there is still scope for bettering the National Scholarship Portal on a few parameters, such as regional language support, institute level data, and beneficiary level data, even in its current format it has abundant utility and may be used as a one-stop dashboard for scholarship monitoring once the alignment with all other state scholarship portals is complete.

Apart from the states having their portal linked to the National Scholarship Portal, only a few states are able to cross the 50 percent mark in maturity assessment. Karnataka & Uttar Pradesh are the two top performing states in 'Scholarship portal maturity assessment index', developed for the purpose of this review (for details on methodology of ranking, please refer to Annex below), with good scores in terms of managing their state portal owing to the availability of granular data. Most state portals do not have any public data available on their website even at the highest aggregated level, that is, district level data.

Annex-

The online scholarship application process facilitates smoothness and transparency. Thus there is a need to assess how well the existing IT infrastructure, that is the State scholarship portals are performing.

Currently, eligible beneficiaries/students have the option to apply online or offline for a scholarship. The online application may be made and processed on the National Scholarship Portal (NSP) or the respective state scholarship portals. The Central government aims to align all state portals to NSP for the relevant Centrally Sponsored Schemes/Central Sector Scholarship schemes. Currently only seven States and two Union Territories have their portals linked with the National Scholarship Portal & rest of the twenty two States and five UTs continue to use their own portals to register eligible students for such scholarship Schemes.

A guide has been prepared to measure the maturity of state scholarship portals based on linkage with NSP, Accessibility, Transparency, Frequency of Updating, Data Granularity & Speed of the website.

1. **Accessibility** is measured on the basis of whether the website supports regional languages, and whether the information of various scholarship schemes is available along with the deadlines for application. It also takes into account if the students & institutes have an option for registration, and if they can check their application status. Additionally, it also rates the grievance redressal system to register complaints and resolve issues.
2. **Transparency** is assessed by taking into account whether the website has publicly available data of the scholarship distributed to the students.
3. **Frequency of updating** is measured by timely data (and other relevant information related to scholarships) updating on the website.
4. **Data granularity** is ranked on the basis of what level of data is available on the website, that is, district-wise data, category-wise data, Institute level data, and Beneficiary level data.
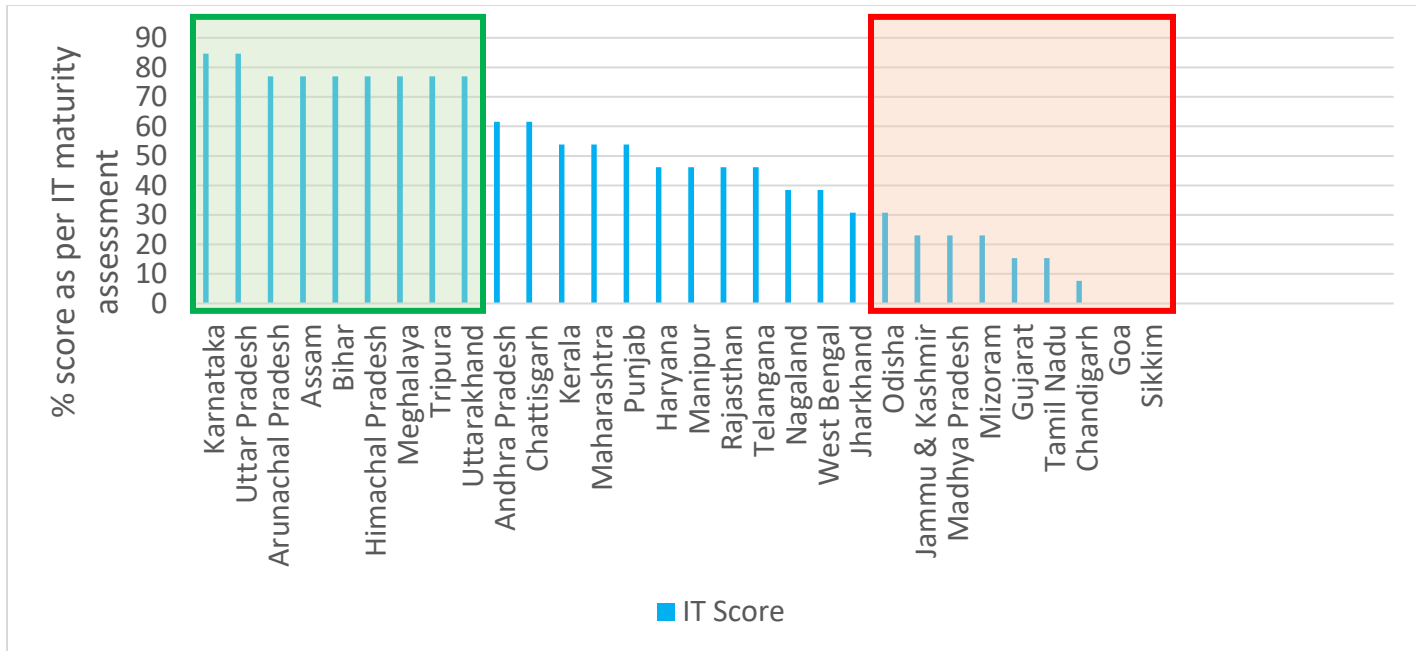
Scoring is done basis the above indicators. For every indicator available, a score of 1 is given and 0 is awarded in case of absence of indicator. A cumulative score out of 13 is given to measure the maturity of the scholarship portal. All State scholarship portals have been assessed on these given parameters to create a maturity index.

The states with portal linked to NSP are considered the gold standard. These have high ease of access, publicly available data at granular level updated annually.

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Figure- Ranking of state scholarship portal basis IT maturity assessment

As depicted in the bar graph above, only 14 out of the 29 states have scores greater than 50 percent. Out of these 14, 9 states have scores greater than 60 percent which can be attributed to the fact that 7 of these states are linked to the National Scholarship Portal. Among the worst performing states on this index are Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Goa & Sikkim. Goa & Sikkim scored 0 as they don't have a portal in place for students to apply for scholarships. The remaining 8 states, which scored less than 30 percent on the index, don't have a dedicated website for scholarship portal but their students are able to apply online through state web portal or through state online service platform. The average performing states have a dedicated scholarship portal in place but don't have sufficient information on website regarding scholarship and lack in public availability of data on their portal.

Scholarships portal
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