

Need Based Students' Scholarship: PUSH KJSCE-A Success Story

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Abstract: The fee structure of many self-financed colleges in India may be exorbitant to aspiring students coming from the financially weaker section. The problem is even more pertinent when staying cost gets added for outside Mumbai students. The paper aims to focus on the process of building a mechanism to bring technical education within reach of the financially needy students, who are admitted to K.J. Somaiya College of Engineering Mumbai (KJSCE). With an aim of raising funds to support such needy students, employees of KJSCE came together and extended a helping hand to establish an organization named as "PUSH" (People United for Students' Help). This paper describes the functioning of PUSH-KJSCE and its long-lasting impact on the lives of low-income students. PUSH-KJSCE, a management-inspired practice in KJSCE, ensured an economic support system as well as much-needed facilities to financially weaker students. As a result of this, it not only makes the students confident, but it also helps them to fulfil their dreams to become professionally qualified. The PUSH KJSCE is a success story of the best management practices which spread the rays of hope in the lives of young minds, such that they are no more hindered by financial obstacles and it also creates awareness in them to contribute and make this model sustainable.

Keywords: PUSH-KJSCE (People United for Students Help-K J Somaiya College of Engineering), Need base scholarship, Statistical analysis, Students feedback, Sustainable system.

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1. Introduction

KJSCE Mumbai is known for its focus on quality in education. Efforts have been made to achieve this by promoting different methods of teaching-learning; such as encouraging hands-on-learning, supporting student participation in national / international project competitions, etc. Due to the additional facilities required for such initiatives, the fee structure of the college might appear to be unaffordable to aspiring students, who come from the financially weaker section. So, in the past, students from financially the weaker section, though competent, either did not take admission in our college or they had to seek support from a number of charitable organizations for their education. Many of the charitable organisations provide performance-based scholarships [1, 2]. They have two main goals: to give students more money for college and to provide incentives for academic progress [3]. In need base scholarship, only highly deserving/ needy students, having acute financial problems, are eligible to apply for this scholarship [4]. Like all others need-based scholarships of other public or private agencies, PUSH KJSCE has the similar policy wherein scholarship is awarded to students for a year only and they have to reapply it each year.

PUSH KJSCE, officially formed in 2013 with a goal to help such financially weaker students, provided an aid of Rs. 41, 48,844 to a total of 96 students till the last financial year 18-19. If minimum eligibility criteria are met every year, a student is supported all through the period of his/her education. After successful completion of their education, student beneficiaries of the past have already started paying back to PUSH-KJSCE fund. Since financial support is provided through college itself, students do not need to approach various funding agencies to collect the same amount; which in turn results in savings in their time, energy and anxiety for funds.

The paper is structured as follows; Section 2 comprises

the organization structure of the PUSH-KJSCE, Section 3 deals with methodology behind the selection of genuine students and Section 4 demonstrates statistical analysis of financial support, given to the needy students. Feedback of the PUSH KJSCE is included in Section 5 along with the success story of one of the beneficial students. The paper is concluded in section 6.

2. PUSH KJSCE Structure

A well organised structure of the PUSH KJSCE is shown in Fig1.

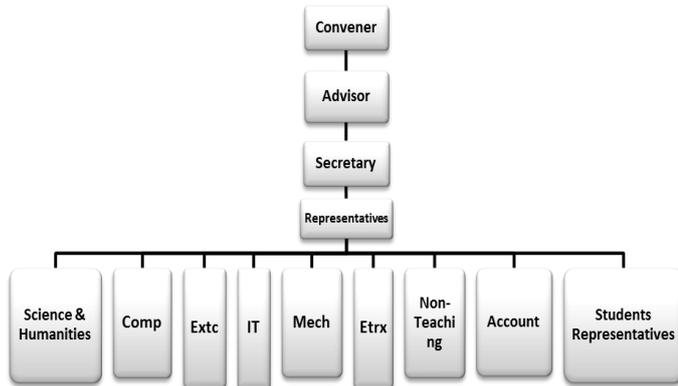


Figure. 1 PUSH KJSCE Core Committee Structure

Working of the need based scholarship comprises the core committee and students representatives.

A. Core Committee

As shown in Fig. 1 convener is the Principal, the head of institute. Advisor is the senior faculty member. The role of the Secretary is to maintain coordination amongst convener and faculty board of PUSH-KJSCE to carry out PUSH activities throughout the year in coordination with students and faculty representatives. The core team also includes faculty representatives from all the departments. Financial records are handled by the account officer of the college.

B. Activities of Student Volunteers

- Reach out for the collection of Funds
- The collection of student data & Help in scrutinising the forms collected.
- Carry out all related activities under the guidance of secretary and advisor.
- Contact beneficiaries- alumni for the refund of amount.

The entire team is responsible for all activities right from the fund raising to the selection of students and disbursement of funds to genuine needy students.

3. Process of Scholarship Allotment

PUSH KJSCE scholarship is completely a need-based scholarship. The student who wants to avail this facility should be from the low income group with gross annual income of the family less than 2 lakhs, earning from all sources.

As shown in the Figure 2, application forms for the PUSH KJSCE scholarship are made available online to the students at the start of the academic year and scrutinised candidates, along with their parents are then interviewed by the PUSH panel (Figure 1).

Out of the available fund of the committee, an appropriate amount, as requested by the students, is provided only after a thorough scrutiny of the student's background by the committee members. The fund disbursed to the students is raised by faculty members, staff, students, alumni and other donors. The entire contribution is voluntary from all stakeholders. Responsibility of fund collection lies with PUSH-KJSCE students' council and committee members. The entire fund is routed through KJSCE-PUSH account, taking an approval from the Principal of college with her signature.

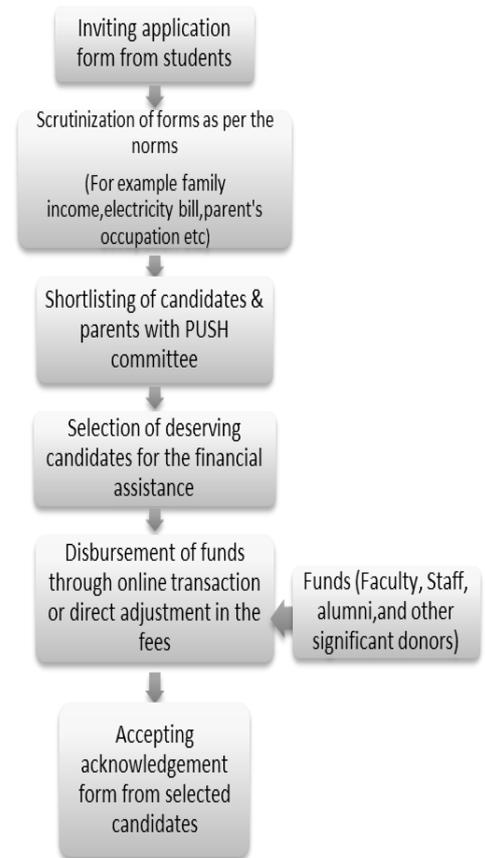


Figure. 2 Selection Process of Applicants

As shown in Figure 2, there is no restriction on a number of

students for the scholarship. However, the amount of aid, given to each student, depends on the availability of fund with the committee in that academic year. The amount of scholarship varies from student to student depending on the need and circumstances of a particular student.

The various tasks involved in the process are executed by the PUSH KJSCE students' body under the supervision of the PUSH KJSCE committee members. Activities of the PUSH KJSCE systematic need-base scholarship allotment process are shown in Table 2.

Table1. Outcomes of the process

Activities	Result
Creation of financial support system in college	Improvement in quality of hostel /day scholars students
Systematic and transparent implementation of policies	Increase in the collection of funds
Detailed background check for need analysis	Increase in the number of deserving beneficiaries
Receipt of funds from the previous beneficiary students	Success of assistance model, Culture of handholding

The PUSH-KJSCE council appeals to the previous beneficiary students to repay their aid amount when they start earning after completing their degree. However, they are under no compulsion to do so.

4. Statistical Analysis

The detailed statistical analysis of the benefits of PUSH-KJSCE initiative to the needy students has been presented in the following manner:

- A. Year wise analysis
- B. Funds Collected Vs Funds disbursed to the needy Students
- C. Financial Resources generated
- D. Funds Remitted back from beneficiary students after their graduation

A. Year wise analysis

Initially application forms are received from the students and then their applications are carefully scrutinized based on the eligibility criteria. All the eligible students are called for the interview along with parents. Year wise statistics is shown in Table 2

Table 2 . PUSH statistical analysis

Academic Year	PUSH Data Analysis		
	No. of students applied for the scholarship	No. of students eligible for the scholarship	No. of students awarded scholarship
2013-14	39	17	17
2014-15	26	14	14
2015-16	22	16	16
2016-17	15	14	14
2017-18	21	17	17
2018-19	19	18	18

The number of students benefitted through the PUSH-KJSCE initiative since its inception are shown in fig. 3.

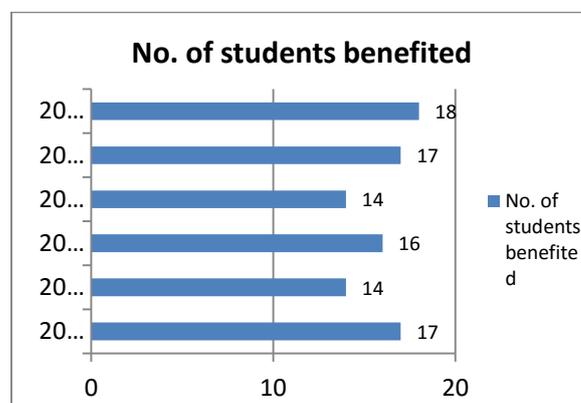


Figure 3: Number of students benefitted through PUSH-KJSCE initiative

B. Funds Collected Vs Funds disbursed to the needy students:

The PUSH-KJSCE amount is collected from donors who include the faculty of KJSCE, staff members of KJSCE, students and Alumni of KJSCE, external donors and previously benefitted students through PUSH-KJSCE initiative. The following figure 4 shows the data related to funds collected and funds disbursed to beneficiaries since the inception of PUSH-KJSCE.

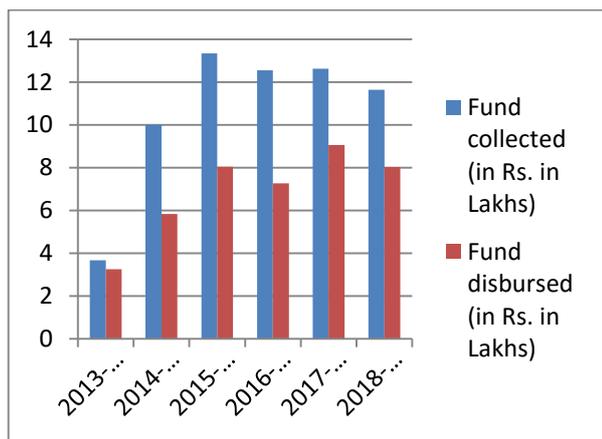


Figure 4: Amount collection and disbursement through PUSH-KJSCE initiative

C. Financial Resources generated

The following figure 5 shows the funds generated for the PUSH-KJSCE from various donors. These donors include faculty and staff members of KJSCE, students of KJSCE, Alumni of KJSCE, external donors and previously benefitted students through PUSH-KJSCE initiative.

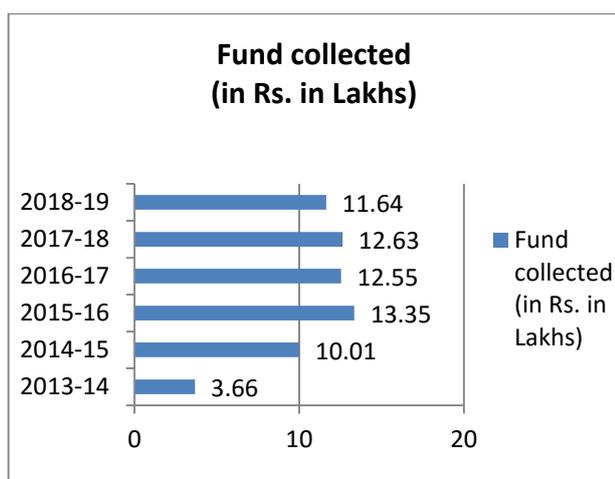


Figure 5: Amount collection through PUSH-KJSCE initiative

D. Funds Remitted back from beneficiary students after their graduation:

Over the years the students, who have been benefitted through the PUSH-KJSCE, have also started contributing back voluntarily to PUSH-KJSCE funds after their graduation and employment. Regular correspondence is done with beneficiary/alumni through KJSCE Alumni association for the same. These funds are also being used for needy students. The following figure-6 shows the funds which have been remitted back from beneficiary students over the years. The figure shows the funds remitted back by students corresponding to academic year in which they were benefitted.

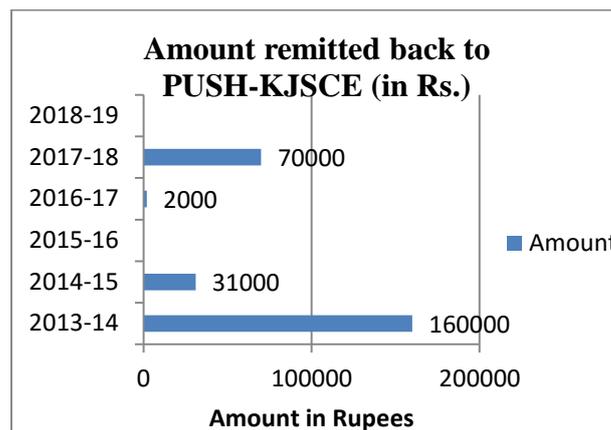


Figure 6: Amount remitted back to PUSH-KJSCE by beneficiaries

Figure 6 indicates that students who were benefitted in 2013-14, 2014-15 and so on have started returning the amounts. The numbers indicate the amount returned by such students corresponding to the year in which they were benefitted.

5. Feedback from the Students

Beneficiary students of PUSH-KJSCE conveyed that PUSH-KJSCE is a great initiative. It is one of the helping hand activities, effectively functioning for the benefits of students in Education. It is really helpful for economically weaker students in college to achieve their goal by helping them to fulfil their financial needs. Even the little help from PUSH-KJSCE made difference in their life. PUSH-KJSCE scholarship made them proud of their ability to get financial help to support their parents. Most of the students conveyed that PUSH-KJSCE helps them and their parents in relieving their financial burden and stress, related to the arrangement of funds required for paying off tuition fees, hostel fees etc. Beneficiary students were grateful to PUSH-KJSCE for lending them helping hand when it was most required and, hence, it gave more impetus to them to stay in touch with college in the future as well to help other needy students. To recount a success story of PUSH KJSCE, we are sharing feedback, received from the first beneficiary student;

Feedback "I passed out in the year 2014 as a B.E. Mechanical Engineer from KJSCE Vidyavihar Mumbai campus. It was long cherished dream coming true. My convocation day bought happiness to many, who were with me all time during my career. One of them was PUSH KJSCE, an association of people who firmly believed that financial problems shouldn't come in the path of education.

You may have one question, how I and PUSH were associated?

The story goes this way.....

In the summer of 2012, out of the blue my mother suffered a paralysis attack. She was hospitalized and the treatment was going on for months. My family nearly went

bankrupt and the financial savings were getting exhausted. In August 2012, it was time to pay fees. I was tensed, feeling sad and felt low for the situation I am going through. The day appeared to submit demand drafts to college. S & H staff was collecting fees in old building, 1st floor. That day, I had decided to quit engineering and take up something else. Just before I do anything that foolish, I decided to talk. My roll no “1015074” was called and I went to Ravindra Salvi sir, who was collecting DD’s. With all courage, I told him that “I don’t have any money to pay fees and I am planning to quit engineering”. He asked me to wait. We later had a word to explain my situation. This is where he, along with other the teachers, decided to pull my fees up through contribution and started PUSH council. I will proudly say that I am the first student to be benefitted by PUSH. After getting a job I decided to take this up and consistently paid Rs. 7000 for 13 months.

I felt fulfilled and accomplished when I paid my last instalment. Thank you PUSH KJSCE. I have only repaid the “amount” but the “time” in which I was supported cannot be returned. It stays with me forever. With this in my mind I always try to help my juniors and guide them in all possible ways I can. Today, I am working with an MNC company and my career has started well off. I now dare to dream and know that money will never be a constraint to achieve my goals.

Most of the PUSH KJSCE beneficiary students conveyed that, because of the financial support they could concentrate more on academics, their results were improved and now they are working well in good companies.

6. Conclusions

Results from the above practices followed in the college indicate that it is possible to cross the barriers of learners if the policies and practices followed in education system support and encourage diversity of students resulting in inclusive education. Student volunteers, who also have been beneficiaries in the past, under the guidance of faculty mentors have formed the PUSH council and have continued to work on their mission even today. Involving student volunteers in PUSH council, generating funds for needy students, allocating a sum of money to the deserving students for their education and returning the allocated amount after its use to PUSH by the beneficiary students etc. help in developing a culture of handholding amongst students. So, the effective functioning of PUSH shows that its work coincides with the humanistic legacy of Somaiya Vidyavihar.

7. Acknowledgement

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