

ScholarFinder

Personalised scholarship matching + essay-help for Indian students applying to UG and PG (India + abroad). Tens of crores in scholarships go unclaimed annually because of information asymmetry. ■999 one-time or ■299/mo for active applicant.

Category	Set 6 · Consumer & Family
Customer	Indian students (and their parents) applying to undergraduate + postgraduate programs in India + abroad, especially from middle-income families requiring financial aid
Monetisation	■999 one-time Standard · ■299/mo subscription during active application phase · ■3,999 Premium one-time (with essay-coach review)
Build effort	Med
Plan version	v1.0 — 2026-05

Executive Summary

ScholarFinder addresses the substantial information asymmetry in Indian scholarship availability. Estimated tens of crores in scholarship funds go unclaimed annually in India because of information asymmetry — students + parents don't know what scholarships exist that match their profile, the application process is opaque, deadlines are missed, eligibility requirements are buried in bureaucratic websites. ScholarFinder maintains a comprehensive database of 8,000+ scholarships (India government + state government + private foundation + university-specific + abroad) + AI matches each student's profile to applicable scholarships + provides essay-help + reminder workflow.

Pricing: ■999 one-time for Standard (full matching + deadline reminders for current application cycle), ■299/mo subscription during active application phase, ■3,999 Premium one-time (Standard + human essay-coach review of scholarship essays). Year-1 target: 12,000 paying users generating ■2.4 crore annual revenue against ■35 lakh costs. Cash-positive month 3.

The Problem

Indian students applying for higher education face a hidden + complex scholarship landscape. Scholarship sources include: Government of India (Vidya Lakshmi portal + Inspire scholarship + dozens of caste-based + minority + special-category awards); state governments (every state has 15-40 distinct scholarships); central + state universities (institutional aid); private foundations (Tata Trusts + Reliance Foundation + Aditya Birla + L&T; + dozens of corporate CSR scholarships + smaller family foundations); abroad-study-focused scholarships (Inlaks + Tata + JN Tata Endowment + Aga Khan + Fulbright + Commonwealth + many others); university-direct aid for abroad study.

Information access is broken. Each scholarship has its own website + application portal + deadline + eligibility + documentation requirements. Aggregator sites (Buddy4Study + Vidya Lakshmi government portal) provide some coverage but are incomplete + frequently outdated + don't personalise matching. Most students rely on word-of-mouth + senior recommendations + accept that they're applying to maybe 3-8 scholarships they know about while 30-80 applicable scholarships go unapplied.

Result: estimated ■500-1,500 crore annually in scholarship funds unclaimed in India because applicants don't know about them. Individual student impact: students who would have received ■50k-5L scholarships graduate with corresponding additional loan burden.

The Solution

ScholarFinder structured around the application journey. Onboarding: structured student profile (age + class + stream + academic performance + caste/category if applicable + family income + state of domicile + target programs + target institutions if known + intent for abroad study).

Matching engine: AI matches student profile against 8,000+ scholarship database; produces ranked list of applicable scholarships with eligibility match score + deadline + application complexity + typical award amount.

Application workflow: per-scholarship structured workflow (eligibility verification + required documents checklist + application timeline + essay prompts + submission tracking).

Essay help: AI-assisted essay writing (provides structure + drafts + improves user-provided drafts) for scholarship essays. Premium tier adds human essay-coach review.

Deadline reminders: WhatsApp + email reminders for upcoming deadlines.

Three structural differences from existing aggregator sites. First, personalised matching (don't show all 8,000 scholarships; show the 30-60 that match this specific student). Second, application workflow (not just discovery — actually help submit). Third, essay help (the biggest application-quality differentiator).

Premium tier (■3,999 one-time): Standard + human essay-coach review of 2-4 scholarship essays + 1 video call with admissions consultant.

Market Opportunity

Indian students applying to higher education annually: ~25M (UG + PG combined). Willing-to-pay segment: ~3-5M who would pay ₹999 one-time for structured scholarship matching.

At blended ARPU of ₹2,000 per applicant, SAM is ₹600-1,000 crore. Realistic 3-year capture: 0.3-1% = ₹2-10 crore ARR.

Adjacent expansion. Year 2: full college-application support (university selection + application + visa for abroad study). Education-loan adjacency (when scholarships are insufficient, integrated education-loan recommendations). Year 3: alumni-mentor matching (current students matched with successful alumni in target career paths).

Target Customer

Primary persona: a 17-year-old class-12 student in Patna applying to engineering colleges + financial-aid eligible (family income ₹6 lakh/yr). Will pay ₹999 Standard with parent's approval after free trial shows applicable scholarships.

Secondary persona: a 22-year-old engineering graduate from Coimbatore preparing for MS abroad. Will pay ₹3,999 Premium for essay-coach review of competitive scholarship applications.

Tertiary persona: a parent of class-11 student in Hyderabad researching scholarships ahead of next year's application. Will pay ₹299/mo subscription for active matching over 8-month research period.

Product

Student profile: structured intake of academic + demographic + financial + interest data.

Scholarship database: 8,000+ scholarships curated + maintained with structured eligibility + deadline + amount metadata.

Matching engine: AI matches profile to scholarships + produces ranked applicability list.

Application workflow: per-scholarship eligibility verification + document checklist + essay prompts + submission tracking.

Essay help: AI-assisted writing tools (structure + drafts + improvement).

Deadline reminders: WhatsApp + email cadence based on deadline calendar.

Premium tier: human essay-coach review + admissions-consultant call.

Technical Architecture

Frontend: Next.js + React Native mobile.

Backend: Python on Hetzner cloud, Postgres.

Scholarship database: curated + structured (continuous content-team maintenance + scrape monitoring for updates).

Matching engine: rule-based eligibility filter + AI ranking.

AI essay help: GPT-4o + Claude Sonnet.

WhatsApp + email: Meta Business Cloud API + Resend.

Payments: Razorpay.

Business Model & Unit Economics

Three tiers. Standard ₹999 one-time (single application cycle access). Subscription ₹299/mo (for active applicants over multi-month research). Premium ₹3,999 one-time (Standard + human essay coach + consultant call).

Conversion: 9% of trial users convert to paid. Distribution: 65% Standard, 25% Subscription, 10% Premium.

Gross margin: Standard 92%; Subscription 88%; Premium 55% (human coach + consultant cost). Blended ~80%.

LTV: ₹999 one-time (Standard); ₹299 × 6 mo avg = ₹1,794 (Subscription); ₹3,999 one-time (Premium).

Unit Economics (Year-1 base case)

Year-1 paying users (target)	12,000
Average revenue per user	₹2,000
Year-1 revenue	₹2.4 crore
Gross margin	80%
CAC	₹220
Year-1 all-in costs	~₹35 lakh
Year-1 net contribution	~₹1.5 crore

Go-to-Market

Channel 1 — School + college partnerships (40%): partnerships with class-11/12 schools + UG/PG colleges for student-discount + counselor recommendation.

Channel 2 — Content + SEO (30%): substantive scholarship-content (per-scholarship deep guides + state-wise lists + sector-specific lists). Strong commercial SEO.

Channel 3 — Education-influencer partnerships (20%): partnerships with Indian education YouTubers (UnAcademy creators + career-counselor creators).

Channel 4 — Parent-community organic (10%): parent FB groups + WhatsApp networks.

Roadmap (first 12 months)

- Month 1-3: MVP with scholarship database (initial 2,500 scholarships) + matching + Standard tier. 1,200 paying users.
- Month 4-5: Database to 5,000 scholarships + essay-help AI + Subscription tier, 4,000 cumulative.
- Month 6-8: Database to 8,000 scholarships + Premium tier with essay-coach + consultant, 7,500 cumulative.
- Month 9-10: Application-workflow depth + WhatsApp reminders, 10,000 cumulative.
- Month 11-12: 12,000 cumulative, ₹2.4 crore year-1 revenue.

Key Risks

- Scholarship database freshness: scholarships change deadlines + eligibility + amounts constantly. Mitigated by dedicated content team + automated scrape monitoring + community-feedback flagging.
- Buddy4Study response: existing aggregator could deepen personalisation. Mitigated by speed + workflow depth + essay-coach offering.

- Year-1 revenue heavily seasonal (June-October UG applications, Nov-Feb PG/abroad applications). Mitigated by year-round content + multi-cycle subscription option.
- Essay-coach scaling at Premium tier: requires quality-coach roster. Mitigated by careful selection + structured review templates.
- Trust signals: parents + students cautious about education-related apps after multiple sketchy edtech failures. Mitigated by transparent pricing + clear-outcome positioning + free-trial without payment-card-up-front.