

CASTE DISCRIMINATION IN HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

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Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education has informed that at present, thirty-one National Institutes of Technology (NITs) and an Indian Institute of Engineering Science and Technology (IIST), Shibpur are functioning in the country as Institutions of National Importance governed by the National Institutes of Technology, Science Education and Research ((NITSER) Act, 2007 (29 of 2007). As informed by Institutes, personal reasons/family issues/ Health related issues/ loss of money due to online trading/ failed in an academic subject/ gaming etc. are some of the common causes of such incidents.

All the Institutes take proactive welfare measures to prevent harassment of students and have engaged Counselors / Psychologists/ Doctors for counseling of students from time to time. The Institutes also have SC/ST cells established in the Institution to look into the issues of students. In addition, the Institute's own faculties/ Wardens/ Mentors are also actively involved in helping Students to deal with a wide range of concerns be it academic, personal, emotional. These Institutes conduct regular counseling sessions through sensitization programs for the student's community and have put in place provision of online registration of complaints/ suggestions. Besides this, motivational lectures/ talks, meditation & yoga sessions, sports meet, cultural meet are organized from time to time to inculcate a healthy atmosphere among students.

The Council of NITSER has also advised the Institutes to join hands in proactively mitigating the problems of students and taking care of emotional well being during their stay in the campuses and help them to remain joyful, positive and empower them to have better vision.

University Grants Commission (UGC) has notified the UGC (Promotion of Equity in Higher Educational Institutions) Regulations, 2012 to give effect to the statutory provisions and policies for prevention of discrimination on the grounds of caste, creed, religion, language, ethnicity, gender, disability.

The UGC has taken various steps for the Prevention of Caste Based Discrimination in HEIs. UGC has issued various directives/instructions and guidelines to HEIs to have a mechanism to address grievances related to discrimination. These include Equal Opportunity Cells, SC/ST Grievance Redressal Committees, and Liaison Officers specifically designated to handle matters concerning SC/ST students and staff.

This information was provided by UNION MINISTER OF STATE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT, SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE, in a written reply to a question in Lok Sabha today.

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