

FEDCUTA observes April 19 as All-India Demand Day; Delegation of teachers' representatives from Universities in Delhi meet UGC Secretary

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Teachers' representatives from FEDCUTA, DUTA, JNUTA and IPUTA assembled at the UGC today to observe Demand Day to highlight the long-standing demands of various universities, including the callous attitude of the Government towards pay revision of teachers and other academics. Members of the different universities who participated in the call to gather at the UGC also presented their memoranda on other issues ailing their universities. The delegation had an hour-long meeting with the UGC Secretary in which a host of issues were discussed including the incomprehensible secrecy surrounding the recommendations of the Pay Review Committee which has not been made public.

Teachers expressed their concern about the fact that the Ministry of Finance has suggested a 70% ceiling on the Government's financial responsibility in meeting the costs arising out of the 7th Pay Review for employees of Centrally-funded Autonomous Organisations. Teachers also expressed their objections to the Governments' policy of granting financial autonomy to some universities and colleges of Delhi University that would have disastrous social and academic consequences and push higher

education in the country towards more commercialisation, unreasonable hikes in student-fee, drastic cost-cutting and overstretching of existing infrastructure. A detailed note was submitted to the UGC Secretary on the issue.

Other issues that were discussed included the need to do away with API and its retrospective implementation in some universities which has led to large scale denial of promotions, the need to ensure implementation of the Order of the Double Bench on the matter of Pensions in DU and to give pension to all categories of teachers. The plight of thousands of temporary and ad-hoc teachers languishing for long years in precarious working conditions with no benefits was also highlighted.

The JNUTA discussed the issue of the massive seat-cut in JNU and the academic and social consequences of the new admission policy in JNU which has been thrust upon the university without any discussion in the statutory bodies. Representatives of IPUTA discussed the ills of the PPP model under which the IP University was set up. The MHRD's letter of 3rd March 2016 which has made the Registrars and FOs of universities personally responsible for financial decisions has dealt a severe blow to the financial autonomy of universities while giving these authorities an opportunity to misuse the letter to their ends. The issue of the violations in the 200 point Reservation Roster in Delhi University was also taken up and the mischievous attempts by some University authorities to keep teachers of Physical Education (appointed as Assistant Professors in Physical Education and promoted in the same cadre) out of the reservation roster. The teachers also conveyed their sense of anguish at the recent developments in Punjab University where funds cut has resulted in

unprecedented fee hike and police brutality has been unleashed on students protesting against the Government's move.

The FEDCUTA call for observance of Demand Day was part of a joint All India action programme, along with AIFUCTO, in an effort to highlight the above issues which must be addressed by the Government in order to prevent the destruction of public-funded education in the country and so that the higher education institutions can continue to attract and retain talent.

Nandita Narain, President

Ayesha Kidwai, Secretary

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