



JNUTA stands in solidarity with JNUSU

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JNUTA expresses its dismay at the denial of registration to the JNUSU President and other members of the Union on grounds of not paying an arbitrarily imposed fine. For the last one year, the students of various political persuasions in JNU have been voicing their dissent and protesting against various anti-student policies of the current JNU administration prominent among them being the unilaterally and arbitrarily imposed UGC notification of 2016 that has drastically affected students intakes for MPhil/PhD programme. It seems that the criminalization of dissent is increasingly gaining legitimacy in the political culture of the country under the current political dispensation. From public intellectuals to political activists to university teachers, everybody who critically engages with this regime is being hounded. The culture of imposing fines to silence dissenting students without giving them a chance to be heard is antithetical to the very existence of democracy. The JNU administration is clamping down on the students by slapping huge fines, instead of trying to understand the cause of their dissent and critique by engaging with them. What is also shocking is that the large sums of fine that run into several thousands, which are quite disproportionate even to the amount of fee these students pay to enroll for research programmes, only reveals the malicious intent of this

administration. This intent becomes manifest further when time and again old cases of students protest are unearthed to punish them.

JNUTA expresses solidarity with the JNU students who have been fined. It seems that the administration is intent upon imposing a certain archaic idea of discipline where there is no room for dialogue and expects only instant obedience; this retributory act goes against all norms of justice and establishes a hierarchical mode of interaction which cannot be to the advantage of a university community. JNUTA condemns the JNU administration's attempt to turn JNU into a space bereft of social awareness by silencing dissenting voices and clamping down on protest. Such acts on the part of the administration betray a desire to coerce students into narrow ways of thinking and consciousness with the ultimate aim of reinforcing 'particular' and 'expected' outcomes. This action of the current JNU administration is, of course, fully in line with their concerted attempts to exclude students from marginalized sections from higher education through various means and stratagems such as the 'seat-cuts' and 'supervisory caps'.

It is obvious that the fining and barring of students from registering is intended to have a chilling effect on students' critical engagement with the ugly and contentious questions of gender disparities, caste atrocities, targeted violence, and everyday forms of discrimination. We assert that the students have the right to make their education about the progress and well-being of the most powerless and marginalized sections of the society. We demand that these sanctions on the students be revoked.

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