

**Press Information Bureau
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Ministry of Human Resource Development**

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Steps to Check Discrimination and Harassment in Central Universities

A Conference of Vice Chancellors of Central Universities was held on February 18, 2016 whereby all the Vice Chancellors and senior Officers of the Central Universities have been asked to be more vigilant & put a proper system in place to ensure that the students from these categories are not put to any disadvantage/ hardship. The Vice Chancellors have inter-alia agreed to appoint Anti-Discrimination Officer as provided in UGC (Promotion of Equity in Higher Education Institutions) Regulations, 2012.

The National Policy on Education, 1986 lays special emphasis on the removal of disparities and to equalize educational opportunity by attending to the specific needs of those who have been denied equality so far. The Central Universities are autonomous bodies which are governed by their own Acts and Statutes, Ordinances and Regulations made thereunder. The Acts of the respective Central Universities, stipulate that the university shall not discriminate on grounds of caste, religion, etc. The Central Universities are competent to take all administrative decisions including to prevent all kinds of harassment and discrimination against any section of students.

The Government of India and University Grants Commission (UGC) have also taken several initiatives to check the incidents of harassment of all students, including the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, in the higher educational institutions of the country. Major initiatives undertaken are as below:

In order to check discrimination and harassment of any sections of students and to strengthen the grievance redressal mechanism, University Grants Commission (UGC) has formulated UGC (Promotion of Equity in Higher Education Institutions) Regulations, 2012 and UGC (Grievance Redressal), Regulations, 2012. These Regulations intend to give effect in letter and spirit to the provisions of the Constitution and other statutory provisions and policies for prevention of discrimination on the grounds of caste and to safeguard the interests of the students belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The Regulations also seek to provide for advancement of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe students through setting up of Equal Opportunity Cells in each Higher Educational Institution. The UGC also provides financial assistance to establish the Centre for Study of Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy to support focused research on the issue of social exclusion related to dalits, tribal and religious minorities.

In order to make the universities/colleges more responsive to the needs and constraints of the disadvantaged social groups, the University Grants Commission is giving financial assistance to all eligible Colleges/Universities to establish Equal Opportunity Centres. The aim and objective of this Scheme is to oversee the effective implementation of policies and programmes for disadvantaged groups, to provide guidance and counselling with respect to academic, financial, social and other matters and to enhance the diversity within the campus.

UGC Regulations on Curbing the Menace of Ragging in Higher Educational Institutions, 2009 provide for

elimination of ragging in all its forms from universities. The UGC has a Nationwide 24X7 anti ragging helpline for receiving and tracking complaints of ragging and for various consequential actions in respect of fresh complaints.

UGC has also approved establishment of 126 SC/STs cells in various Universities with a view to safeguarding the interest of SC/ST students.

Other initiatives also include provisions of Anti Discriminatory faculty advisors for SC/ST students who look into their problems and advise accordingly, appointment of Student Counsellors to address personal, academic, psychological and family related problems, providing sports and extra curriculum activities, setting up counseling centers, provision of anxiety helpline, and setting up disciplinary action committee to take urgent action in case of any complaints reported ragging, discrimination based on caste, creed, religion and gender etc.

This information was given by the Union Human Resource Development Minister, Smt. Smriti Zubin Irani today in a written reply to a Rajya Sabha question.

GG/RT/DS/RK/CENTRAL UNIVERISITIES