

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION  
DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

**RAJYA SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3240**  
ANSWERED ON-29/03/2023

**Caste discrimination against SC/ST students in higher educational institutions**

**3240 Shri Vaiko:**

Will the Minister of *Education* be pleased to state:

- (a) the number of cases of caste discrimination and alienation in SC/ST students in higher educational institutions like IITs, Central Universities in the last five years, year-wise and institution-wise;
- (b) remedial action taken including sensitization programmes conducted to address these issues;
- (c) the number of suicides committed by SC/ST students in such institutions in the last five years, year-wise and institution-wise;
- (d) whether any enquiry has been made to find the reasons for such extreme steps and if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the measures taken to prevent recurrence of such type of untoward incidents in future, along with details thereof?

**ANSWER**

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

(DR. SUBHAS SARKAR)

(a) & (b) : In order to proactively address any issues of SC/ ST students, Institutes have set up mechanisms such as SC/ ST students' cells, Equal Opportunity Cell, Student Grievance Cell, Student Grievance Committee, Student Social Club, Liaison officers, Liaison Committee etc. Further, University Grants Commission (UGC) has issued instructions from time to time for eradicating discrimination among students. No cases of caste discrimination and alienation in SC/ ST students have been reported from IITs in the last 5 years. With regard to Central Universities (CUs), no data of caste discrimination is maintained centrally.

(c): In case of IITs, suicide cases of 2 SC students in 2018, 1 SC student in 2019, 1 SC student & 1 ST student in 2022 and 2 SC students in 2023 have been reported. In case of CUs, suicide cases of 4 SCs students in 2017, 2 SC students in 2018 and 1 SC student in 2021 have been reported.

(d): In cases of suicides, besides an internal inquiry by the Institute, the district and police administration also enquire into the incident. The reasons behind such suicides were found to be academic stress, family reasons, personal reasons, mental health issues, etc.

(e): The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 provisions for counselling systems for handling stress and emotional adjustments in Institutions. It also provisions for opportunities for students participation in sports, culture/arts clubs, eco-clubs, activity clubs, community service projects, etc. Further, in alignment with the NEP, to eradicate language barrier for the students for an improved understanding and improved teaching learning outcome, All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) has initiated the work of translation of technical books in 12 scheduled regional languages. University Grants Commission (UGC) (Redress of Grievances of Students) Regulations, 2019 have been formulated to safe guard the interest of students. UGC has also notified UGC Regulations on curbing the menace of Ragging in Higher Educational Institutions, 2009 and issued circulars for strict compliance of the regulations. To address the issue of mental health and well-being during the after COVID, UGC had issued advisories to Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) on 05.04.2020. UGC has also issued Guidelines for Promotion of Physical Fitness, Sports, Student's Health, Welfare, Psychological and Emotional Well-being at HEIs on 05.05.2022. UGC, vide DO No. 2-109/2022(CPP-II) dated 6<sup>th</sup> January, 2023, have circulated the National Suicide Prevention Strategy formulated by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

The Ministry has undertaken various steps such as peer assisted learning, introduction of technical education in regional languages for students in order to ease the academic stress. The Government of India initiative, named MANODARPAN, covers a wide range of activities to provide psychological support to students, teachers and families for mental and emotional well-being during the COVID outbreak and beyond. Besides this, students' specialised psychological counselling helplines, students' wellness centres, buddy-support system and various other measures have been implemented in IITs and other Institutions, for early detection of cases of psychological stress.

The higher educational institutions take various steps such as conducting workshops/ seminars on Happiness and Wellness, regular sessions on Yoga, induction programs, extracurricular activities including sports and cultural activities, assigning of one faculty adviser per 10 students to support with their academics and monitor their progress, and appointment of Student Counsellors for overall personality development and de-stressing students. Further, students, wardens and caretakers are sensitized to bring to notice the signs of depression in fellow students to the authorities so that timely clinical consultation may be provided. Further, IIT Bombay has launched a self-help website, BANDHU, dedicated to the emotional well-being of the students.

\*\*\*\*\*