

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION  
DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION  
**RAJYA SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO- 1450**  
ANSWERED ON- 02/08/2023

**Steps to make non-discriminatory environment for SC/ST Students**

1450 Shri M. Shanmugam:

Will the Minister of Education be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Supreme Court has asked University Grants Commission to specify steps it has taken and propose to take, to provide non-discriminatory, enabling environment for the students belonging to Scheduled Castes and Schedule Tribes in institutions of higher learning;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) steps taken or proposed to be taken by UGC in compliance with the Supreme Court directions; and

(d) what specific steps have been taken by Government to provide friendly environment for weaker community students in view of three more students ending their lives in institutions of higher learning in the country in the last two years, details thereof?

**ANSWER**

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION  
(Dr. SUBHAS SARKAR)

(a) to (c): As per information received from the University Grants Commission (UGC), in the matter of W.P. No.1149/2019, titled as Abeda Salim Tadvi & Anr. Vs. Union of India & Ors., Hon'ble Supreme Court of India has passed the Order dated 06.07.2023, whereby the Hon'ble Supreme Court has directed the UGC to submit the report stating the steps taken by the Commission to protect the interest of affected students. In pursuance to this Order, the UGC has constituted an Expert Committee on 21-07-2023 for revisiting the UGC Regulations/Schemes concerning the SC/ST/OBC/PwD and minority communities in Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) and suggest further remedial measures if required to make non-discriminatory environment for SC/ST Students in HEIs.

(d): To address the issue of mental health and well-being during and after COVID, UGC has issued advisories to 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. In January 2023, UGC has circulated the National Suicide Prevention Strategy formulated by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. The Ministry of Education 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 HEIs 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 for small group of students to support with their academics and monitor their progress, and appointment of Student Counsellors for overall personality development and de-stressing students. 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, the UGC has also issued instructions from time to time for promoting equity and fraternity amongst students.

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