

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.3126
ANSWERED ON-20/03/2023

Suicide by SC/ST Students

3126. SHRI S. VENKATESAN:

Will the Minister of EDUCATION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has taken note of reports on suicides of students particularly those belonging to Scheduled Castes (SCs)/Scheduled Tribes (STs) in Central Institutions of Higher education and the recent one in the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Mumbai;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the details of SC/ST students cells formed in Central Institutions of Higher Education and those institutions not having such cells, institution-wise;
- (d) whether one of the head counsellors of the said committee is a person who signed anti-reservation memorandum and IIT, Mumbai also admitted it as fact;
- (e) if so, whether inclusion of such members will not affect the confidence of SC/ST students to approach them for their grievances;
- (f) if so, whether the Government will issue suitable instructions to put persons having social sensitiveness in those committees and remove those who are not; and
- (g) if so, the details thereof and the details of SC/ST Cells of Central Institutions of Higher Education have members from students belonging to SCs/STs?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

(DR. SUBHAS SARKAR)

(a) & (b): The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 provides for counselling systems for handling stress and emotional adjustments in Institutions. It also provides for opportunities for students participation in sports, culture/arts clubs, eco-clubs, activity clubs, community service projects, etc. 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. University Grants Commission (UGC), vide DO No. 2-109/2022(CPP-II) dated 6th 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.

During last five years, 33 suicide cases from IITs, 24 cases from NITs and 4 cases from IIMs have been reported.

After the suicide was reported in IIT Bombay, the Institute has provided all necessary support to the family of the deceased. In addition, IIT Bombay has done an internal investigation through its Ex-Chief Vigilance Officer and the institute is further strengthening its existing mechanism for prevention and early detection of psychological stress. IIT Bombay is also cooperating with the SIT formed by the Maharashtra Government in their investigation.

(c) & (g): There are 23 IITs, 25 IIITs, 7 IISERs, 20 IIMs, 32 NITs and 1 IISc. Out of this, 19 IITs, 14 IIITs, 7 IISER, 1 IISc, 20 IIMs and 26 NITs have SC/ST students' cell. Remaining institutions in order to proactively address any issues of SC/ ST students have set up mechanisms such as Equal Opportunity Cell, Student Grievance Cell, Student Grievance Committee, Student Social Club, Liaison officers, Liaison Committee etc.

(d) to (f): After the issue came to the notice of the institute in 2022, the person has been removed from the head counsellor position from the Student Wellness Centre. IIT Bombay has appointed a new In-Charge for Student Wellness Centre. The institute has initiated the recruitment of one counsellor each from the SC and ST communities, so that students can approach them for their grievance.
