

To,
Dr. Rameshwar Oraon
The Chairperson
National Commission for Scheduled Tribes
New Delhi.

February 02, 2016.

Subject: An appeal for seeking the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes' intervention in enabling TISS students to avail of the National Fellowship for Higher Education of ST Students (NFST) academic year 2015-17.

Dear Sir,

We the Scheduled Tribe (ST) M.Phil-PhD students of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), across campuses (Mumbai, Tuljapur, Guwahati and Hyderabad) bring to your notice that due to an error by the UGC (since change in the name of the scheme, earlier Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship for ST Students (RGNF) now National Fellowship for Higher Education of ST Students (NFST), TISS name is not in list), we have been deprived of applying under the UGC scheme 'National Fellowship for Higher Education of ST Students'. In the online application form of NFST, the name of Tata Institute of Social Sciences did not appear in the list of eligible universities, due to which, many ST students could not apply and some have applied leaving the Institute name blank in the online application form. As an Adivasi Students, we are eligible to apply under this scheme, but we are being deprived of being considered for the award of the Fellowship.

The online application under the aforesaid Fellowship was opened online on 23rd September 2015 and closed on 23rd November 2015. We have made several efforts on our part as students by calling to the authorities concerned in the UGC requesting them to add the name of our university in the application form but all our efforts have been in vain. An official letter from the Registrar of TISS has gone highlighting this error in the online form, but no action has been taken by the UGC to rectify the error. We would like to highlight the fact that many TISS ST students have been awarded this Fellowship in the past years (it was known as the Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship for SC/ST Students). We have been told by the UGC

officials that since we do not fall under the 12B and 2F category of Deemed Universities, this Fellowship is not available to TISS students. However, we would like to point out that TISS does not need 12B and 2F certification since we are already certified under Allocation of Business Rules, MHRD, 1967. The TISS is a fully funded Deemed University by the UGC, therefore TISS students should be allowed to apply under this scheme.

Now, our concern is as follows:

1. Whether we will be able to access our Constitutional right of being considered under the National Fellowship for ST Students, which is meant to support the higher education of ST students?
2. Whether the students who have filled up the online form leaving the name of the university blank be considered in the selection process?
3. Whether the students who have not filled up the form will get chance to fill it up, by extending the date of application for TISS students?

We appeal to your good office to ensure that we are not deprived of our legitimate rights, and request you to kindly look into this issue on as urgent basis.

Thanking you.

Yours sincerely,

Priyanka Sandilya

Pradeep Kishore Minj

Nikas Kindo Dawood

Ahmad Khan

Praveen Kachhap

Priya Namrata Topno

Anil Horo

Noli Nivedita Tirkey

Sangeeta Basumatary

Naveena Naik

(M.Phil-PhD Scholars)

Tata Institute of Social Sciences

(Mumbai, Tuljapur, Guwahati and Hyderabad Campus)