

NOTIFICATION ON REGISTRATION FOR THE 2017-18 ACADEMIC YEAR
CLARIFICATION TO CONCERNS AND DEMANDS MADE BY SOME STUDENTS
THROUGH emails and THE PRESS

On 26th May 2017 the administration of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences wrote a letter to all students from Masters and M. Phil. programs who will be returning after vacation to the 2nd year (3rd semester) regarding introduction of the semester registration system and related procedures to be implemented from Academic year 2017 -18.

Some students have raised concerns regarding the content and procedures of the said communication through emails and the press. We would like to clarify the following:

I. Online payment of fees and uploading of documents for the third semester.

The fee payment has been streamlined with introduction of online payment through SBI Collect. The payment of fees is a requirement for legitimizing the enrolment of students for each academic session/ semester. The practice has been that the first day of the semester is the last day for payment of fees.

1. As in the past, upon representation by the concerned students, those who required extension of time payment of fees due to genuine reasons were given time strictly on a case-to-case basis.. Representation must be done by June 6, 2017 for such cases to be considered by the administration. This has been the practice at the institute and there is no change in this policy. The administration will ensure that the bills generated against all such students are recovered before semester examinations.
2. The last date for payment of fees is 8th June 2017. Those who may require an extension for payment of fees must fill in the requisition form for the same and submit it to the Academic Section on or before 6th June 2017 to be eligible for joining the semester.
3. Allowing modes of payment other than SBI Collect can be considered subject to feasibility, that too on a special request clearly stating the reason to do so. Online payment through the SBI Collect is the most convenient mode for the administration to collect fees. Students facing problems in using this mode may approach the Academic Section for working out an alternate mechanism. Introducing other modes of fee collection puts the online system into serious difficulties in tracking and monitoring payment of fees. There have been situations where some students claim to have paid their fees through other means but the administration could not identify the payments from in the bank records. In view of past experiences other modes of payments will be approved only as special cases.
4. We have made arrangements to get status of payment of 1st and 2nd semester fees from the records and the same would be integrated by the Secretariat in the online semester registration system. Students with fee receipts from offline payment system will be given the option of uploading the fees receipt. For the remaining, verification will be done with the data available in the online semester registration system. In case of

need to reconcile the untraceable fee received, the academic section may call for copies of fee paid receipts or other documentary evidence.

5. The MHRD/UGC recommends that, Aadhar is required for availing Scholarships of various kinds. Those who are eligible for Government of India (GoI) - Post Metric Scholarship (PMS) and other State and Central government scholarship as well as those who are desirous of availing Student Aid are required to submit their Aadhar number. Further, UGC Notification No. D.O. F 9-14/2014 (CPPI-II) dated 27 March 2017 requires universities to introduce identification mechanisms such as photographs and Aadhar Number in student's degree certificates. Those who have not got Aadhar may report the same to Academic section. A Aadhar enumeration drive will be organized as we have done a year ago. The Institute is also seeking support from the PSU Banks to secure low credit loans, which may also require the Aadhar number. Since we do not want to disturb you after start of the Semester, the idea is to get all documentation completed during the vacation.

II. Biometric Attendance System

As stated in the notification, Biometric Attendance System (BAS) is the current norm already being practiced in many reputed institutions in the country. After facing several difficulties in computing attendance before start of examination every semester, the administration planned to introduce fingerprint based biometric attendance system last year, which was approved by the Academic Council. However since the back-end systems were not fully in place, the implementation was postponed to the academic year 2017-18. A few students have raised some concerns regarding privacy issues. The Standing Committee constituted to prepare Operating Procedures integrating all safeguards has addressed all concerns of privacy. The Standing Committee has ensured that,

1. Biometric attendance system shall not be linked to Aadhaar in any form.
2. The fingerprint data will be linked only to the student enrolment number in the Attendance System and not with any other data such as name, photograph, address etc.
3. The fingerprint data will not be shared with other sections within the institute such as security, accounts etc. as well as any outside agencies including law enforcement and investigation agencies.
4. The fingerprint data will be fully deleted once the students graduate from the institute.
5. The entire data management will be done by the "Biometric Empowered Committee" constituted of the following members: The Deputy Director (Academic), The Registrar, A Senior Professor and two student representatives (One from reserved and one from general category) nominated from amongst the elected students union executive committee.

III. Student and Campus Management Systems

The Institute is determined to streamline student management system. The CCTVs and biometric systems are for the benefit of the students. One student wrote saying, if the Institute

had money to install CCTVs and introduce biometric system, then why it should not have used the money to support the students. The CCTVs have been installed to secure the campus from theft and ensure security of all inhabitants including students, staff and temporary residents in guest houses and hostels using independently generated resources specifically procured for the purpose. We did not use resources from the maintenance grant. And in any case, the amount of money required to support to students is much large and continuous whereas the CCTV and Biometric systems creation is one time investment.

IV. Financial Aid and Support to Students eligible for GoI PMS

For the past several years the Institute has been taking care of all costs related to education of SC and ST students eligible for Government of India Post Matric Scholarships (those with family income below the Government of India norms) enrolled across the campuses of TISS. The Institute has thus gone beyond its mandate to ensure that such support is made available to eligible students. Prior to restructuring of the Institute in 2004-06, the number of students admitted to the Institute was small and the cost of living was reasonable. The Institute was therefore able to meet the entire cost from its maintenance grant received from the Government of India. However, presently the Institute has reached a situation where it can no longer continue to bear student related expenses without a source of reimbursement of the same (maintenance grant) or from external sources. Moreover, with the introduction of Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) system, scholarships come directly in the students' account and not to the institute account. When students fail to transfer the scholarship amounts to the Institute, as expected, the Institute loses the entire cost it has borne towards supporting the education of students eligible for GoI PMS. This is an unethical practice and to address this problem we are demanding to see the passbook.

1. In order to better manage finances, the Institute has to find resources to support the studies of students with financial difficulties. Upholding the value of social justice and support to weaker sections, from this academic year the Institute shall provide advance assistance to meet the tuition expenses to students eligible for GoI Scholarships from SC, ST and OBC categories. All students who received fee waiver will have to apply for scholarships and use the scholarship amounts for paying their remaining fees. Further, the Institute has been working with Banks and Corporates to enable the students to apply for external scholarships OR take low interest loans. The details of the loan product will be made available by the first week of June.
2. As is the practice, limited Student Aid will be available for students with an annual family income less than 4 Lakhs and who are not availing GoI Scholarships.
3. Students who are currently receiving GoI PM scholarships are required to upload the copies of their passbook to verify the receipt of scholarship amount in their bank account. The institute does not have any other means to verify receipt of scholarship by students. Last year less than 25% students have returned the scholarship amount they might have received in their account to the institute.

Therefore, students need to understand that the Institute is going through financial strain and hence pro-active measures such as full fee waiver is not sustainable any longer.

While students who are eligible for GoI PMS from SC, ST and OBC communities can avail the scholarship, TISS is acutely aware of the need to have substantial scholarship support for students from less privileged backgrounds having annual family income less than Rs 2.5 lakhs, irrespective of the caste category or community that they belong to. We are working towards a comprehensive system where such supports can be mobilised from own sources of students, scholarships as well as educational loans.

Projected amount of financial support required (Mumbai, Tuljapur, Guwahati and Hyderabad campuses)

Number of students to be supported	1060
Total expenditure required to be incurred per student per year (tuition fees, Dining Hall, Hostel and other programme fees.)	Rs. 1,00,000/-
Total financial resources required	Rs. 10,60,00,000/-

TISS and NSDL e-Governance Infrastructure Ltd have created an innovative Corporate Social Responsibility initiative “Vidyasaarathi” to mobilize resources to provide scholarships to needy students of TISS and other universities and Institutions. Vidyasaarathi had its meeting with corporates on 26th May at TISS Mumbai and proposes to hold such consultations and appeals in Guwahati, Kolkatta, Bangalore and Hyderabad between 31st May and 5th June. The idea is to generate sufficient support from Corporates and Foundations to be able to support all needy students.

Students are requested to join hands with the administration to mobilize resources to continue with the support mechanisms currently in place and contribute in various ways in reducing the burden on the Institute. There is no other alternative than finding sustainable resource back up for upholding all what the Institute stands for in ensuring social justice.

The basic commitment of Tata Institute of Social Sciences towards its students will remain unaltered, which is, to:

- a) Ensure continued and comprehensive financial support for the education of students from socially and economically less privileged sections through facilitating multiple schemes.
- b) Sustain diversity through support to the less privileged students from different parts of the country regardless of caste, community, regional backgrounds.
- c) Ensure the educational and socio-economic advancement of students from less privileged sections, through the successful completion of studies and successful job placements.
- d) Produce trained human service professionals who are willing to work in the hinterlands of the country.

While Institute administration works overtime and beyond capacities of the officials involved in it, we expect students to understand the situation and join our efforts to secure the interests of all the students and the Institute and not engage in negative publicity which neither serves

any interest of the students or of the Institute, nor it brings any resources which is the need of the hour.

It is our strong conviction that students and the administration can together to work out mechanisms in the best interest of all students. And, we are open to have a meaningful dialogue – to find ways to support students so as not to generate unmanageable deficit for the institute.

We appeal to TISS alumni, corporates and the Government bodies to contribute to the ‘TISS Scholarship Fund’ to support the needy students whereby we can continue on our mission to fulfill the commitments mentioned above.

One point the students must be conscious of is that the Institute is duty bound to secure its finances and it has the ability to guide the students to secure loans and scholarships. Additionally, given that the Institute has put in place mechanisms to secure jobs for students, it is absolutely possible for the students to pay their loan amounts over a period of time.

Please be informed that the institute has no other way but to ensure that such measures are strictly implemented to safeguard the institute and its student community for long time to come.

The Registrar

30th May 2017