

HIGHER EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Video Conference Meeting: 28.12.2024, Saturday: 11am to 2pm

Minutes of the Video Conference Meeting conducted by Additional Chief Secretary to Government, Higher Education department with Commissioners of Technical Education, Collegiate Education and all the officials on campus security, women safety, alerts system and SOPs

The Additional Chief Secretary to Government, Higher Education Department chaired the meeting and the following officials have participated in the meeting

Commissioner of Collegiate Education, Commissioner of Technical Education, Registrars of all State Universities under the aegis of Higher Education Department, Joint Directors of Collegiate Education, Officers dealing with security, estate affairs, women safety, student development, POSH, infrastructure and e-governance initiatives of all State universities attended this meeting

The Additional CS has given the following directions to the Commissioners of Technical education, Collegiate education and Registrars of Universities:

- The Additional Chief Secretary, Higher Education Department has outlined the purpose of the meeting as safety measures to be taken at all University departments and it's affiliated Colleges coming under Directorate of Technical Education and Directorate of Collegiate Education
- The Additional Chief Secretary, Higher Education Department stressed that safety in campus, Safety of women on campus are very important
- Proper redressal system should be created on campus
- Authorities should identify what are all the gaps in the universities /colleges administration system and how to fill those gaps should be given immediate attention
- **To evolve better safety measures inside the campus is the need of the hour**
- On the background of Anna University incident, the Additional Chief Secretary alerted all the Universities to be vigilant on the safety measures to be followed
- **ACS further warned that the lack of follow up action won't be tolerated**

- Because of the outsiders or any insiders, if any unwanted and unpleasant situations are created inside the campus, those kind of persons and happenings shall be totally avoided and prevented at all costs
- Already clear directions have been given to all to set up ICC and help desk at all higher educational institutions
- **Universities should strengthen their online and offline support systems and there should be proper data backup to assess what is happening exactly**
- Best use of redressal system is expected from all and POSH system should be there at all institutions
- When complaints are raised, strict and swift action has to be taken and the day-to-day business as usual won't help us in any way
- The Vice Chancellors, The Registrars, The Deans, The Security officers and everybody in the institutions has to work seriously and make the institutions free from all hazards
- At the same time, we should not put unnecessary restrictions on the student's community
- The same way, we should realize that the student's feedback is also important to us
- Institutions should check that the safeguard measures are systematically followed without fail
- **The Additional Chief Secretary insisted that all the universities and colleges having a campus system should arrange a third-party audit of security systems to exist in their premises and there should not be any lame excuses for the failure of security measures**
- All should understand the seriousness of safety measures for our students
- Apart from general instructions, specific instructions based on the location of the institution i.e., rural or urban, situation based specific instructions may also be needed and that should be taken into account to arrive at real solutions
- After these remarks, the Additional Chief Secretary Higher Education Department has welcomed necessary inputs and feedbacks from all who participated in the meeting
- The Registrar, Manonmaniam Sundaranar University has stated that 3 complaints have been received and 1 complaint settled, 2 complaints are in enquiry stage. In an incident on a complaint received about a technical assistant, based on the ICC recommendations, the university syndicate has taken a decision to terminate the staff who was involved in women harassment
- **The Additional Chief Secretary has stated that since the educational institutions are vulnerable in identifying strangers, it is suggested that the**

movement of outsiders should be reported and documented on a daily basis to avoid future complications

- **There should be strong systems to be maintained at all educational institutions like technology backed biometric system to regulate outsiders like electricians, canteen workers, water man, plumbers, contract and construction workers**
- No encroachments inside the campuses should be allowed
- **Multiple exits and entrances should be avoided. Institutions should minimize the entrance and exit gates**
- **Identity cards should be a must**
- Important committees like anti-drug committee should function effectively in the campus
- Sharing of vital information with the Police is very important and the institutional authorities should work closely with the Police
- The institution should tighten the entire internal system
- There should be a proper redressal system in place at all higher educational institutions to ensure the safety of all students
- It is not about individual efforts but a totally constructive and comprehensive system to look after all types of student problems is what we wanted right now
- **Other than students and staff, no one should be allowed to enter the campus without prior permission from the concerned authorities. Particularly, suspected criminals should be prevented and not allowed to enter the premises. The movement of any stranger should be identified at the earliest to prevent all problems**
- Patrolling system should be there in the campus at regular intervals and relevant registers should be maintained
- Vulnerable places inside the campus should be identified where security has to be constantly employed and proper lighting should be maintained there
- **The number of vehicles moving through the campus and the list of visitors should be properly recorded on a daily basis**
- Responsibility and accountability should be fixed for all erring officials
- **Students should be encouraged to download 'Kaavalan' app and to use it whenever it is necessary**
- The problem of Supervisors and research scholars should be addressed immediately and lack of follow up action will be viewed seriously
- The students should be encouraged to register their complaints without any fear

- Awareness should be created among the students to raise their voice against all types of harassment problems
- At the same time, confidentiality should also be maintained about the complainants
- Suggestion box / Complaints box should be placed in prominent places at all institutions
- **A separate meeting with regard to the problems of research scholars and guides should be convened immediately in all institutions**
- Those who can handle the sensitive problems with utmost maturity can be put into the redressal committee as members
- **The Additional Chief Secretary has categorically stated that Higher Education department won't spare the defaulters and highest departmental punishments should be given to the defaulters**
- Regular ICC meetings should be conducted before any problems arise
- Specific dashboard should be in place to address all types of harassment problems
- The DOTE Commissioner pointed out that apart from taking care of the academic activities, it is also the responsibility of all administrators and concerned officials of the several redressal committees to take care of the safety measures of the students
- Before the end of the meeting, Commissioner of Collegiate Education, suggested that there should be preferably only one main entrance through which vendors and outsiders should be allowed and separate entrance for staff and students if possible
- The Additional Chief Secretary in his concluding remark has categorically stated that the Government and the Higher Education Department will not tolerate unwanted incidents inside the educational premises
- Harassments of any kind and misconducts will be dealt with strong actions
- ACS has further instructed to conduct periodical awareness programmes about gender equality and to create a safe environment for all the girl students studying in Higher Educational institutions

With these remarks, the meeting has been concluded
