

PRESS RELEASE

Text of the D.O. letter dated 10.7.2020 of Thiru. Edappadi K. Palaniswami, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, addressed to Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank', Hon'ble Minister for Human Resource Development, New Delhi.

Dear Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' ji,

I bring to your kind notice that Covid-19 pandemic is showing a surge in various parts of the country including Tamil Nadu. My Government has been taking all required measures to contain the spread of disease, as well as to provide comprehensive treatment to the infected people. Though the efforts of the Government has borne good results, any minor let up may still pose a challenge to the State.

Due to the progressive policies of the State Government, Tamil Nadu has the highest Gross Enrollment Ratio of 49% among the States, resulting in large number of students studying in various Universities, Colleges and Polytechnics. Though we had scheduled their semester examinations in April 2020, these examinations could not be conducted as scheduled because of Covid-19 pandemic.

The UGC on 29.4.2020, had issued guidelines which gave the flexibility to the Universities and Colleges for the conduct of examinations, without any restrictions on the guidelines / directions issued by the appropriate Government / Competent Authority. The new guidelines which were issued on 6.7.2020, mandated that all the Educational Institutions across the country shall conduct examinations by September 2020 for the final semester students.

I would like to bring to your notice that the new guidelines has many constraints and difficulties which include the students reaching the Examination Centres, as many of them are residing outside the district, outside the State and some even outside the country. It is also not feasible to conduct online examinations, considering the various issues relating to digital access to the students. Moreover, most of the Government and Private Arts & Science and Engineering Colleges, Polytechnics and other institutions of Higher learning (including the hostels, classrooms etc.,) in the State have been converted as Covid Care Centres for housing asymptomatic positive persons under quarantine and these centres may continue as Covid centres for some more time.

Therefore, if we are not in a position to conduct examinations even after waiting till September 2020, it would jeopardise the future of the students who are in their Final year / Semester. Moreover, it will also unnecessarily affect the future of the students who were recruited through campus selections and the students who have applied for courses abroad, who may have to join in the month of October 2020, after the ban on international travel is lifted.

Many States in the country have taken a decision not to conduct the final semester examinations. In order to ensure career opportunities, future prospects and to simultaneously safeguard the principles of health, safety, fair and equal opportunity for students, the States may be given the freedom to work out its own assessment methods, without compromising on the quality and academic credibility.

In the above context, I request you to direct the respective Apex authorities like University Grants Commission (UGC), All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), Council of Architecture (COA), Pharmacy Council of India (PCI), National Council of Teachers Education (NCTE) and National Council for Hotel Management and Catering Technology to endorse the decisions of the respective State Governments, which would be based on the local prevailing COVID 19 conditions. This would go a long way in rendering justice and fairness to the parents and the students, during these distressful times.

Issued by: Director of Information and Public Relations, Chennai-9.