

STATEMENT OF SOLIDARITY
A Group of Alumni - TISS, India

We the undersigned are alumni of the various Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) campuses in India. We are appalled by the recent events in various institutes of higher education across India as well as the increasing frequency of disturbing happenings in the country at large. We express our solidarity with the victims & their families, students & the faculty members of these institutes.

At the outset, we strongly condemn any and all ideas, thoughts, activities or events that are targeted against India or the Constitution of India. That said, we also firmly believe in the right to critical thinking and registering dissent.

As alumni of institutions of higher education, we have been encouraged to cultivate and exercise a thinking mind and a voice, as much of dissent as of tolerance. Such thought-provoking spaces have shaped us into the responsible citizens that we believe ourselves to be. However with utmost remorse, we today observe that these spaces are increasingly under threat. From Pune to Hyderabad, from Allahabad to Delhi, from Aligarh to Allahabad, these spaces and inner voices are being gagged in favour of a uniform ideological discourse. Space for freedom of expression and tolerance of diverse ideas, acceptance and dissent are rapidly receding. The powers that be seem to be stifling the democratic ethos of the country on a regular basis in the recent times.

We therefore, in our individual capacities as alums of TISS, condemn the following:

- The actions of the University of Hyderabad(UoH) and the HRD Ministry and all the people involved in systemic discrimination of students on campus and the consequent death of the UoH Ph.D scholar, Mr. Rohith Vemula in January, 2016.
- The presence and actions of Delhi Police in the JNU campus, their raiding of hostels & terrorising the students, subsequent arrest of the JNU Student's Union members and other students on charges of sedition.
- The brutal attack on students, faculty/professors, supporters and media personnel in the Patiala Court complex.
- The similar attacks on students, professors and human rights defenders in different parts of the country, as well as the foisting of outlandish cases of sedition on some of them.
- All events wherein freedom of speech and expression have been challenged in the Film and Television Institute of India(FTII), University of Allahabad, Banaras Hindu University(BHU) and Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) and the likes.

We urge the Government of India to ensure unbiased investigation of the cases for identification and strict action against the culprits, so as to deter repetition of any such incidents in any of the educational institutions and beyond. We demand a halt on the media trials inciting violence through defamation of the academic community and institutes of our country by labelling them as anti-nationals with no concrete evidence.

The Constitution of India grants us the freedom to express our opinions and dissent with any policies, actions or political ideologies that perpetuate systemic prosecution and discrimination. The Government is duty bound to uphold the same irrespective of our age, religion, gender, caste, language, domicile, class, and allegiance to political ideologies. Our country can achieve progress only in the hands of the self-thinking youngsters shaped not by the comforts of convenience, the cacophony of corrupt rhetoric and false ideals but by their ability to question the status quo and do something about it.

We stand in solidarity with the citizens who have been victims of aforementioned clampdown of dissent in and beyond campuses, including those events going uncovered or under-reported across the country; who by their very existence abide by our Constitutional values of truth, freedom, equity and justice.

In Solidarity,

Pranav Patel
Abdul Kalam Azad
Namgurang Ndang
Mansi Awasthi
Mridu Markan
Sandipan Paul
Basudev Barman
Ruhul Kuddus Sayed
Sravanthi Dasari
Sharmishtha Nanda
Sujit Nikalje
Mahendran Chokkalingam
Prerna Gautam
Saumya Ranjan Nath
Srikrupa Ragnathan
Manohar Lal
Sayantani chatterjee
Dhilip Karunakaran
Archanaa R
Shruti Mukherjee
Ipsita Gauri
Shreya Majumdar
Veronica Xavier
Subroto Dey
Nandini C K
Deborah Dutta
Suryakant
Sanjay Sen
Vasudha Sawaiker
Ankita Gupta
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Anand Manarkattu
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Sidrah
Lory Gaur
Jitendra Pandit
Mahammadhusen Mansiya
Lydia
Milind Kamble
Jitendra Garava
Sandip B. Hire
Ummed Singh Dhakad
Sunil Laxman Yadav
Anita Rego
Vishal Sudesh
Priyadarshi Shrivastava
Utpala
Bibin Babu
Kavin
Gomathi

Nivedita
Vinay
Karishma Pahwa
Alok
Vijay Jathore
Vijay Ganesh
Dipti
Juhi Gautam
Harpreet Bhullar
Rulee Phukan
Lydia Lhaineineng Lhouvum
Vijay Pratap
Amit Kumar
Trishita Sut
Ritumoni Bhuyan
Leroy Mario Veloso
Mehjabin Farha Yashmin
Nikita
Mohd.Asif Khan
Paromita Bora
Vikas Jadav
Vipul Kumar
Vikas Satho
Surabhi Gajbhiye
Shubham Sharma
Aashima Chaudhary
Vinayak Pawar
Dilkash Akhtar Wakeel
Vishwas Sonawale
Raisa Anna Philip
Lay Smrity
Ambareen Abdullah
Rahul Thampi
Kunwar Rajeev Singh
Tushar Ghadage
Anup Hiwrale
Ami Misra
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Divya S Sarathy
Prasant Mohanty
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Jerome Dsouza
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