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Around 700 protesters gathered at DST demanding regularization of their research fellowship.

Regularization of research Fellowship

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Research scholars of AIIMS, New Delhi wore black dress on Tuesday declaring it Black Day in history of Indian research, at the first day of their protest demanding hike and monthly payment of fellowship amount, medical claim benefit and annual increment during subsequent years.

Around 700 Researchers of various Colleges, institutes and Universities

were gathered demanding regularization and salary hike in front of Department of Science and Technology (DST), New Delhi.

Some declared this date as Blackday while some were there for peaceful demonstration.



This was the first time when these many scholars had come along for a reason to concern.

“We are working on the same fellowship for 10 years, neither have the salary has been regularized nor has been increased said Vaibhav Sharma researcher from AIIMS.



The crowd was big since early in the morning and they kept shouting "We want Justice" till office of DST was closed at 5:00 PM. They were demanding certain regulatory measures to ensure better living. Annual Increment in fellowship amount, Medical Benefits and speeding of work in sanctioning amount were among the few things they were asking for.

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Research fellows of among the following Prominent institutes like NII, ICGEB, JNU, AIIMS, IITs, UDSC, IGIB, Jamia, INMAS, THSTI, ICPO, NIPGR came at 9:00 AM on 25 July 2014 and started to communicate with authorities of DST. 5-6 representatives were

chosen so that they can go and talk to honourable education minister of India 'Smriti Irani'.

On the same date research scholars of upcoming biohub city Mohali became the part of protest going in New Delhi. All members of Chandigarh Research Scholars Forum came together in support of protest held in Delhi. The movement kick started with IISER, Mohali coming together and thereof it was followed by research scholars from NIPER and PGIMER.

We cannot mention every event in India but after this day researchers of every city started to protest. Till the writing of this article we observed the change in around 72 cities across India. What they now require is mass protest to send the message to our education minister.

Peaceful protest is not going to work....protest will be a failure if fellowship does not amount to 35-38K/month. We require another protest within a month or two, better planned than this time said an anonymous protester outside DST.

How can anyone survive in this scenario of economy with only 14000-16000 Rs per month, condition become worst when you are not in your home. I quit the research because a Private company can pay me more with other benefits like medical claim. And then I may switch for better option but commitment toward PhD is like 5 years of life has already gone with no savings in hand explained by Nitin Bhatt from a private Biotech firm.



We are working on the same fellowship for past four years, nor it has been increased with budget neither even any false promise has been made regarding this. We are not sure whether our message is going inside the walls but now you can see more and more researchers are joining us. The demands of scholars are not so much to consider but govt must understand our needs. The meagre amount of 16000 is just not enough for living in an age after 25. My brother after BTech is earning more inspite of the fact that I have done higher studies already said a protestor from IGIB.

Most of students quit the research because fellowship is very less and no subsequent increment both for PhD students who are getting fellowships from various funding agencies and research scholars engaged in projects in universities and colleges.

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At the end of the day when everybody was going home but couldn't due to barrier made by crowd, the secretary, DST then gave an assurance letter about meeting with Hon'ble minister of state in next week. "We have decided to go by the suggestions from the Ministry as far as salaries of fellows are concerned. This matter also has been discussed and Board has agreed to the proposal," said Dr. K Vijayaraghvan secretary to DST, India.

The next meeting took place in the next week only when 6 representatives again met secretary, DST but no conclusion was made about the demands. He said we have already moved the application to the concerned ministry and approval from them is required before disbursement of amount from effective date. ■



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