

Women's Studies, TISS, Alumni Statement

Drastic Termination of Contracts of Teaching and Non-Teaching Members at TISS: Facts and Demands

4th July 2024

We, the alumni of Women's Studies (WS), Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai; are appalled at the recent news published in various news platforms (30th June 2024 The Hindu; 1st July 2024, Indian Express among others) with regard to the mass termination of contracts of faculty members and non-teaching employees. More than 100 faculty and non-teaching employees across the Mumbai, Guwahati, Hyderabad, and Tuljapur campuses of the institute were given letters on 28th June, 2024 stating that their contracts would come to an end on 30th June, 2024 without any further renewal of contracts. The affected faculty and non-teaching employees include those whose contracts are supported by the Tata Education Trust (TET), *as well as* those who were hired and remunerated under the UGC 12th Plan. This led to a sudden loss of employment for a wide pool of teaching and non-teaching employees, many of whom have been working in the institution for more than a decade. Their contributions to teaching, research and administrative services have ensured that TISS became one of the premium research institutions in the country. They have nurtured hundreds of scholars and fieldworkers who are employed in universities and organisations around the world.

Media reports suggest that the move to discontinue the contracts came unexpectedly. Earlier, when several staff members had enquired into the status of renewal of their contracts in the previous month, the administration had assured them that there was no cause for concern and that they should continue working on the ongoing admissions process. Yet, while issuing discontinuation notice of the said contracts, with only two days' remaining, TISS cited the non-clearance of dues from the Tata Education Trust as the reason, something the institute would definitely have foreseen.

As this highly unethical and unprofessional move on the part of the administration was highlighted in the media, the TISS administration released a circular withdrawing the letters of termination, assuring that "positive developments" had taken place during discussions with the Tata Education Trust and funds would be made available to pay salaries of the affected teaching and non-teaching employees. With this press release, it would seem that the issue with *all* contractual employees has been "resolved." No further information, however, was provided regarding any decided timelines though the faculty and non-teaching employees have been instructed to continue their work. Further, the administration is not transparent regarding the status of tenure of faculty members and non-teaching employees hired under the 12th Plan of the UGC, which includes three teaching and one non-teaching member at the Advanced Centre for Womens' Studies at TISS, Mumbai. Even after repeated enquiries by WS faculties, the administration remained nonchalant.

It must also be noted here that the WS centre runs MA and PhD programmes and there are many PhD and MA students, under the faculties, who are extremely anxious with the current developments. The first year MA batch is going to start in a week's time and there is no direction about who will teach in the current scenario. It must be mentioned that many PhD and MA students come from very marginalised locations, who have fought economically, socially and academically to be admitted to TISS. The consistent negligence of the institute, especially of the WS centre, not only highlights its irresponsibility but also shows its lack of vision.

The situation of the ACWS at TISS reflects the changing labour arrangements within university spaces and increasing privatisation of higher education. Over the years, there has been a trend of hiring qualified employees without appropriate remuneration who share equal teaching and administrative responsibilities with their non-contractual colleagues in the department.

Historically, departments of Women's Studies have been allied to feminist movements in India. Women's Studies departments have been rooted in the political recognition of the marginalisation of women through the UN International Decade for Women (1975-1985), and the Committee on Status of Women in India (1974). The first Women's Studies centre has been functional in India since 1974, and the discipline has been a part of the National Education Policy since 1986. Currently, there are nearly 160 Women's Studies centres across the country. However, Women's Studies centres have constantly struggled with irregularity of funding by the UGC, which has committed to strengthening teaching and research in these departments since the 12th Plan (2012-2017). Consequently with the discontinuation of the 12th Plan, an uncertainty gripped the WS centres across institutes in 2017. In this context UGC came up with the category of "UGC scheme for WS" under which the WS contractual positions in TISS continue. We intuit that the maintenance of the precarious labour conditions in the departments dilutes the commitment to critical thinking and teaching practices. It is to be noted that this anti-gender narrative is evidence of the gradual erosion of democratic principles.

It is pertinent to note that besides perspective and knowledge, Women's Studies has also enabled the development of diverse skills that ensure strong career prospects and employability. As alumni of the ACWS, we wish to highlight that many of us have carved promising careers equipped with a Women's Studies degree. Some have gone on to work as public policy experts and development sector professionals, while others have contributed to academia as researchers and teachers. The interdisciplinary training has equipped us to productively engage across verticals like education, health, livelihoods and labour, law and justice, art and culture, climate change and sustainability and other such areas. Alumni of the ACWS also work in various government-supported programs to ensure better access of rights, entitlements and welfare policies to under-served communities. Some of us are also employed in the philanthropy sector, mobilising resources and bridging funding shortfalls in the development ecosystem. Our alumni have been working at esteemed academic institutions like Yale University, Chicago University, University of Illinois Chicago, Kentucky University, Toronto University, University of Bristol, Innsbruck University, University of York, University of Leeds, Purdue University, National University of Singapore, Ashoka University, University of Calicut, Central University of Jharkhand, CEPT, Ambedkar University, Savitribai Phule Pune University; and prominent National and International organisations like UNWomen, Frida Fund, Women's Fund Asia, Azim Premji Foundation, DASRA, Nirantar Trust, CEHAT, ICRW, Ipas Development Foundation, Jagori, PUKAR, Samvada, Point of View, The YP Foundation and Sappho for Equality among others.

Recently, there has been a practice in TISS, of not including faculty in interview processes and decision making regarding recruitment of teachers and admission of students. We strongly condemn such unethical practices, where faculties are not given due respect and discriminated against on a daily basis in relation to institutional work, which only strengthens the vertical hierarchy of the institution, thereby once again violating the scope for democratic functioning.

Noting the above context, we express full solidarity with all the teaching and non-teaching employees at the Advanced Center for Women's Studies, and the teaching and non-teaching body of TISS at large. We make the following demands of the TISS administration:

1. We demand that all contractual faculty and non-teaching staff under UGC 12th Plan to be reinstated with immediate effect, their pending salaries released and the terms of their employment to be regularised at par with the permanent employees on UGC payroll.
2. We demand an official timeline and long-term planning of regularisation of both TET and UGC contractual employees to ensure their financial sustainability, on-time disbursement of salaries, which the TISS administration has been delaying for many years.
3. We demand transparency and a plan of action regarding all permanent UGC positions that remain vacant even as there are several WS faculty and non-teaching staff that have been in contract positions for over a decade.

4. We demand that faculties are included in key decision making processes of the institute, regarding recruitment, admission, functioning of the institution and any decision making regarding their own schools and centres.
5. We demand that the institution adheres to the values of equality, social justice, and democratic functioning that have been vital in its making.

Signatories:

SL No.	Name	Programme/ Batch (Ex: MA/ 2016-18)	Organisational affiliation	Designation
1	Yamini John	M.A 2010-12	University of Calicut	Research Scholar
2	Rigya Singh	MPhil/ 2016-18		
3	Shreya Sen	MA/ 2011-13	Zariya Collaborative	
4	Sukanya Bhattacharya	MA 2020-2022		
5	Kritika Shukla	MA/WS/2022-24		
6	Manisha Parida	MA/ 2021-23	RGAVP	YP
7	Priyanshu Kumari	M.A/ 2018-2020	Evidence Action	Associate
8	Poornima Kumar	MA 2015-17	Samvada	Program Co-Lead, Research & Advocacy
9	Leah	2021-23		
10	Shreya Sharma	MA 2022-24	Urja Trust, Dadar Mumbai	Impact & Communications Lead
11	Malavika Goyal	M.A. 2016-2018	Breakthrough Trust	Manager
12	Kaveri Murthy	MA/2016-18	None	Independent Consultant
13	B. Shreya	MA WS/2021-2023	Solidarity Foundation	Documentation Officer - Livelihood
14	Pratikshya Priyadarshini	MA/ 2016-2018	Centre for Enquiry into Health and Allied Themes	Senior Research Associate
15	Pratiksha Suryakant Pawar	2022-24	Magic Bus India Foundation	Management trainee
16	Anushka Maheshwary	MA / 2020-22		
17	Neha Dhingra	MA - 2007-2009, MPhil - 2013 - 15	CRISP	Senior Programs Manager
18	Shruti Iyer	MA 2021-2023	SNEHA	Communications coordinator
19	Ami Misra	MA/ 2010-12	Dasra	Associate Director

20	Ditilekha	MA 2010-12, MPhil 2013-15	Women's Fund Asia	Thematic Lead
21	Aastha	2017 - 19		
22	Madhavi Shivaprasad	PhD (2015-22)	Independent researcher	
23	Alankrita Anand	2015-17	University of York	Research Scholar
24	Rukmini Banerjee	MA 2012, MPhil 2018	Dasra - ClimateRISE Alliance	
25	Hiba Fathima Muneer	MA/2022-24	Jan Sahas	Associate coordinator, MEL
26	Anu Salelkar	MPhil/2013-15		
27	Abhishek Yadav	MA 2019-21		
28	Tanya Singh	MA 2014-2016		
29	Kaushal kumar	MPhil 2019-21	Indian Political Action Committee (I-PAC)	Fellow
30	Shruti Vaidya	MA/2011-13	University of Chicago	PhD Candidate
31	Neharika Mahajan	2010-2012		
32	Adiba Saher	BASW 2015-17	Nirantar Trust	Project Associate
33	Aathira Gopi	MA/ 2019-21	Teaching Faculty, Pathways	Teacher
34	Richa Singh	MA 2014-16		
35	Arghya	MA/ 2022-24		
36	Pragya	MA 2016-18	NA	NA
37	Shrinkhala	MA/2021-2023	Nirantar Trust	Research associate
38	Ankita	M.A 2016-18	TISS	Research scholar
39	Geeta Thatra	MA/ 2009-11		Associate Director
40	Sanchita Dwivedi	MA 2020-22	Centre for Mental Health Law and Policy	Project Officer and Research Associate
41	Titas Ghosh	MA/ 2016-18	Ipas Development Foundation	Senior Coordinator, Programs
42	Ananya Iyer	M.A. in WS (2018-20)	Work Fair and Free Foundation/Aajeevika Y	Associate, Knowledge and Research
43	Kuhika Seth	MA/2014-16		
44	Yashashwani Srinivas	2019-21	School of History, University of Leeds	PhD Scholar, AHRC Awardee
45	Madhukar Chandrakant Pakale	2013-2015	Maharashtra Village Social Transformation Foundation, Mumbai	Mission Associate
46	Md Altamash Khan	MA/ 2016-18	Men Against Violence and Abuse	Program Manager
47	Aalia Shaikh	MPhil 2016-2018	University of Tübingen	PhD candidate

48	Gauri Pawsey	MA 2018-2020	-	-
49	Sunita Purty	MPhil/2013-2015	Central University of Jharkhand	Research Assistant
50	Sravanthi Dasari	MPhil / 2014-16	University of Illinois at Chicago	PhD Candidate
51	Anamika	MPhil/ 2012-14		PMEL Officer
52	Sapontara	MA Women's Studies, 2020-2022		
53	Smruti Mani	MA 2018-20		
54	Swetha Shenoy	Employee	Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Hyderabad	Student Coordinator
55	Archanna Prasad	MA/ 2018-20	Malayala Manorama	Sub Editor
56	Ashwini Ghising	MA WOMEN STUDIES 2014-2016		
57	shivangi	Women's Studies 2018-20	Deloitte	Program Coordinator
58	Deepannita Misra	2018-20		
59	Lavanya Shanbhogue	MA	TISS	Asst. Prof.
60	SHEETAL MUNSHI	MA/ 2013-15		
61	Prachi	2020-2022		
62	Lopamudra Nayak	MA/2018-20	Jan Sahas	Associate Coordinator - MEL
63	Bhagyashri Boywad	2018-20	Action aid UNICEF	Consultant
64	Seema Marmath	MA batch of 2014-2016		
65	Bedadyuti Jha	MA 2015-17	Purdue University	Doctoral Student
66	Priyanka Hore	2017-19	Alternative development initiative	Community Development Facilitator
67	Ananya Sarkar	2018-2020	Google Operations	Digital media senior associate
68	Jahnvi Dwivedi	MA 2018-20	Ambedkar University, Delhi	PhD Research Fellow
69	Sangharsh Apte	MPhil 2013-15	Campaign Advocating Rights of Victims Atrocities (CARVA)	Convenor
70	Priyanka Sisodiya	MA/ 2013-15	United Nations Organisation	Project Director
71	Aswathy Nair	MA/2019-21		
72	SRUTHI P K	MA/ 2018-20	TISS HYDERABAD	

73	Manaswini Ghosh	MA/2018-2020		
74	Shaktee	MA/2020-2022		
75	Pritha Bhattacharya	MA/2018-2020	WageIndicator Foundation	Global Lead (Newsletters)
76	Roshni Chattopadhyay	2014-2016/ MPhil	Emory University, US	Graduate Student
77	Neetika Vishwanath	MA/2014-2016		
78	Fathima R F	MA 2016-18	IIT Madras	PhD Candidate
79	Raahi Adhya	MA/2013-15	National University of Singapore	Lecturer
80	Annehsa Majumdar	MA, Women's Studies - Batch 2019-21		
81	Semanti Chakladar	MA Women's Studies 2021-2023	SEWA Cooperative Federation	Research Associate
82	Simona Sarma	Ex: M.phil-PhD (2016-2023)		
83	Aanchal Jain	2016-18		
84	Pooja Narayan	MA (2020-22)		
85	Tash	MA/2019-21		
86	Izra Nawas	MA Women's Studies/ 2013-2015		
87	Sonali Shirke	MA /2019-21	University of Amsterdam	Researcher (PhD)
88	Rajeev Anand Kushwah	MA/2020-22		
89	Navnath more	MA/ 2012-14		
90	Sohnee Harshey	MPhil/2013-15		
91	Prerna Mishra	MA/2017-2019		
92	Anchal	MA/ 2021-23	Amazon Development India limited	Executive
93	Anjali	MA (2017-19)	Haiyya Foundation (Delhi)	
94	Rashad Ullah Khan	MA/2020-22		
96	Utpal Gore	2017-19	Development sector professional	
97	Meenu Vadera	NA		
98	Daisy Zacharia	M.Phil 2019-2021		
99	Akanksha verma	2014-16	PwC	Manager
100	Riya Bhardwaj	2018-2020		

101	Deepa Ranganathan	MA/2012-14		
102	Alia Farooqui	MA/2012-14		
103	Disha K R	Mphil 2017-2109	IIT Bombay	PhD Scholar
104	Asha Vasant Kamble	M.A.in Women's Studies 2009-11		
105	Divya	MA 19-21	IIT Bombay	PhD Scholar
106	Avni Arora	MA/ 2018-20	Healthsetgo Education	Partnerships Liason
107	Debolina Ghosh	MA/2010-2012	Roots Foundation	Senior Program Manager
108	Radhika Chakraborty	MA 2013-15		
109	Deachen Angmo	2018-2020	Department of Social and Tribal Welfare, ladakh	
110	Anantika Mehra	MA 2017-2019	None	Freelancer
111	Pratyaksha Jha	MA WS/ 2019-21		
112	Payal Tiwari	MA/ 2010-12	The Pad Project	Program Coordinator - International Programs
113	Dhananjay	MA/2017-19	Cehat	Senior Research Associate
114	Saima Hussain	MA 2021-23		
115	Nikita Pathak	MA 2018-2020		
116	Aiman Khan	M.A (2014-2016)	Centre for Modern Indian Studies, University of Göttingen	Phd Scholar
117	Jenny S	MA 2012-14, Mphil 2015-17		
118	Arati Kade	MPhil 2017-19	University of Amsterdam	PhD student
119	Dewla Hansda	MA/2019-21		
120	Deepshikha	2014-2016	N/A	N/A
121	Himalika Mohanty	2016-18		PhD Scholar
122	Awanti Kawale	PhD 2020-23	TISS Mumbai	PhD Scholar
123	Nisha Rani	2013-15	Crea	Project coordinator
124	Sachin Kamble	MA/2016-18		
125	Amol Nimsadkar	PhD 2016	Tiss	Student
126	Shreya Khaund	MA WS 2016-2018		
127	Thampatty Madhusood	M.Phil 2018	IIT Madras	Ph.D scholar

128	Tanya	Mphil 2016-2018	Ambedkar University Delhi	PhD scholar
130	Parima Salgat	MA/2015-17		
131	Sadaf	MA/ 2019-2021		
132	Himadri Yadav	2019-21	Tata steel foundation	Assistant manager
133	Anchal jain	MA (2011-2013)		
134	Akanksha S	MA/ 2015-2017	FRIDA The Young Feminist Fund	Senior Officer for Learning & Impact and Focal Point for Asia & The Pacific
135	Ankita Kundu	MA 21-23		
136	Amrita H	2016-2018		Qualitative research consultant, Independent Researcher
137	Dilsha Farheen P M	MA 2022-24		Student
138	Snehal Khandait	M A Women studies	Kotak education foundation	Coordinator
139	Aneela Imam	MA/2021-23	Samvada, Bangalore	Research and Advocacy Associate
140	Sayali Waghmare	MA. 2019-21	ENpower	Program Manager
141	Alpha Toppo	MA/2017-19		
142	Dnyaneshwari Burghate	MAWS 2019-21		
143	Nalini Sharma	MA/ 2017-19		
144	Praneta	MA /2014-16	Freelance	Journalist
145	Lakshita	MA 2017-2019		
146	Vidushi Asthana	MA Women's Studies 2017-2019	Refuge	
147	Mahitha	M.A Women's Studies (2017-2019)	TISS offcampus Hyd	Senior Analyst
148	Vibhuti	MA (WS)/ 2017-19	Savitribai Phule Pune University	PhD Student
149	Maitreyee Misra	MA/2018-20		
150	Madhusree Chatragadda	MA Womens Studies 2017-2019	Apex Advocacy , USA	Social Media Expert
151	Payal Sharma	MA/ 2014-16		
152	Raksha Saini	2021-23		

153	Abhilash Dhabe	2017-19	Sant Gadge Baba Amravati University, Amravati	Contributory Teacher
154	KRANTI JAMANKAR	2017-2019	Raintree Foundation	Senior Officer
155	Myingthunglo M Lotha	MA 2019	PLAN International (India Chapter)	
156	Vanita Ganesh	MA/2017-18		
157	Amritha	MPhil 2017-19	Delhi university	PhD scholar
158	Komal Mangar	MA/2017-2019		
159	Sagarika Ghatak	MA in Women's Studies/2017-2019		
160	Deepshikha Sahu	MAWS/2021-23		
161	Pankaj Waghmare	MA/2009-11	IT Firm	CSR Manager
162	Salomi Jacob	MA/ 2013-15		
163	Anusha Misra	MA 2021-2023	Revival Disability India	Founder
164	Gitanjanli Kamra	MA 2018-2020		