

Several colleges ignore tuition fee waiver

B. Aravind Kumar and
Ramya Kannan

CHENNAI: The exemption in tuition fees for first generation graduands is meant to provide relief to students who have struggled to study and find a place in professional courses.

The relief is available for all those who join MBBS/BDS and Engineering seats in government and self-financing colleges, with the maximum benefit derived by those who are admitted into the latter group of colleges.

From the time the government decided to waive the tuition fee for engineering education for first generation students, these students joining self-financing engineering colleges or self-supporting streams in government aided colleges became eligible for Rs 20,000 cut in the fee.

The corresponding amount for MBBS students in self-financing medical colleges is a substantial Rs. 1,80,000, and for government medical colleges, the waiver of tuition fee amounts to Rs. 4000 per year. However, many colleges insist that the first generation students should pay the full fees for professional education despite a government directive against it.

When Shanmugam, a first

generation student went to an engineering college in Chembarambakkam, a city suburb, the college management clearly told him that he should pay the entire fee for admission to the college.

The boy and his father could not convince the college authorities and had to return home to mobilise the required money to be paid for the admission.

Anna University officials say that the university has been receiving a lot of complaints by way of phone calls and letters from first generation students asking for a direction as college managements across the State were insisting that these students pay the entire fee initially and then reimburse the amount later.

Circular dispatched

According to officials at the Directorate of Technical Education (DTE), the commissioner has sent a circular to principals of all the engineering colleges, government, aided and self-financing, to collect fee after waiving tuition fee for first generation graduates.

According to DTE officials, the fee waiver would be Rs 2,000 for government colleges, Rs 4,000 for government aided colleges and Rs 20,000 for self-financing engineering colleges and

self-supporting departments of government aided colleges.

As the circular was sent through post, the principals of nearly 500 colleges would be receiving the copies of the circular by July 18, officials said.

When it comes to medical education, a government order ratifying this principle of waiving tuition fee has to be passed every year.

That has not yet come through this year.

Meanwhile, there are about 7000 students who are eligible for the tuition waiver. The first phase of counselling has concluded and students have been requested to join the colleges assigned to them.

Students in tight spot

However, students who are likely to benefit from this scheme are worried, as they would be forced to pay the entire amount up front if the GO is not out by then.

This is a tall order for some of these students who come from disadvantaged social and economic backgrounds, educationists explained.

Health department officials promised that the process to issue the GO and thereby, secure the benefits for the students, would be expedited.