SRI DEVARAJ URS ACADEMY OF HIGHER EDUCATION & RESEARCH

SRI DEVARAJ URS MEDICAL COLLEGE

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Seat-blocking: 212 students' fate in limbo

They are accused of grabbing seats surrendered by meritorious students

DH EXCLUSIVE

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BENGALURU, DHNS

The fate of over 212 first year MBBS students in the state is in limbo as the Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences (RGUHS) has withheld their results for their alleged collusion with students accused of "suspected seat blocking" a year ago.

Seeking directions, RGUHS has written to the state government. These students had grabbed seats surrendered by meritorious students who joined premier colleges elsewhere in the country. The students had surrendered seats to private colleges instead of the Karnataka Examinations Authority.

Sources in the Medical Education department revealed to *DH* that the "suspected seat blocking" was reported during the beginning of the 2018-19 academic year (NEET-2018) for admissions to undergraduate medical courses. After a tip-off, RGUHS alerted the government as the admissions were not approved by the government. It was only after the government's permission pending an inquiry that the students were allowed to appear for the first year exam.

Accordingly, awaiting the government's nod, RGUHS has now withheld the results of the examination that was conducted on June 2019. Confirming the move, RGUHS vice-chancellor Dr Sachidanand told *DH* that they are awaiting a reply from the government. "These students' admission to MBBS course was not approved by the government. Yet, the government had allowed them to appear for exams. But now, in the absence of further directions, we have written to the government seeking orders," he explained.

Meanwhile, documents available with *DH* revealed that the issue was discussed last year by the government.

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WHAT IS SEAT-BLOCKING

Seat-blocking is a term attributed to the trend of opting for a seat during counselling process but dropping out at the last moment. While it prevents deserving students from gaining admission to good colleges, it also wastes government's resources in the creation of that seat. Private colleges collude with top rank students to block medical seats. The seats are then sold to low rank holders for huge donations after the former surrender it.

Seats in 17 colleges

Bengaluru	5
Mangaluru	5
Vijayapura	1
Chitradurga	1
Kalaburagi	1
Davangere	2
Bagalkot	1
Shivamogga	1

Seat-blocking..

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Then minister for Medical Education E Tukaram had even constituted a committee to further probe the issue and submit a detailed report. Interestingly, the minister himself was convinced that this was a clear case of "seat blocking" and accordingly wrote in his official note and ordered inquiry.

"The NEET ranking of over 212 students, who have surrendered their seats after the initial mop-up round, was within the rank limit of 15,000 and they were all meritorious students. They surrendered seats in Karnataka after getting into other premier colleges across the country. The authorities shall consider this as seat blocking and write to the Medical Council of India (MCI) urging it to cancel the admissions of those who had surrendered their seats in Karnataka and took admissions elsewhere in the country," the minister's remark read. The minister's order also came with a rider that the fate of 212 students is subject to final recommendations of the committee considering the future of students.

Commenting on the issue, a senior official from the Medical Education department said, "This has happened because of the confusion as the consensual agreement between the government and colleges last year allowed students to surrender seats directly to the colleges. However, this year, we have changed it and asked the students to surrender seats to the medical education department."