

## Appeal

The iconic University College of Arts and Social Sciences, popular as Arts College, is not only a symbol of pride but also a reflection of the glorious, historical and academic legacy of Osmania University which has completed a century. The majestic structure in pink granite has been a cradle of education for scores of students who have strengthened the socio-political and economic fabric of the country. Students who passed out of the hallowed portals of this reputed institution have contributed substantially to various fields across the globe. The reputation and prestige of the University are inextricably linked to the Arts College which is permanently etched in the psyche of the public. The diverse happenings on the campus as also in front of the Arts College become major debating points in the media and the society. Such events unrelated to academics definitely send strong signals and messages on the academic standing of the University. Thus it becomes incumbent on each of the stakeholders to own up responsibility for the nature of activities on Campus. There can be no dispute on any academic activity on the Campus which strengthens the vibrancy of the University.

The University administration has been striving hard to maintain such academic ambiance. As a result, it is ranked among the top 10 Universities in the country and has bagged the University with Potential for Excellence status, Grade I autonomy status and above all NAAC A + grading. The student clientele should also augment the efforts of the University in sustaining such standing. Notwithstanding such ranking, Osmania University has scored low on the perception parameter in the National Institutional Ranking Framework and several all India surveys by independent organisations. This is a very distressing fact as the University is misperceived

because of the certain non-academic activities: release of calendars/ posters, birthdays, putting up huge flexis, staging protests, playing loud speeches/ music, songs, rituals etc which take place with unfailing regularity.

It is pertinent that as per Article 49 of the Indian Constitution the States are obliged to protect monuments and places and objects of national importance. "It shall be the obligation of the State to protect every monument or place or object of artistic or historic interests, declared by or under law made by Parliament to be of national importance, from spoliation, disfigurement, destruction, removal, disposal or export, as the case may be. Similarly it is the fundamental duty of every citizen of India under Article 51A(f) of Indian Constitution to value and preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture. The Supreme Court recognized the right to protest and decided to confine protests to "designated places alone" and also prohibited public meetings etc without permission in the areas known as Parliament House, North and South Block, Central Vista Lawns together with its surrounding localities and areas: Locally, the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation mandated that "heavy penalty would be imposed on those tying the banners, and cases slapped too if need be. The Government was serious about the beautification of city, hence no flexis, pertaining to any event, would be allowed on major roads and government offices. The Government departments were directed to implement the ban in totality as it would lead to visual pollution, solid waste management etc.

The University administration is aghast that the Arts College has been bearing the brunt of activities with potential to damage the structure. Each of these events become media spectacles

which is a major cause for worry as some events are going viral on social media denting the image and reputation of the University to say the least. The University can ill afford to lose prospective students who wish to join the University but view it as a cauldron of politics. This is inimical to the University even as it faces stiff challenges posed by the entry of the private sector into higher education. Against this backdrop and factoring the rulings of the Supreme Court, High Court and the GHMC Act, the Executive Council of Osmania University at its recent meeting has taken a decision to prohibit all such non-academic activities near and in front of the Arts College. In pursuance of the ECs decision, the University administration has decided to provide an alternative venue on Campus to stage such activities. The University makes it emphatically clear that its intent is not to stifle the rights of students/ student groups to express their dissent and protest. Failure to comply with the rulings of the Supreme court, High court would mean that the University is liable for contempt and the University definitely does not want to earn the tag of a contemnor. Further, the University does not want to be branded as a violator of provisions of the GHMC Act, observations of the Archaeological Survey of India, conservationists and heritage lovers.

In order to protect and preserve the sanctity of the University revered as a “temple of learning,” to salvage and sustain the positive image, the University appeals to all sections to avoid organizing and discourage hosting such events in front of Arts College. Any violation of this appeal will be viewed seriously and the parties concerned will be held accountable. Let’s join hands to unfetter Arts College from all non-academic activities and restore its glory and also that of the University.