

Tamil Nadu NGOs see foreign funding dip by 90%

TNN | Apr 10, 2021, 11.23 AM IST

CHENNAI: Donations from abroad for NGOs in Tamil Nadu have dropped by 90%, pushing the state to fourth in the country in attracting funding under the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA). This has adversely impacted activities of many groups largely dependent on such contributions, say activists.

TN has the most number of NGOs and associations registered under the FCRA in the country and 3,262 of the 6,485 NGOs eligible to receive funds are currently active.

Data furnished by the Union home ministry in the Rajya Sabha, a fortnight ago shows NGOs and associations in TN received more than Rs 2,000 crore for 2016-17, 2017-18 and 2018-19, second only to Delhi. This fell to Rs 219 crore in 2019-20. Data for 2019-20 was based on Annual Returns (ARs) filed on 16-03-2021, but an extension has been given till June this year.

Human rights activist Henri Tiphagne, executive director of People's Watch, said funds received by TN NGOs are also used for various social activities across the nation. Asked if foreign funds to NGOs in TN for 2019-20 would match the previous years, he said, "I will not be surprised if this drops further in the coming years." Tiphagne said his organisation used most of the foreign contributions for promoting human rights education in schools with government authorisation. The organisation's FCRA bank account was suspended in 2016. "Local funds are not available for such activities as most of the CSR funds go to government oriented projects."

Dr R Manivannan, professor and head of department of politics and public administration at University of Madras, said foreign contributions for NGOs in Tamil Nadu in 2019-20 was unlikely to touch the levels of past years. Pointing out that regulation was necessary for foreign contributions, he said, "But, the genuine work of NGOs should be appreciated."

As per media reports, between 2014 and 2019, FCRA registration of more than 14,800 NGOs across the country including several in Tamil Nadu was cancelled. In 2019 alone more than 1,800 NGOs and academic institutes found violating laws were banned from receiving foreign funds, a media report added. Several NGOs executing religious and social work came under the scanner after the Centre tightened the screws.

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/chennai/tamil-nadu-ngos-see-foreign-funding-dip-by-90/articleshowprint/82000994.cms>