

Govt says no to screening of documentary on beef-eating practices

HT Correspondent, Hindustan Times, Mumbai / New Delhi



Members of Citizen Rights Foundation protest against Delhi Police raid on Kerala house on Wednesday, October 28, 2015. Police landed up at the state guest house acting on an alleged complaint of beef being served in the canteen. (Hindustan Times)

The Centre has allegedly denied permission to screen a film on beef-eating practices made by students of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS).

The film, 'Caste on the Menu Card', was selected in the student films competition category in the '12th Jeevika: Asia Livelihood Documentary Festival', to be held at Siri Fort Auditorium on Friday.

The organisers of the festival claimed that they received a notice from information and broadcasting (I&B) ministry saying the film cannot be screened.

Sources in I&B ministry said the filmmakers had not provided sufficient information on it so that it could be cleared. "There are certain rules to be followed for a film to be screened, and it cannot be cleared on one or two line of information provided. We have asked for more information," a senior official from the ministry told HT.

The organisers, however, said the synopsis of the film was sent about two weeks ago and they received the notice from I&B ministry on Thursday.

“We were told it will create problems if screened,” Snigdha Verma from Centre for Civil Society, the organisers of the Jeevika festival, told HT. An attempt to convince the officials that the film would not hurt any religious sentiments failed, she added.

KP Jayasankar and Anjali Monteiro, guides of the students who made the documentary, said: “We have not received any official intimation of denial of permission to screen the film, which was part of a class project. If it is the case, it reflects the culture of censorship that is unfortunately becoming the order of the day. As citizens who stand for freedom of expression and the right to eat food of one’s choice, we deplore this attempt to silence voices that are seen as uncomfortable,” the duo told HT on email.

TISS officials were unavailable for comment.

According to rules, any film that has to be screened at a public place needs censorship exemption certificate from the government.

The synopsis of the film said it delves into the idea of food as a site of exclusion by focusing on beef-eating practices in Mumbai.