

## 'ARBITRARY RULES'

# Rough ride awaits students trying to avail concession passes for Metro

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LAST WEEK, Gouri Theertha, a second-year economics student at the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics (GIPE), approached the ticket counter at Deccan Metro station to get a student's pass. She carried her ID card and hoped to get the concession card so that she could enjoy the Metro commute.

However, to her rude shock, the authorities turned her away. "They said that GIPE students can't get a concession pass because it didn't have 'college' in its name. I tried to reason with them but to no avail. Finally, I gave up," said Gouri.

She is not alone. Students in Pune are facing a lot of difficulties in procuring student concession passes from the Pune Metro. Many students are being turned away by the staff at the ticket issuing counters over multiple reasons. Only first and second-year students are eligible for the Metro concession card, final year students won't get passes; ID cards won't work, requirement of bonafide certificates from colleges to get the passes are some of the hurdles.

A student from Fergusson College, who did not wish to be named, said, "They denied me the student concession card when they came to know that I am in the final year of my graduation. Although they were ready to give me a discounted ticket but refused

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the concession card. I feel that this whole process is arbitrary." Students, up to the bachelor's degree level, receive a 30 per cent concession for Metro commute.

Authorities of the Pune Metro, however, seemed unaware of the struggles students are facing in getting the concessional passes. Hemant Sonawane, public relations officer of Pune Metro, said all the students up to the undergraduate level were eligible to get a concessional pass for the Metro if they are studying in a university affiliated to NAAC or pursuing a NAAC recognised course.

"We don't differentiate between students studying in public or private institutes nor the the year they are studying. Students only need to produce an ID card that shows that they are studying in a legitimate institute recognized by authorities. Only post-graduate students are not eligible to get concessional passes as per rules," said Sonawane.

He said that so far 7,486 students' passes have been issued. "There may be some confusion at one or two counters, we will try and resolve those," he said.