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POLL CODE VIOLATION?

# Govt questions college on Rahul meeting students

**CHENNAI:** The Tamil Nadu government has ordered an enquiry on how a college here gave its nod for Congress president Rahul Gandhi to interact with its students when the Model Code of Conduct is in force.

The top Congress leader, in his interaction with students of Stella Maris College on March 13, promised 33 per cent reservation in government jobs for women and answered several of their questions. The Director of Collegiate Education, R Sarumathi directed a subordinate official to enquire "immediately" on the matter and submit a report, official sources said.



In a communique (dated March 14) to the Regional Joint Director, Chennai Zone, the director pointed out that in view of the Lok Sabha elections the MCC was in force and under such circumstances sought to know "how permission was granted" by the college for the event.

Sources said Stella Maris is one of the 10 government aided colleges in Chennai. Such institutions are not only bound by State norms, but are also expected to follow the MCC.

When contacted, the college authorities declined to say if any enquiry was made by the Collegiate Department officials.

The Chief Electoral Officer also did not

comment. Warning of "strong ramifications" for pulling up Stella Maris College for allowing an interaction between his national president Rahul Gandhi and students a few days ago, state congress chief K S Alagiri on Friday urged the Directorate of Collegiate Education to immediately recall the notice issued to the college management.

Claiming that the Chief Electoral Officer had sufficiently responded to the issue during media briefings in which he had said that there was no violation in holding such meetings with prior permission, Alagiri said the BJP, unable to bear the success of Rahul's meeting with the students, had used AIADMK to issue a notice to the college management.