

MINISTRY RENEWS FCRA REGISTRATION OF PHFI

Relevant for: Developmental Issues | Topic: Role of NGOs, SHGs, Donors & Charities, and Institutional & other Stakeholders in Development Process

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has renewed the FCRA (Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act) registration of Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI), a public health advocacy group, the Lok Sabha was informed on Tuesday.

The move comes four years after the organisation was barred from receiving foreign funds for lobbying with parliamentarians, the media and the government on tobacco control issues.

The PHFI's FCRA registration was cancelled in 2017, days after Swadeshi Jagran Manch (SJM), the economic arm of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) brought out a 'white paper' on the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's (BMGF) influence in India's health sector. The BMGF was a major contributor to the NGO, having transferred Rs. 183 crore to it between 2010 and 2015. The FCRA registration, renewed in 2017, was valid till 2021.

Revoked in 2018

The PHFI's registration was partially revoked in 2018 and it was placed under the "prior permission" sanctioned list. It effectively meant that the organisation had to obtain prior permission from the MHA before acceptance of each foreign contribution. The latest move means that the PHFI could receive foreign funds in its designated bank account without the additional ring of check by the MHA.

On Tuesday, Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai, in a written reply in the Lok Sabha, said, "since November, 2021 the FCRA certificate of Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI), New Delhi and Missionaries of Charity (MoC), Kolkata was renewed by way of revision."

The Minister was responding to a question by members Vijayakumar and T. R. Paarivendhar on the number of NGOs whose FCRA was recently restored.

On December 31, the MoC was among 6,000 NGOs whose registration had ceased to exist. FCRA registration is mandatory to receive foreign donations.

The Minister said that about 5,800 FCRA registered associations had not submitted their applications for renewal within the stipulated time and their registration was ceased.

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