

Academics oppose UGC's LOCF for UG courses

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MANY academics, former vice-chancellors and professors from various colleges have opposed the University Grants Commission's (UGC) Learning Outcomes-based Curriculum Framework (LOCF) designed for undergraduate courses across the country.

At a meeting organised here on Thursday by All India Save Education Committee (AISEC), Dr Manjunath Krishnapur, mathematics professor from IISc, who initiated a petition along with 900 mathematicians against the "unscientific maths curriculum" in September, said, "Looks like this LOCF was generated using ChatGPT. It is so random and many of the references cited in LOCF do not exist. We have prepared a petition seeking withdrawal of this LOCF for mathematics. We have sought an autonomous committee of academics to prepare a new curriculum framework. More than 1,000 mathematicians have signed the petition. To point out a few bizarre recommendations, a new subject, 'Philosophy of Indian Mathematics, has been included and there is nothing about mathematics in it. 'Kalajnana' and many other subjects suggested are outdated and will not be of any use to students. 'Panchanga' promotes unscientific thinking and lacks basic tenets of mathematics."

He said, "They have included a study of tithi, nakshatra, yoga, karana, vara, and determination of auspicious and inauspicious muhurtas. Further, teaching of modern algebra has been reduced. Ancient geometry has been given more prominence."

Dr Sayantini Banerjee, PG coordinator, Commerce, St Joseph's University, said in commerce and management studies, the UGC has used the word, 'Bharatiya', in brackets after



'Indian'. "What are they trying to refer to here? Commerce as a discipline cannot be Indian or Bharatiya. It has to be international as we deal with international matters. They have also used Rama Rajya and Shub Labh. They could have used ideal governance instead of Rama Rajya and ethical profit making for "Shub Labh," she added.

Meanwhile, Prof R Ramanujam, mathematician and professor at Azim Premji University, Bengaluru, said, "Most of the curriculum is outdated, unscientific and will take our civilization centuries backward. However, I must thank the UGC for bringing 900 mathematicians together to oppose this curriculum. Why do we need a national level curriculum for all institutions when we have a federal structure? It is abysmal and has to be rejected lock, stock and barrel.

"However, MK Sridhar, member of the drafting committee of the National Education Policy (NEP) and member of UGC, did not agree with these views and questioned their expertise. "If you are commenting on Arthashastra, you should have read it at least once. UGC has analysed everything scientifically before putting it out in the draft," he said.

He said, "UGC was dormant for a long time. It saw many changes in the past two years. If Prof (Dr) Jose Verghese can write a compendium on Kautilya's Arthashastra, why can't others at least read and understand it?"