

# St Joseph's varsity refutes govt report, calls it arbitrary

BENGALURU, DHNS

**S**t Joseph's University has disputed the Karnataka State Higher Education Council's (KSHEC) report on the basis of which the government decided to levy a penalty of Rs 4 lakh on the institution.

*DH* reported on June 26, the government's decision to penalise the university after the KSHEC found violations related to admissions, enhancement of seats and introduction of new courses.

The KSHEC report is "arbitrary" and "seems intended to discredit an institution that has consistently supported government initiatives", the university said in a statement issued by its faculty member Swetavalli Raghavan.

KSHEC Executive Director K G Chandrashekara "refused to examine" relevant documents and "drew conclusions without verification", the university said, adding that this was "unbecoming of a public official".

"In our 143-year history, St Joseph's has never violated any law or government directive. We remain committed to transparency, compliance and public service," the university said.

On the charge that seats were enhanced without notifying authorities, the university said: "Every increase in intake was either notified in advance or subsequently regularized, exactly as envisaged under the RUSA and UGC frameworks."

The university explained that it had been implementing the National Education Policy (NEP) with a two-major structure. "However, on May 8, 2024, we were suddenly directed to revert to the earlier State Education Policy (SEP), which follows a three-major structure. In response to this transition, we merely renamed existing courses to align with the SEP framework with due approval from the Board of Governors. This administrative renaming has been wrongly construed as the introduction of a new course, which it is not," the university said on the charge that new courses were started without approvals.

On running a third shift, the university said it was a "social inclusion measure" and not due to infrastructural deficiency. "Shift III was introduced to replace St Joseph's Evening College, which was discontinued, thereby supporting working professionals and students from disadvantaged backgrounds who cannot attend daytime classes," it said.

Citing the Supreme Court judgement in the TMA Pai case, the university argued that it need not share seats with the government. "The St Joseph's University Act, 2021 does not override our minority status or constitutional rights over admissions," it said. "The clause requiring adherence to the state reservation policy does not negate our minority autonomy."