

UGC Draft Curriculum Highlights Ancient Wisdom in Higher Education

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Ancient Wisdom Latest News

- The UGC has released a draft curriculum framework that integrates Indian Knowledge Systems into undergraduate courses, sparking debate over tradition and academic rigour.

Introduction

- The **University Grants Commission** (UGC) has unveiled a draft **Learning Outcomes-based Curriculum Framework** (LOCF) for undergraduate courses in disciplines such as anthropology, chemistry, commerce, economics, geography, home science, mathematics, physical education, and political science.
- A striking feature of this framework is the emphasis on **Indian Knowledge Systems** (IKS), with provisions to embed traditional wisdom, philosophies, and practices into modern pedagogy.
- The draft has been opened for stakeholder feedback.

Focus on Indian Knowledge Systems

- The LOCF outlines an approach that seeks to contextualise higher education within India's cultural and intellectual traditions.
- This aligns with the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**, which encouraged decolonisation of education and promotion of indigenous systems of knowledge.
- Each subject has been tasked with weaving elements of Indian thought into the curriculum, blending heritage with modern learning outcomes.

Subject-wise Integration of Ancient Wisdom

• Mathematics

- The draft proposes modules on *mandala geometry*, *yantras*, *rangoli and kolam* as algorithmic art forms, and the study of temple architecture through āyādi ratios.
- It highlights contributions of Indian mathematicians in arithmetic, algebra, geometry, and calculus, and their influence on global mathematical traditions.

• Commerce

- Commerce education is to incorporate *Bhartiya philosophy* and the Gurukul system's holistic learning approach, linking ethical leadership and sustainable practices with modern corporate governance.
- Kautilya's *Arthashastra* will be taught as a classical text offering insights into trade regulation and financial management.
- Concepts such as *Ram Rajya* in governance, CSR, ESG frameworks, and the *Shubh-labh* philosophy on profit with responsibility will also find space in the curriculum.

• Economics

- The LOCF emphasises dharmic perspectives on wealth and prosperity, trade ethics, and collective enterprise.
- Students will study indigenous exchange systems, agrarian values, principles of *dana* (charity), and the role of the king in the economy, contextualising economics within cultural and moral traditions.

• Chemistry

- In chemistry, traditional Indian fermented beverages like *kanji*, *mahua*, *toddy* will be included in a module on alcoholic beverages.
- The course also introduces ancient Indian concepts of the *parmanu* (atom) alongside modern atomic theory.
- This integration aims to balance modern scientific education with historical Indian perspectives.

• Anthropology

- The draft anthropology curriculum draws from thinkers such as Charaka, Sushruta, Buddha, and Mahavira.
- Their reflections on the relationship between nature and culture are presented as indigenous perspectives that enrich anthropological studies.

Criticism and Challenges

- While the NEP 2020 encourages multidisciplinary learning, the LOCF prioritises single-major pathways.
- For instance, in chemistry, 96 out of 172 credits are allotted to discipline-specific core courses, leaving limited room for interdisciplinary exploration.
- Opposition-ruled states have criticised the framework, alleging attempts at “saffronisation.” The challenge lies in balancing respect for indigenous traditions with ensuring global competitiveness and academic rigour in higher education.

Significance of the Draft Curriculum

- The draft curriculum signals a paradigm shift in India’s educational philosophy. By embedding Indian Knowledge Systems into mainstream education, UGC seeks to:
 - Decolonise curricula and promote indigenous heritage.
 - Provide culturally rooted yet globally relevant education.
 - Encourage ethical and sustainable practices in professional fields.
 - Revive the historical contributions of India to mathematics, economics, medicine, and governance.

Future Outlook

- With feedback from stakeholders invited, the framework could undergo revisions before implementation.
- If adopted, this LOCF could redefine the intellectual foundation of Indian higher education, making it more rooted in cultural heritage while aligning with global standards.
- However, the challenge will be ensuring that ancient wisdom complements rather than replaces scientific temper, critical thinking, and multidisciplinary inquiry.

Source : TH

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