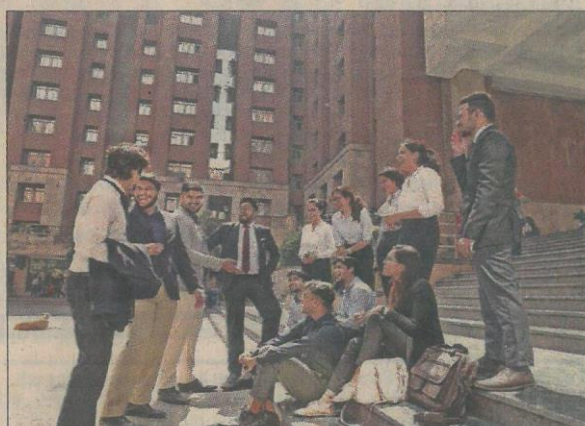


DOABLE WITH HELP OF NEW TECHNOLOGY AND REAL TIME TRANSLATION APPS: JAGADESH KUMAR

After AICTE, UGC Plans Courses in Indian Languages

UGC chairman opens dialogue with varsities on the proposal, says response positive



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New Delhi: Months after the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) opened up engineering courses in Indian languages, the University Grants Commission (UGC) is preparing to follow suit in the university system.

ET has gathered that the apex higher education regulator- UGC- has opened up a conversation with Vice Chancellors to all Central universities as well as with those of several state universities to consider offering full fledged undergraduate and post graduate courses including professional courses in regional Indian languages.

The new UGC Chairman Prof M Jagadesh Kumar confirmed the same to ET.

"We intend to introduce courses in Indian languages as well in the university system just as AICTE has started doing. We want to do so as much for the STEM courses as other disciplines. I have already had a discussion with Vice Chancellors on the subject and they have shown a very positive approach and an open mind on the issue. We will soon start drawing up a roadmap for the same", Chairman, UGC told ET.

Kumar also said that contrary to perceptions on difficulty in rolling out programmes in local languages, it was quite 'doable' with the help of new technology and real time translation apps that are being developed.

A similar governmental attempt at introducing engineering courses at IITs in regional languages had, however, run into roadblocks over the diverse student composition, the difficulty of finding faculty with adequate felicity and command over the regional languages and lack of study material in languages other than English.

While courses in regional languages could not take off at IITs, the AICTE has gone on to do so at engineering colleges.

About 20 engineering colleges in ten states are now offering certain courses in

six regional languages- Hindi, Marathi, Bengali, Tamil and Telugu.

The government has strongly been advocating a shift to the mother tongue- right from the primary level of school- and the same is also reflected in the new National Education Policy, 2020.

NEP 2020 says that "for languages to remain relevant and vibrant, there must be a steady stream of high-quality learning and print materials in these

ENGINEERING COLLEGES



While govt plans for regional

language medium at IITs could not take off, 20 engineering colleges now offer it after AICTE nudge

languages. Languages must also have consistent official updates to their vocabularies and dictionaries".

The Prime Minister has also emphasised on the same in several of his remarks including most recently in a webinar on the budgetary focus on education where he pointed to a clear link between education in the medium of mother language and the mental development of children.

He further drew attention to the focus on digitalisation in the 2022 Budget and the need to integrate digital learning tools and framework with Indian languages so that all students are on equal footing and can access quality learning material in their mother tongue.

In fact, it was an October 2020 address by PM Narendra Modi in Bihar where he announced plans to teach all technical courses including medical and engineering in the mother tongue. High level discussions were held soon after in the Union Education ministry on the subject and it finally led to the AICTE initiative and now to the UGC action plan.