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# ORPHANS TO GET FREE EDUCATION IN STATE UNIVS AND COLLEGES

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**KOTA:** The Rajasthan government has decided not to charge orphans for education in its universities and colleges, Higher Education Minister Kali Charan Saraf announced on Sunday.

The free-education policy will be implemented from this year in 24 state-run universities and their 207 constituent or affiliated colleges, Saraf said in Kota.

The minister, however, clarified that the decision was not binding on private colleges.

Governor Kalyan Singh was instrumental in bringing about the policy, taken at the Vice-Chancellors' coordination committee meeting held in January this year, he said.

"The aim is to provide educational opportunities to orphans who face financial issues and are vulnerable as they do not have parents," he said.

Commissioner of the directorate of state higher education, Anoop Khinchi said orders have been issued to universities to not charge fees from orphan students from this academic session (2016-17), which began earlier this month.

*However, he said the policy would be applicable only to those orphan students who clear the admission process.*

Vice-Chancellor of Vardhman Mahaveer Open University (VMOU), Professor Ashok Sharma said while other varsities would provide only free education to orphans, VMOU would also provide free study material to them.

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# Orphans

However, he said no orphans have approached the university yet, he said. Vice-Chancellor of University of Kota, Professor PK Dashora said orders have been issued for implementing the policy, but they were yet to receive applications from orphans. Education is free for orphans in government schools of the state.

Deputy secretary of secondary education, B K Gupta said while the school education is free for orphans up to Class 8, the Rajasthan government has extended the policy till Class 12. Besides Rajasthan, Odisha government provides free education to orphans in universities of the state.