

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO-528
ANSWERED ON- 04/02/2026

Legitimacy of new courses under NEP

528. **Dr. K. Laxman:**

Will the Minister of **Education** be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that postgraduate programmes in Development Studies offered by more than 35 Universities, including JNU and TISS, are facing difficulties in obtaining formal equivalence with traditional social science degrees;

(b) the reasons for the absence of a clear equivalence framework despite the programme being aligned with the National Education Policy (NEP) vision of multidisciplinary education;

(c) whether this lack of equivalence is affecting students' eligibility for academic careers, research fellowships and competitive examinations; and

(d) the steps proposed to ensure timely recognition and academic parity for Development Studies degrees across institutions?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
(DR. SUKANTA MAJUMDAR)

(a): The University Grants Commission (UGC) has informed that it specifies degrees under Section 22 of the UGC Act, 1956. Universities, being autonomous bodies, are permitted to offer UGC specified degrees with the approval of their respective statutory councils, in accordance with applicable UGC regulations and guidelines. Unless specifically notified otherwise, degrees specified by the UGC and awarded by recognized Universities following due process are considered recognized across the country.

(b): For promoting multidisciplinary and flexible learning pathways, the UGC has issued the National Higher Education Qualifications Framework (NHEQF) and the National Credit Framework (NCrF) to promote standardisation, transparency, academic mobility, and comparability of higher education qualifications across institutions.

Further, equivalence of degrees is not determined by UGC. Equivalence is decided by the concerned University, and in matters of employment, by the respective recruiting or employing organisations, in accordance with their statutory rules and eligibility norms.

(c): Eligibility for academic appointments, research fellowships, and competitive examinations is governed by the regulations and criteria prescribed by the respective Universities, funding agencies, recruiting bodies, and examination authorities. The National Eligibility Test (UGC-NET) is also conducted in the subject Development Studies along-with Economics, Rural Economics, Co-operation, Demography, Econometrics, Applied Economics, Development Economics, Business Economics (Subject Code: 01).

(d): The UGC continuously engages with higher education institutions to promote clarity, transparency, and quality assurance in academic programme design and implementation. Universities have been advised to clearly specify programme structure, credit allocation, learning outcomes, and degree nomenclature in conformity with UGC regulations, the Learning Outcome Based Curricular Framework, and the provisions of the NHEQF and NCrf. Standard Operating Procedures for implementation of NCrf have been issued, and all HEIs have been requested to adopt the framework.
