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UGC Asks Varsities To Prevent Animal Experiments

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The University Grants Commission has issued a notice to all universities and colleges under it to desist from dissections and prevent animal experiments

The University Grants Commission has issued a notice to all universities and colleges under it to desist from dissections and prevent animal experiments violating the Wild Life Protection Act, 1972 and the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1960. The notice issued on February 20 asks institutes to use the advancements in technology to find alternatives. The notice has a plan to be followed to replace animal dissection. The UGC has received several petitions to put a stop to dissections.

Animal rights activists explained how demands for dissection contribute heavily to problems of depletion of animal population, habitat loss, pollution and climate change. The commission committee, formed to look into the possibilities of tackling the situation, gave its report after which guidelines were made. The UGC has called for `Dissection Monitoring Committees to be set up at all higher education institutions that will ensure the animals for dissection are procured in an ethical manner. The animals cannot be not removed from the wild and must be transported to the laboratory without stress or strain. For live dissections, the animals have to be anaesthetised.

The notice states, All educational institutions coming under the purview of UGC shall prescribe laboratory curriculum involving animals in such a way that is compassionate with the animals, avoid experiments on animals, wherever possible, and use alternatives in their place. The number of animal dissections will be reduced and experiments contained to only laboratory bred animals, both in under-graduate and post-graduate studies with specific guidelines.

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Prof B B Nath, head of the department, Zoology at the University of Pune explained that live dissections has already become insignificant at their institute while remarking The UGC guildelines are welcome but the changes called for cannot be implemented overnight, though we have already started taking cognisance of them,.

Dissections here are done on dead animals. Anybody wanting to use an animal for research or experimentation has to undergo strict scrutiny of a committee formed for such work. The syllabus has also been revised in a way to minimise the need for dissections. Dr K D Pendharkar, head of the department, Zoology at Fergusson College, stated Experiments are done on dead animals as not much hardcore zoology studies are happening these days.

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