

'Sanatan literature' to be taught as value-added course

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This will be a value-added course under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 framework for students enrolled in first-year BA from this academic year.

Interestingly, around 160 students have already opted for this course for which classes have started.

First-semester students will be taught stories based on 'Upanishads' as part of the course curriculum. As students transit to the next level, they will be taught Bhagwad Gita and other religious texts.

"No university in India has used the word or nomenclature of Sanatan. The moment one talks of 'Sanatan' literature, it is connected to negativity with political discourse. But for us, Sanatan literature is important as it refers to the timeless body of written and oral works from ancient India encompassing a wide range of texts including religious scriptures, epics, philosophical treatises, poetry, and other literary works," professor Hitesh Raviya, head of Department of English, said.

The curriculum inclu-



des the story of Nachiketa from 'Katho Upanishad' and stories from Chandogya Upanishad like those of Indra and Virochana, Svetaketu, Satyakama Jabala and Uddalaka and Shvetaketu.

They will be taught the origin of these stories, their narration, their scripts and their contemporary relevance.

He argued that somehow the 'Sanatan' nomenclature was avoided by institutes and universities for decades because of the political discourse associated with it.

"Countries like Germany, Australia, Canada, and even Africa teach their own literature. Identities of even smaller countries like Bulgaria and Cambodia are linked with Bulgarian and Cambodian literature. When we use the word Indian literature, it does not ser-

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ve its purpose. But when we use the term Sanatan literature, we immediately get linked to Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, and other religious scriptures," said Raviya.

"Stories from the 'katho Upanishad' and 'Chandogya Upanishad' are taught as an introduction to Sanatan literature in semester-I. In semester III, they will be taught other aspects of the literature," he said.

The course has been introduced in the spirit of NEP 2020. "As per guidelines of the University Grants Commission and Gujarat government, students should be able to select a value-added course in semester-I and semester-III.

The value-added courses should be based on the Indian knowledge system. Hence, as a department we choose to introduce the course on Sanatan literature," he said.